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1.0 INTRODUCTION

A man willing to work, and unable to find work, is perhaps the saddest sight that fortune's inequality exhibits under this sun.

THOMAS CARLYLE

Men and women willing to work but unable to find work is indeed an extremely saddening sight. Unfortunately, this is precisely what most countries of the world are going through presently. According to the 2013 ILO Annual Employment Report, world unemployment could top record levels this year and continue rising until 2017. In its World of Work Report (ILO 2014), the ILO reports that global unemployment numbers has risen by 30.6 million reaching 199.8 million in 2013, as compared to the pre-economic crisis level.

According to Statistics Mauritius figures, the unemployment rate is estimated at 7.8% in 2011 and 8.0% in both 2012 and 2013. In 2013, the unemployment rate among female was 12.2% and 5.3% for male. The rate of youth unemployment for the fourth quarter 2013 was 22.2% (15.1% for male and 33.3% for female).

The lack of required skills and competencies among local jobseekers has led to an increased dependence on foreign workers in various key sectors of the economy. Yet, another challenge the authorities have to grapple with is the redeployment of workers who have been laid off following the closure or downsizing of companies. While some of these laid-off workers have opted to start their own enterprise, most of them have subsequently joined back the labour register as unemployed jobseekers in search of a stable job. According to figures available, as at December 2013, there were 2,865 employees who were laid-off, 38.3% of which were women (1,096) and 61.7% were male (1769).

The labour scenario is such that it is becoming more and more challenging to ensure that:

- a) those entering the labour market for the first time find decent work;
- b) jobseekers are sufficiently skilled to find a decent job and to remain in employment; and
- c) the conditions of work are to the satisfaction of one and all.

With a view to addressing the immediate needs of the labour market and given that employment is one of the most effective ways of eradicating poverty, specific schemes, policies and strategies are being implemented by Government to promote job creation, employability, re-skilling as well as ensuring that decent work conditions prevail.

However, given the unemployment circumstances worldwide and the prediction of the situation worsening and recalling that employment is a fundamental component of any development strategy as affirmed in the 2006 United Nations Ministerial Declaration, it is essential that a National Employment Policy be formulated. The National Employment Policy, one of the main components for the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment in the ILO Decent Work Country Programme for Mauritius signed in 2012, is the first ever in Mauritius. The Policy will serve as a coherent framework and will be an important tool to enable all Mauritian citizens, men and women alike, who are willing to work, to attain secured and sustainable livelihood, to enhance their standard of living through productive and freely chosen employment.

2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 Economic trends

Mauritius has been able to craft a strong growth-oriented developmental path despite being a small island economy vulnerable to exogenous shocks. Over the years, the country has transformed itself from a poor sugar economy into one with the highest per capita income among African countries. The country has achieved sustained progress in economic conditions and it continues to be among the most competitive, stable and successful economies in Africa, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$11.5 billion and per capita income of over \$8,400 in 2012.

In 2005, Government embarked on an economic reform aiming at opening the economy, easing business, enhancing the climate for investment and mobilizing foreign direct investment. These reforms contributed significantly to accelerate the growth rate and the pace of diversification of the economy and to reduce unemployment. The reforms also helped to limit the adverse impact of the 2008-2010 global economic recessions and the Euro-zone crisis and paved the way for Mauritius to resume growth in 2010.

However, the global economic turbulences and the intensification of the Euro-zone crisis threatened the resilience of the Mauritian economy, particularly in key sectors such as tourism, textile and the offshore and financial sectors which depend heavily on European markets. Consequently, the GDP growth slowed down to 3.6 percent in 2011 and dropped further to 3.4 and 3.2 percent in 2012 and 2013 respectively. Forecasts for 2014 show a gradual recovery with growth rates rising to 3.7 per cent.

However, while macroeconomic performance has been positive, it has not benefited all citizens alike. In fact, an increase in income inequality has been observed over the recent years, whereby the Gini coefficient for the country which was 0.388 around 2006/2007 reached 0.413 in 2012, implying a rise in income inequality during the period 2006 to 2012.

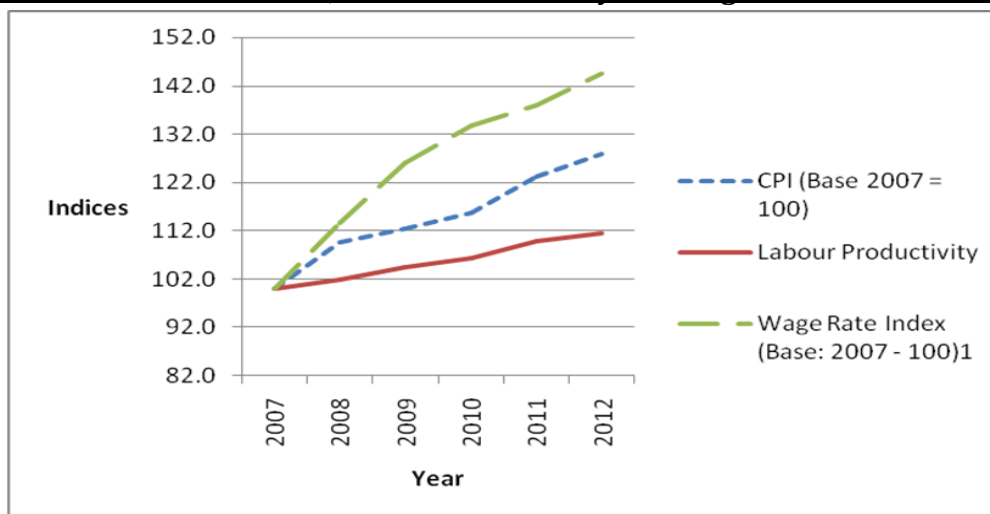
2.2 Trends in Environmental Sustainability

The current-account imbalance remained wide at -11.9 per cent of GDP in 2012, as the merchandise trade deficit continued to deteriorate partly due to the ever rising fossil fuel imports. Mauritius' fossil fuel dependency is 85 per cent with annual demand in petroleum products having increased from 1, 195,700 tonnes in 2011 to 1,236,500 tonnes in 2012, representing 3.4 per cent. This heavy dependence on energy imports is not only a drain on economic growth but implies foregone employment opportunities. Moreover, it led to a stark increase in per capita CO² emissions from 1.5 tons CO² in the mid-nineties to more than 2.9 tons in 2012.

In addition to the increase in air pollution, the continuous deterioration of key environmental indicators puts at risk our Mauritian tourism sector and fish industries as well as its agriculture. Natural resources sustain more than 45,000 jobs in agriculture and sugar cane, 20,000 jobs in tourism and 10,000 jobs in fishing, forestry and livestock. The coastal belt is already under severe stress from pollution and overfishing. Agricultural soil is degrading and productivity in some areas declining.

2.3 Consumer Price Index, Labour Productivity and Wage Rate Index

Figure: Consumer Price Index, Labour Productivity and Wage Rate Index: 2007 – 2012



2.3.1 Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is the indicator of changes over time in the general level of prices of goods and services acquired by Mauritian consumers. From 2007 to 2013, the average CPI has increased from 100 to 132.5, indicating that prices have increased by 32.5%. The main reasons for the overall increase in the CPI for the year 2011 were higher food prices and other consumer goods and services.

2.3.2 Labour Productivity

Labour Productivity is construed as the real GDP per worker. From 2007 to 2012, the labour productivity index has improved over the years from 100 in 2007 to 117.4 in 2012, giving an average annual growth of 2.2%. During the period 2007 to 2012, labour productivity in the manufacturing sector registered an average annual growth of 3.3%, whereas for export oriented enterprises, labour productivity registered average annual growth of 7.4%. The highest average annual growth of 7.5% was in the information and communication sector, followed by arts, entertainment and recreation sector by 6.8% and then professional, scientific and technical activities by 5.2%. Mining and quarrying registered the lowest average annual growth of -7.7%.

2.3.3 Wage Rate Index

The Wage Rate Index (WRI) measures changes in the price of labour, namely, changes in the average rates actually paid by employers to their employees for work during normal working hours. The wage rate index has increased over the years from 100 to 152.9. The increases indicate a general upward movement in the index throughout the years, with major increase in 2008 of 13.7% following the salary revision in the Government sector (Pay Research Bureau -PRB).

From 2007 to 2013, the increase is mainly explained by the salary increase in the government sector (incremental credit) and the seasonal wage increase in the sugar industry.

Main increases were registered in the following industry groups from 2012 to 2013:

<i>Education</i>	14.3%
<i>Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities</i>	12.0%
<i>Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply</i>	9.9%
<i>Human health and social work activities</i>	8.6%
<i>Transportation and storage</i>	8.4%
<i>Public administration and defence; compulsory social security</i>	7.7%

Main decreases were registered in the following industry groups:

<i>Construction</i>	0.8%
<i>Agriculture, forestry and fishing</i>	0.2%
<i>Accommodation and food service activities</i>	0.2%
<i>Arts, entertainment and recreation</i>	0.2%

“Equal pay for equal work” is a reality in Mauritius. The National Remuneration Board (NRB) has been ensuring that job appellations and classifications are based on the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value. References to “female workers” have been removed and neutral terms are being used.

Following the review of the NRB of the following Remuneration Regulations:

- Field Crop and Orchard Workers (April 2008);
- Livestock Workers (July 2008);
- Domestic Workers (December 2010);
- Cleaning Enterprises (August 2013); and
- Electrical, Engineering and Mechanical Workshops (December 2013),

the discriminatory provisions prescribing wages and/ or conditions of employment on a gender basis have been removed. Thus, wages are now prescribed on a job content

basis and the criteria laid for entitlement to travelling benefits no longer differ for male and female workers.

Presently, only Remuneration Order Regulations governing the Salt Manufacturing Industry, the Sugar Industry and the Tea Industry still contain gender-based discriminatory provisions with respect to rates of pay. This is due to the fact that in these sectors, there are limitations on assignment of work whereby female workers cannot perform certain tasks which are exclusively reserved for male workers. In addition, whenever male and female workers are performing the same type of work, the task allotted to female workers is lesser compared to that of their male counterparts.

2.3.4 Inflation

The inflation rate is one of the key indicators of economic performance of a country and it is used for wage negotiation. From 2007 to 2012, the wage rate indices were higher than both the consumer price indices and the labour productivity indices.

2.4 Government's Development Strategy and Key Employment Challenges

Today, the long-term challenge for the country is to maintain its unique combination of resilience in the face of changing economic and environmental circumstances and adaptability to new paths towards achieving growth, such as, through green growth, accompanied by a reduction in income inequality through an improvement in the standard of living of all. In that connection, Government is implementing targeted strategies for the different sectors of the economy as follows:

- the agricultural sector is being revitalised to emerge as an economic pillar. There is greater orientation towards more modern production of high-value added primary and agro-based products. The sugar sector has been transformed into the cane sector. However, in general, this sector does not appeal to those joining the labour market, especially the young jobseekers, as they aspire mostly to having white collar jobs. On the other hand, some areas in Agriculture that have potential

for employment creation and skill development are aquaculture, hydroponic cultivation, soil conservation, among others, but these areas require specific skills and competencies.

- In the manufacturing sector, especially in textile, watch-making, fish processing, the focus is on the use of high technology and on higher value-added products for exportation. Export oriented enterprises, one of the main revenue generating sectors, are being given all support to remain competitive.
- The services sub-sectors are being transformed to play a pivotal role in the economic growth of the country. Such sub sectors include the ICT, BPO and financial sectors.
- Efforts in the tourism sector are targeted towards enhancing the attractiveness of our islands as a destination for natural and eco-tourism, namely, for culture, entertainment and the arts, for international sporting events, for health-tourism, recreational activities as well as for wedding celebrations.
- The financial services sector is being strengthened to position the island as the financial hub for the region.
- The Information Technology Enabled Services, Business Process Outsourcing and Knowledge Process Outsourcing sectors are being developed into a vibrant ICT hub.
- Specific emphasis is being laid on bolstering the environment for SMEs through different measures and schemes, as well as through the creation of an enabling policy and regulatory environment for SMEs.

However, despite these measures and all efforts, eradicating unemployment still remains a big challenge.

Mauritius, being a small island state having only its human capital as main resource has to make judicious use of this resource to achieve its fundamental development and employment goals and objectives. Addressing issues of unemployment, especially as regards women and the youth, skills mismatch, underemployment, lack of skills or skills gaps, overdependence on foreign workers, amongst others, is of utmost importance in ensuring that a sufficient number of skilled workers and an appropriate local workforce with the right mix of skills are available to meet the demand and needs of the labour market. Human Resource Development is fundamental to be successful in this endeavour.

2.5 Labour Market Situation

The main statistics about the Mauritian labour market are outlined hereunder:

- (i) the labour force for the year 2013 was estimated at 571,200, while employment was at 552,000, with 348,300 men and 230,700 women;
- (ii) the rate of unemployment, 7.8% in 2011 increased to 8.0% in 2013;
- (iii) the number of unemployed in 2013 was 43,400 which comprised 17,500 men and 25,900 women. Unemployed women outnumbered unemployed men by 8,400. In the Mauritian labour market, as in other labour markets, more jobs are male oriented due to the nature of existing jobs. As such, women have trouble to integrate the labour market. Moreover, due to family constraints, women are not willing to join some specific sectors (e.g. The BPO and textile sectors) though employment opportunities abound, due to odd hours of work and perceived unsatisfactory working conditions;
- (iv) the female unemployment rate is twice as high as male unemployment. The overall unemployment rate in 2013 was 8.0%, 5.3% for men and 12.2% for women;

- (v) in the 4th Quarter, 2013, out of the 43,400 unemployed, 24,500 were below 30 years, namely, 56% of the unemployed were the youth. Out of the 24,500 youth unemployed, 13,800 were women and 10,700 were men;
- (vi) in the 4th Quarter, 2013, some 6,800 or 16% of the total unemployed had not reached the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) level or equivalent and a further 12,600 (29%) did not possess the Cambridge School Certificate (SC) or equivalent;
- (vii) in the 4th Quarter, 2013, around 10,242 (24%) among the unemployed were in possession of tertiary level qualifications;
- (viii) around 33,300 of the unemployed (77%) had been looking for work for up to one year and the remaining 10,100 (23%) for more than one year;
- (ix) as at the end of December 2013, around 15,682 (36%) were registered at the Employment Service of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment;
- (x) there are presently over 38,808 foreign workers holding work permits in employment in the country with 27,013 being female and 11,795 male workers. They are mostly employed in the manufacturing and construction sectors.

2.6 Female Unemployment

In the 4th Quarter, 2013, the number of female unemployed was 25,900, out of which:

- 2,694 (10.4%), did not hold the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE);
- 3,004 (10.4 %), held the CPE;
- 7,692 (29.7%), have attended secondary school but did not pass the School Certificate (SC); and
- 12,510 (48.3%) had SC, HSC and tertiary education.

Among the female unemployed, 13,800 (53.3%) were aged between 16 and 30 years, 7,200 (27.8%) between 30 and 39 years, 3,800 (14.7%) between 40 and 49 years and 1,900 (7.3%) above 50 years. As for the length of unemployment, 10,700 remained unemployed up to 5 months, 11,000 for 6 -12 months, 4,400 for 13 - 24 months and 2,500 for more than 25 months.

In an effort to address female unemployment, the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, more specifically, the Gender Unit of that Ministry has put in place various initiatives aiming at enhancing women employability and entrepreneurship.

Such initiatives include:

- Capacity building programmes in Women Centres to train and empower women in various fields for their self-empowerment and/or employability. As such, for the year 2012, some 3,229 and for the period January to August 2013, some 2,858 women have been trained in various courses.
- Funds provided under the Special Collaborative Programme for Women and Children in distress aiming at empowering vulnerable women to acquire skills and knowledge in various fields (provision of catering services, processing of fruits and vegetables, among others) and generating income to sustain their livelihoods.
- The National Women Entrepreneur Council, a para-statal body under the aegis of the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, provides women entrepreneurs with various facilities and training programmes to enable them to set up their enterprise and manage it effectively. Such facilities include:
 - Skills development programmes in the field of Business Management, Marketing, Quality Management, Human Resource Management, Finance and Costing, Customer Care, among others, to equip women to better manage their enterprise.

- Women Entrepreneur Leadership Programmes to empower women.
- Setting up of 2 Business Incubators to encourage women to set up their enterprises through the allocation of space at nominal rates.
- Organisation of trade fairs/ sales exhibitions to enable women entrepreneurs to meet potential buyers, contract orders, among others.

2.7 Youth Unemployment

Unemployment among the youth is one of the most challenging economic and social problems that policy makers are facing in many countries around the world. In Mauritius, out of the 43, 400 unemployed in 2013 (Q4), 24,500 were below 30 years or 56% of the total unemployed. Out of the 24,500 unemployed youth, 13,800 are women and 10,700 are men. Each year, about 7,600 young persons join the labour market, out of whom, some 43% do not hold a School Certificate. The problem of youth unemployment presents a challenge to the country's long term growth potential as well as to the economic and social stability of the country. The greatest challenge is how to properly nurture the youth to become employable and highly productive to spearhead the dynamic transformation of the economy.

2.7.1 The Youth Employment Programme (YEP)

The Youth Employment Programme (YEP), a joint Public-Private initiative, run by the Skills Working Group (SWG), operates under the aegis of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED). The YEP has been established to address youth unemployment those below 30, by building capacity and promoting/ sponsoring employable skills among the youth through placement and training whereby the youth are placed in organisations for an initial period of one year to enable them to acquire on the job training.

2.7.1.1 Incentives

The YEP offers a subsidy on the stipend paid to the youth during their first year of placement/ training. The SWG offers a refund of 50% subject to a maximum of Rs 4,000 per person for non-degree holders (including diploma holders) and Rs 7,500 per person for degree holders (possessing a degree accredited by the Tertiary Education Commission or such equivalent qualifications abroad).

2.7.1.2 Success rate

As at beginning January 2014, out of the 6,450 youth registered on the SWG database, 3,605 (55.9%) have been placed in organisations (among which 1633 were women).

2.7.1.3 Shortcomings

The YEP is not considered as a long term employment programme as the duration of the programme is only one year. If these youths are not recruited after their one year placement, they re-enter the job market as unemployed.

2.8 Employment of Vulnerable Groups

The vulnerable groups normally comprise poverty stricken persons, those having disabilities, coastal people, ex-offenders and drug addicts, those psychologically affected due to unforeseen circumstances and unexpected hardship situations where they are unable to reintegrate the society and the world of work without assistance from other stakeholders. They cannot by themselves take advantage of opportunities available, including productive employment opportunities. They very often rely on Non-Governmental Organisations for assistance.

It is worth noting that the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board (TEDPB) provides traditional training in:

- Agriculture
- Basketry
- Jewellery
- Wheelchair Repair
- Embroidery
- Receptionist

The TEDPB has signed MOUs with Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF)/Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA)/Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) to ensure that persons with disabilities (PWDs) benefit from training schemes from these institutions. The Ministry of Social Security has signed MOUs with Remploy UK to adopt new strategies for the integration of PWDs in society.

Legislation pertaining to Training and Employment of Persons with Disabilities has been amended and is referred as 'Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act (Amended) 2012. The legislation is more user friendly and explicit in terms of the responsibilities of Companies employing more than 35 people. The TEDPB has the responsibility to implement legislation which is being carried out and is on-going. The following has been introduced in the new legislation:-

- (i) an assessment panel to assess PWDs for channelling them into training and employment; and
- (ii) a Hearing Committee has been set up, as stipulated in Sec. 14 to ensure that non-compliant Companies are heard and dealt with.

In the case of people with disabilities, despite the fact that the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act was amended previously to make it mandatory for companies with 35 or more workers to have 3% of their workforce as people with disabilities, the level of non-compliance to this provision is unfortunately still high. This will have to be addressed by advocating the increasing participation of the employers for job creation for these vulnerable persons.

Both the NGO Trust Fund and the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board TEDPB run courses on Social Entrepreneurship to instil entrepreneurship among PWDs. Furthermore, SMEDA provides courses and facilities for start-ups.

The TEDPB has started a campaign of promotion together with the Ministry of Social Security in 2007 "Valuing and Empowering Persons with Disabilities" with a view to

sensitise employers and the civil society. Moreover, job fairs are organised on a regular basis to sensitise the PWDs on available job and training opportunities.

2.9 Mismatch in the Labour Market

It is observed that the Mauritian labour market has lately been characterized by a mismatch in demand and supply of workers. While there are presently around 43,400 Mauritians who are unemployed, around 38,800 (38, 808 exactly) foreign workers are in employment in the country. Despite jobs being available for the unemployed, employers are having recourse to foreign labour.

The main sectors include jobs in the manufacturing, where women mostly predominate and the construction sector. There is a problem of mismatch in skills whereby available local labour does not meet the requirements of Employers in terms of skills and competencies. There is also a tendency for Mauritians to steer away from certain sectors and types of jobs for reasons of low pay and lack of job security. According to recent studies carried out on labour shortages in different sectors, including the ICT/BPO sector, the Financial Intermediation, the Construction and the Manufacturing Sectors:

- There is a lack of qualified and skilled labour on the local market.
- The education system does not meet market demands as the educational curriculum is too academic and does not focus enough on technical and manual skills including greening activities that would enhance economy wide energy, material and water efficiency.
- Graduates from local universities are very often not apt to join the labour market in some sectors as they have not been empowered in these fields.
- Employees are not multi-skilled and also lack soft skills.
- Lack of work ethics and proper attitude to work.
- Lack of proper career guidance.

- Lack of experience.
- Mismatch between skills available and skills required.
- Jobseekers being overqualified and reluctant to perform the jobs available at operational level with low salaries.
- Lack of coordination between employers and educational institutions as regards current skills needs.
- A recent study on skills for Green Jobs further identified skills gaps in emerging green industries which could provide employment for youth.

2.10 The Education-Training and Employment Value Chain

Education, training and employment are inextricably linked. Education is the key to success. Only human resources having acquired the right training can be employed in high value adding businesses, bringing about innovation and also emerging as entrepreneurs, enhancing job opportunities at their end.

However, despite remarkable efforts to improve the education system, weaknesses still exist. The existing education system is very academic. School and university leavers face difficulties when they join the labour market. Employers are unwilling to recruit workers who do not have the required skills and experience. This results in skills mismatch and the high unemployment of young persons including the female ones. It also entails the recruitment of foreign workers at the expense of locals. It was pointed out in the World Bank Report entitled Mauritius Country Economic Memorandum: Sharpening the Competitive Edge, that:

- Skills produced are below requirements because of low quality of inputs and instructions.
- Three-fourths of secondary school teachers have inadequate teaching skills.
- The curriculum pays insufficient attention to the acquisition of cognitive skills, science and mathematics.

- A rigid examination system encourages memorization of facts rather the ability to analyse and solve problems.

The IMF also drew attention to the fact that “Mauritius educational system is lagging behind the transformation of the economy. Although Mauritius has a comparatively high literacy rate, it is weak in secondary and post-secondary education, especially in natural sciences, engineering and vocational subjects”.

Moreover, despite the fact that the number of schools offering pre-vocational education increased significantly over the last years, 30 % of the students dropped out of the system. Of those who complete pre-vocational education and join technical education as expected, the success rate is only 70%.

The remaining students have no alternative than leave the system as most of them have already reached the age of 16 years and join the labour market without attaining the level of education as well as the necessary employability skills required. Such category of young unemployed persons can easily be influenced by social evils and have recourse to illegal activities, putting at risk the social cohesion and peace of the country.

2.11 Enhancing Employability

Taking into consideration the present needs of the unemployed youth, unemployed women, as well as the lack of skills among jobseekers, Government has put up various schemes with a view to providing the necessary skills, work exposure and hands on experience to jobseekers. These schemes are presently being implemented by different organisations towards this objective, namely:

- The Youth Employment Programme being implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, aiming at providing placement and employment opportunities to those aged between 16-30 years.
- The Training and Placement Scheme implemented by the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) for those earning below Rs 6200 per month.

- Training schemes under the Human Resource Development Council.

The situation is such that apart from the Employment Service database system and website, all the above organisations, though operating towards the common goal of promoting employment, have their own database, website and system and operate independently from each other. Jobseekers interested to join the different schemes have to register themselves on each database/system and this approach is not user-friendly and customer oriented. The lack of synergy and coordination between these organisations constitutes a great barrier and does not promote effectiveness and efficiency in addressing the unemployment issue.

Moreover, these schemes mostly facilitate the placement in temporary jobs of those registered, the time for them to acquire some skills. Most of the placed candidates are, however, not retained by employers for long term employment after their training as Government stops contributing for the stipend after a set time frame.

2.12 Linkages between Educational/Training Institutions and Industry

One of the top priorities for the labour market is the forging of linkages between vocational training and industry. Training should become driven by the demand of companies for human resource. It is a great challenge for the whole vocational training system as well as for educational institutions to contribute to economic development. Linking schools with enterprises, renewing the curricula and making them competency-based, improving teachers' competencies, improving the acceptance of vocational training and education in the society, are the main tasks to make the whole system more efficient and effective. While the demand for labour emanates from the industry, there is presently minimum interaction between the industry and the training/educational institutions. This leads to institutions not being aware of the exact needs of industry in terms of skills and the planning for capacity building and other courses of action to be adopted cannot be properly done.

2.13 The Informal Sector

According to statistics at the Ministry, around 50% of the registered jobseekers are already employed in some form of occupation but are in quest of a better job. As for those who are registered as unemployed, many are actively engaged in an occupation, in the informal sector. When referred to employers in the private sector, most of the registered unemployed jobseekers do not turn up or decline the job offer, as they are not that eager to accept any job offer.

Such jobseekers are usually self-employed with hawking as activity. They operate as micro and small enterprises dealing with a form of activity, with or without a license. Though the informal sector is a source of revenue, the revenue generated is, in most cases, not consistent. Moreover, most of these micro and small enterprises may be subsistence activities and unregistered businesses earning low incomes where the operators have low educational attainment, face high risks and are unable to get access to credit facilities, especially where security has to be provided for the loan.

This explains why many of those engaged in such informal activities still choose to be registered as jobseekers, to benefit from any unemployment benefits or to obtain a more suitable job. It is, however, unfortunate that such statistics and structured information are not easily and readily available for employment in the informal sector.

2.14 Labour Migration

Due to the unavailability of local labour with the right profile to meet the needs of employers, around 38,808 foreign workers are presently in employment in Mauritius. Most of them are employed as skilled workers in positions such as machine operator, spinner, knitter, bakery operator, mason, barbender, plasterer, carpenter, steel fixer, electrician and welder. Employers are having recourse to foreign workers despite the fact that a foreign worker costs around 2 to 2.5 times higher than a local worker due to the costs of recruitment, accommodation, air ticket and formalities for necessary permits.

On the other hand, Mauritius is also a sending country whereby the employment of Mauritian nationals abroad is being facilitated by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment with the collaboration of the International Organisation for Migration and other stakeholders. The gains that can be accrued from structured labour migration are as follows:

- Workers get international exposure. They acquire new skills and experience which can be shared with their home country.
- Workers can earn more than they would expect, thus improve their standards of living. They can also start their own enterprise when being back to their country of origin.
- Workers may in addition to the remittances and inflow of money, contribute to the economy which benefits from the multiplier effect, bringing about further development in the country. For 2012 alone, **the remittances to Mauritius amounted to USD 244M (0.071% of GDP)**, representing a substantial inflow of money.

Mauritius, being both a receiving and a sending country has to devise the right strategies and policies to derive maximum benefits from labour migration, namely, considering diaspora engagement and development, as one of its effective policies.

2.15 Improving Working, Occupational Safety and Health Conditions

Mauritius is often seen as a role model for African countries as far as safety and health at work are concerned. However, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment is further strengthening its legislative framework to cover specific sectors with a view to providing enhanced protection to employees in those sectors.

2.16 Role of the Employment Service

The Employment Service falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment and is responsible, amongst others, for the registration of jobseekers and for facilitating their placement in productive employment. In line with ILO Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), the Mauritian Employment Service is a free public employment service whose prime objective is to ensure the best

possible organisation of the employment market as an integral part of the national programme for the achievement and maintenance of full employment and the development and use of productive resources.

It operates within the framework of the Employment and Training Ordinance 1963, which needs to be reviewed to suit present needs, in view of technological advancement, labour market evolution regarding the profile of the unemployed, the requirements of employers and migration opportunities, amongst others. Action is being initiated to review the existing legislation with a view to better regulating and enhancing the services being offered. As at end of December 2013, 35, 880 jobseekers were registered, out of which 20,198 were in employment and 19,206 were registered as unemployed. Despite all the efforts put in by the Officers of the Employment Service, the number of effective placement has remained low.

In fact, most of the registered unemployed:

- are looking for a Government job and, as such, turn down offers of employment in the private sector;
- do not have the skills and the competencies that employers are looking for and for the new types of jobs that are being created;
- have low academic qualifications and most of them are not holders of a School Certificate;
- do not want to travel a long way to go to work; and
- do not wish to work in some sectors such as the manufacturing sector where jobs are available, in view of frequent lay-offs, unsatisfactory working conditions and absence of job security.

2.17 Labour Market Information System (LMIS)

The LMIS is a web-based information system used by Officers of the Employment Service to register jobseekers, register vacancies and perform job matching. It is used by Officers at the Main Office as well as by those posted at the 13 Employment Information Centres around the island.

The LMIS

The LMIS comprises a website and an Electronic Labour Exchange (ELE), which is an online interactive platform meant for jobseekers and employers. This 24 hour free service is being provided by the Ministry for job matching.

The ELE allows for:

- (i) jobseekers to post online their particulars such as personal information, qualifications and experience and also to match their profiles with vacancies available; and
- (ii) employers to post online their vacancies and to retrieve the lists of potential candidates to match their requirements.

However, the LMIS is presently being upgraded to suit the needs of the various stakeholders, with a view to offering better customer oriented services to jobseekers and employers

3.0 NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY

VISION, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

3.1 Vision

The National Employment Policy aims at “stimulating economic growth and development and to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work as well as raise the standards of living of the population”.

3.2 Objectives

The National Employment Policy will pave the way for a common and interactive platform to be established amongst the various stakeholders in Mauritius and the set objectives will be as follows:

- (i) to enable all Mauritian men and women who are available and who are willing to work to have remunerative work in conditions of freedom, equity, human dignity and security;
- (ii) to provide opportunities to each worker, without any discrimination whatsoever, to use his/her skills and competencies in a job for which he/she is well suited;
- (iii) to promote a well-educated, trained, skilled, versatile, enterprising labour force with a view to increasing employment and meeting the demands of the labour market and of the economy; and
- (iv) to stimulate economic growth and sustainable development, to meet current socioeconomic needs without compromising future needs, while harnessing employment opportunities in emerging environmentally friendly sectors, eradicating poverty, fostering social cohesion and improving the standards and quality of living of workers by minimizing the rates of unemployment and underemployment and safeguarding the basic rights and interests of workers

through industrial peace, harmony and closing the gender gaps in employment as well.

3.3 Underlying Principles

The National Employment Policy will be based on the following fundamental principles:

- (i) as the employment issue is multi-dimensional and is inextricably linked to the problem of poverty, environmental degradation and natural resource depletion, distribution of income and the economic empowerment of women and youth in particular, the NEP should be consistent with the overall development policies and strategies of the country. Employment would, therefore, be promoted within the framework of national economic, social and environmental policies, and in line with the principles of good governance, gender equity and inclusiveness;
- (ii) jobs to be created should be decent and as environmentally friendly as possible. Minimum wages, safe working conditions and basic social security in line with the green initiatives advocated in the Mauritius *Ile Durable* Policy of the Government to be ensured;
- (iii) as the private sector is considered as the engine of sustainable growth and development, emphasis will be laid on the provision of a favourable environment for private investment and job creation; and
- (iv) the vulnerable groups, namely, people with disabilities, those below the poverty line, who require particular attention and a customized approach, to be given equal opportunities in any strategy being developed to ensure equity and inclusiveness.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

Given the complexity of employment issues and the diverse nature of policy challenges facing Mauritius, a coherent and gender sensitive approach has to be adopted for the creation of full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all. While the public sector can act mainly as a facilitator, creating the right environment for business, education and training, the principal driving force for job creation and industrial diversification, taking into consideration new technologies and emerging sectors would rest on the private sector.

Policy statements in this National Employment Policy are organized under the following nine headings:

- (i) Macro-economic Policies;
- (ii) Sectoral and SMEs development and transition to formality;
- (iii) Human Resources Development;
- (iv) Policies for strengthening the Employment Service;
- (v) Youth and Female Employment Policy Measures;
- (vi) Policy Measures for the Vulnerable Groups;
- (vii) Labour Migration Policy Measures;
- (viii) Promotion of Green Jobs; and
- (ix) Social Protection and Working Conditions

4.1 Macroeconomic Policies

The magnitude of the employment challenge calls for the commitment of one and all and the vigorous and determined national response at macro level as well. Accelerated economic growth should be pursued in view of the distinct relationship between economic growth, gender and employment.

Macroeconomic and financial policies, investment policies, business climate, trade policies and labour mobility are the key factors influencing market expansions and affecting aggregate demand. These factors have an incidence on the increasing dynamism of the private sector and its employment creation potential. Monetary policy must be coordinated with financial sector reforms in order to improve employment opportunities for both women and men, reduce poverty and support human development. To generate better employment opportunities, central bank policy should provide the necessary incentives to encourage employment-generating investment, facilitate sustainable economic expansion and harnessing of investment opportunities in green growth sectors to maintain macroeconomic stability.

The following macro-economic measures could be adopted:

- Fiscal, monetary, credit, industrial and financial policies to be related to the employment objectives. The Mauritian authorities to integrate the employment creation priorities in policy formulation and ensure maximizing the economy's potential for employment creation for its citizens at large. Maintain a competitive income tax rate with a view to increasing both local and foreign direct investments.
- Maintain a competitive exchange rate, while stabilizing the trade balance and sustain foreign reserves. Government should implement gender sensitive and enabling employment preservation and promotion strategies through tax incentives to sectors that have export potentials.

4.2 Sectoral and SMEs Development and Transition to formality

Government should create a conducive regulatory environment for private sector development, in particular, the development of Small and Medium Enterprises which is an engine of employment creation.

Government will have to ensure the following:

- Appropriate measures for an enabling business environment for the private sector to operate, especially those enterprises having greater potential for employment creation for both women and men including the younger generation.
- Accessibility to finance and appropriate package of incentives to enable small and medium enterprises to also envisage job creation taking into account the situation of women.
- Identification and removal of administrative and regulatory barriers impacting on the cost of doing business.
- The streamlining of existing procedures for the timely issuance of permits and at reasonable costs.
- Clear guidelines and customer oriented help desks to be set up to provide required assistance and information on regulations, policies and incentives to both local and private investors.
- The initiative for a 'Green Export Processing Zone' to be considered to stimulate domestic Green employment creation as well as to gain a competitive edge in the future green global world economy.
- That the account balance be improved through forced investment incentives for Independent Power Producers (IPP) for renewable energy so as to reduce import dependency on fossil fuels.

4.3 Human Resource Development

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources, in its Strategy Plan 2008-2020, has reviewed the current educational system and came up with a panoply of reform measures with emphasis on quality education for all and the creation of a Human Resource Base which would be better equipped to meet global challenges and adapt to the ever changing environment.

The main aims of the Strategy Plan are to ensure that “learning opportunities are accessible to everyone, learners are provided with values and skills for self-development, enhancing their critical and exploratory thinking and encouraging them to innovate and adapt to changes in an increasingly globalized and competitive environment.”

The strategy, taking into account the prevailing dynamics will provide for the following:

- (i) improved quality of education, as from early age up to tertiary level, to enhance skill development of students for them to be confident enough and possess the required skills to be successful in joining the job market and also to inculcate the culture of life-long learning amongst the students;
- (ii) development of a creative and innovative Human Resource Base through the development of a culture of achievement and excellence;
- (iii) ensuring that learning opportunities are available to everyone, generating new knowledge for economic growth and sustainable development;
- (iv) human resource development plans/strategies addressing current needs of the market, supportive of recent developments and making room for changes in future;
- (v) building of flexible and integrative structures that encompass both the education and training sectors, as well as promote lifelong learning to create a flexible workforce, able to face the various changes and new challenges;
- (vi) improving access to and enhance quality of technical and vocational education and training (TEVT) responsive to present and future needs through the continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills in a lifelong learning environment;
- (vii) increased efficiency and effectiveness at the level of tertiary education by focussing on areas of study of relevance, more appropriate to the demands of the labour market and encourage skills development of students;

- (viii) encourage “humanpowerment” of Mauritius by fostering a culture of training and lifelong learning at the individual, organizational and national levels for increased employability and productivity; and
- (ix) facilitating professional development for enhancing efficiency of staff to ensure that they are well versed on emerging issues, are aware of the knowledge and skills required to adapt to a dynamic environment and that they have the skills and competencies to deal with pedagogical and para-schooling features.

Moreover, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has come forward with various educational reforms for addressing the problem of skills mismatch for school and university leavers in order to combat the unemployment phenomenon in the long run. These include:

(i) **Introduction of Entrepreneurship Education as from Form I**

After the pilot phase in 2013, this project will be rolled out in all secondary schools next year (2014). The subject will be taught as a compulsory one for all students in Forms I to III. The students may then choose to study Enterprise Studies which will be offered as optional subject in forms IV and V.

Entrepreneurship will also be offered as a 15-hour mandatory module for all students in Lower VI;

(ii) **Implementation of a New Strategy for Prevocational Education**

The new curriculum provides for the gradual integration of Trade and Livelihood skills as from the first year of secondary education. At the end of the four-year prevocational cycle, successful students will be awarded newly recognized certification pitched at Level 2 of the National Qualifications Framework which will enable them to either join the world of work or opt for further vocational training;

(iii) **Work Placement for Lower VI Students**

Lower VI students are given the opportunity to get some experience of the world of work during the holidays; and

(iv) **Introduction of the HSC Professional as an alternative to the traditional HSC as from 2015**

The HSC Professional incorporates work placement as a mandatory component to provide opportunities for HSC students to experience work placement.

4.3.1 Human Resource Planning

Employment is a cross-cutting issue. Its active promotion and creation is the concern of one and all and for all sectors. The overall objective is to fully employ the country's human resources, while preserving the underlying principles of decent, safe, and productive employment. Human Resource Planning, which is the process of determining and striking a balance between the available or potential human resources of a nation and its effective disposition and utilization, is, therefore, of paramount importance.

The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), set up under the HRD Act 2003, is vested with the responsibility of administering, controlling and operating the National Training Fund, which provides the necessary incentives to employers to develop their human resources.

The HRDC has come up with a revised scheme to encourage more effective human resource development at the national level and to emphasise targeted training while at the same time minimising the existing loopholes in the previous system in order to provide training opportunities to a greater number of employees. The HRDC will be called upon to work in a more concerted manner with the Employment Service to provide relevant labour market information.

4.3.2 Careers Guidance Unit/Service

The Careers Guidance Service falls under the aegis of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. It aims at providing effective guidance and counselling to students and the public at large in their future endeavours. Moreover, its various objectives are to ensure:

- Clear information concerning subject choices at school. This includes information about the consequences of subject choice for future educational, training and career options.
- Opportunities to explore and clarify their interests, skills, aptitudes, natural abilities, strengths and weaknesses and subject choices and enable them to understand how these are linked to further education, training and career path.
- An awareness of the contents and the syllabus demands of particular subjects.
- Assistance in identifying the student's most effective learning styles and in developing effective study and note-taking skills, examination techniques and time management skills.
- Guidance on the educational, vocational and career options available including career progression routes and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Encouragement to explore a wide range of educational and career choices, including non-traditional careers.
- Guidance in developing individual career plan based on the individual achievements, ambitions, interests, skills and personal circumstances.
- Guidance to make good use of labour market intelligence and information.

The Careers Guidance Service will also liaise with the senior educators and provide assistance to plan and organise careers guidance and careers activities in respective schools. Furthermore, it will increase its awareness programmes for Form III students to effectively choose their subjects for career development. The Careers Guidance Service will be called upon to have increasing collaboration with the Employment Service for the latter to provide relevant and effective labour market information as well as solid occupational information.

To ensure that the strategies formulated in this NEP are implemented successfully, some fundamental issues have to be addressed and catered for. With a view to ensuring that there is proper human resource planning for the medium and long terms for Mauritius, this Policy advocates the following:

- (i) the relevant stakeholders, including Statistics Mauritius, the HRDC, the Labour Market Information Unit of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment, to join efforts and work together to come up with updated data and consolidated information and statistics to enable effective human resource planning for the country. Relevant statistics and trends for employment and unemployment, demography, education and skills development, companies in operation, amongst others, to be compiled and analysed to assist policy makers in their human resource planning and other strategies for the labour market;
- (ii) an Employment Promotion Committee to be set up with representatives of the main employment stakeholders, such as, employers, relevant Government authorities and workers to work together to address employment issues;
- (iii) the relevant stakeholders to work together to provide forecasts regarding the demand for labour and skills for the medium and long terms, by category for specific sectors, including green sectors;

- (iv) a regular analysis of the labour market to be undertaken to identify emerging sectors, sectors with growth and employment creation potential such as green industries for necessary planning in terms of skills provision and training programmes to be undertaken;
- (v) the analysis to also focus on the structure and composition of the labour market in the near future as well as forecasts for medium and long terms. The ageing population in Mauritius to be taken into consideration for appropriate policy decisions to be adopted for the employment of the youth to ensure sustainable development;
- (vi) the necessary structure and mechanism to be put in place for gathering meaningful information on the informal sector, as this sector offers livelihoods to many Mauritians. Information thereon, especially on the types of activities being indulged into, will help Government to get a true picture of the labour market. Statistics Mauritius and other related stakeholders to include new modules in data collection and information gathering with regard to informal employment and from a gender perspective as well, to assist policy makers.

4.3.3 Skills Development Policies

The critical challenge facing countries today is how to cope with the various changes occurring in the world of work, namely, technological advancement, new business and management strategies, emergence of global markets and competition as well as with the new forms of doing business. Training and skills to increase productivity, especially labour productivity, energy and material productivity are, therefore, of utmost importance.

However, it is noted that technical and vocational skills development suffers from weak links with the job market and the economy. There is need to improve technical and vocational education to equip the labour force with the skills needed to drive the productive sectors of the economy while considering a reduction in overall energy

intensity of the economy and taking into account that the greening of skills offers a double dividend, namely increasing labour productivity and increasing efficiency .

The National Employment Policy will, therefore, attempt to address these shortcomings in vocational training and skills development through the following measures:

- (i) develop and implement functional literacy, numeracy, vocational training and skills development programmes in order to improve the skills of workers;
- (ii) equip the youth and women with skills that will improve their employability in more productive, stable and decent work;
- (iii) invest regularly in the upgrading of public training institutions to provide for customised training in line with latest technologies, latest market trends and demands;
- (iv) address bottlenecks in primary and secondary education to reduce the drop-out rates at these levels and to find ways and means to increase the level of cognitive skills of students in mathematics and sciences;
- (v) gauge the reasons for the present high drop-out rate at vocational level and to address these issues;
- (vi) include entrepreneurship education at secondary level and beyond so as to inculcate the notion of business culture among the youth at an early stage;
- (vii) ensure that vocational and technical training are linked to market demands and to the needs of the economy. This can only be achieved through the increased collaboration between vocational, technical, and tertiary institutions with the business community and the private sector in general so that the demand for skills and competencies is rightly addressed. The course of action to be adopted would be:
 - a) proper networking between companies, training providers and Government for establishing appropriate mechanisms and

- incentives/schemes to encourage workers and jobseekers to undergo further training to increase their employability and skills for career development;
- b) private training providers as well as Government training schools to involve the private sector in curriculum development to ensure that the right curriculum/modules are put in place; and
 - c) encourage the private sector to put their resource persons and up to date equipment at the disposal of public training institutions for the conduct of customised courses and training programmes.
- (viii) put up specific schemes such as reduced training fees, free transport, appropriate stipend for the vulnerable groups, namely, for those below the poverty line, the disabled, the ex-convicts, the drug addicts, amongst others, to enable them to smoothly integrate into the world of work;
- (ix) design apprentice schemes to provide opportunities to trainees to get hands-on experience and skills;
- (x) the National Training Fund, managed, controlled and operated by the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), to be more user-friendly and its procedures streamlined to encourage enterprises to provide more training opportunities to their employees; The HRD Committee could rope in representatives of the Employment Service as well.
- (xi) find out the fields in which employment opportunities are available abroad and build up a pool of people for these jobs;
- (xii) engage in diaspora development; and
- (xiii) mainstream the greening of skills (increase resource efficiency and decrease pollution intensity) into the curricula of public and private schools, training institutions and universities to ensure sustainable development.

4.4 Strengthening the Employment Service

The Employment Service acts as the focal point for jobseekers, employers looking for workers and eventually for job matching. However, the Employment Service has, somehow, lost its lustre following the emergence of a number of Departments and Government Institutions, such as the National Empowerment Fund and the Skills Working Group under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, equally involved in employment matters. As the Employment Service was set up following the ratification of the ILO Employment Service Convention, 1948 (No. 88), it has to be revitalised and given the appropriate human and financial resources as well as the legal and structural framework to operate more effectively and efficiently.

In this perspective, the following strategies and activities will be undertaken:

- (i) the review of the Employment and Training Ordinance 1963, to pave the way for a modern, more responsive legislation to cater for present and long term needs ;
- (ii) in view of the limitation of the ELE website, the Ministry will expedite matters for the introduction of the Job Management System (JMS), at the earliest. This system will be the first Open Source software to be used by a Government Department in Mauritius.

The JMS will be a powerful communication instrument serving the goals and objectives of providing resources and information to all target audiences, with particular focus on jobs, both local and overseas.

At the same time, the JMS will be a crucial and dynamic tool to improve public awareness and knowledge of job evolution in Mauritius and abroad.

The JMS design will be interactive, attractive, user friendly and responsive. It shall be easily accessible to intended users and will be an on-going living record of the system. Necessary records/ data on the LMIS database will be uploaded, evaluated and posted to the JMS;

- (iii) the number of Employment Information Centres (EICs) across the island will be reviewed and where required, the EICs will be upgraded. The additional facilities to be provided will be:
 - IT corners for registration, access to the database, online application;
 - Counselling corners where counselling services, on a sessional basis, will be carried out on a regular basis according to a planned calendar; and
 - Proper meeting rooms where jobseekers would have privacy and may freely express themselves with the Officers;
- (iv) the staff of the Employment Service will be given appropriate up-grading skills to enable them to respond efficiently to the specific needs of jobseekers and employers and to enhance their gender capacity. Moreover, the Employment Service will be reinforced with additional human resource to provide individualised attention to the jobseekers from the time they register with the Employment Service up to their actual placement;
- (v) arrangements will be made for services such as psychological support and counselling to be provided/outsourced by the Employment Service to those in need of these services, for instance, to jobseekers who have been laid off. The appropriate staff to be recruited or the services of professional psychologists, on a sessional basis, to be solicited, as appropriate;
- (vi) the Employment Service will work in close collaboration with the Career Guidance Service of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to provide a structured, well documented and professional service to school leavers and those deciding upon a career, taking into consideration the gender perspectives, as well. This should help to reduce the extent of the problem of underemployment in the long term. Assistance for job search and for the preparation of CVs and interviews will also be provided;
- (vii) the counselling service of the Service will be revived to enable counselling to be dispensed for different categories of persons, namely, for school leavers,

unemployed women, the vulnerable groups and people with disabilities. The service will be a mobile one, moving from place to place, aiming at specific target groups for the necessary counselling;

- (viii) promote good working relationships with employers and provide enhanced services, such as, proper job matching and facilitating the final selection of candidates. Enhanced services will ensure employers will solicit the services of the Ministry repeatedly. Job canvassing will be reinforced by putting up a dedicated team for that purpose. The team will comprise competent officers who would be proactive and on the look-out for employment opportunities arising, for example, in new hotels, new shopping malls, emerging green sectors, amongst others;
- (ix) the Re-deployment Unit of the Employment Service will be strengthened to enable regular job canvassing and contacts with employers so as to facilitate the matching of laid-off workers with enterprises seeking workers and to enhance placement. Moreover, the focus will be on provision of quality services, outreach and regular visits to enterprises; and
- (x) establish the required synergy with all other organizations, public, private and the NGOs engaged in employment service activities.

4.5 Employment Policy Measures for Youth and Women

4.5.1 Youth Employment

Youth unemployment is one of the growing concerns worldwide. Many countries are facing problems to tackle this phenomenon, including Mauritius. Being freshly out of school or universities, the youth, aged 16-30 years are amongst the most vulnerable groups.

Lack of professional experience, communication and other employable skills as well as skills mismatch constitute barriers to the gainful unemployment of the youth in Mauritius.

The following policies and measures will be applied to address the above problems:

- (i) specific measures and programmes to improve the employability of the youth will be developed. Efforts will be undertaken in a concerted manner by the different stakeholders;
- (ii) targeted and specific counselling sessions for the youth will be conducted with particular focus on their areas of interest and the demands of the labour market;
- (iii) the Employment Service would have to play a much more prominent role in career guidance and counselling by sharing labour market information and occupational information with training institutions and school based guidance counsellors. This may be done by the Employment Service through direct advice and counselling for youth and other jobseekers on opportunities both local and overseas;
- (iv) as the Career Guidance Service and the Employment Service do not operate under the aegis of the same Ministry, the appropriate linkage will have to be created between both services to provide a quality and up to date advice and information to students and jobseekers.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources will be called upon to re-engineer the Career Guidance Service in terms of personnel, documentation on local and overseas education so as to provide proper advice to the youth in their choice of career and in channelling them towards the appropriate studies. This will help to reduce the extent of the problem of underemployment in the long term;

- (v) specific migration schemes to be worked out for the youth in collaboration with the International Organisation for Migration. Government will use diplomatic channels and will enter into bilateral agreements to get job opportunities/placement abroad for the youth. The youth will also be

channelled to reliable, licensed Recruiting Agencies which may facilitate their placement in appropriate jobs abroad;

- (vi) together with Government stakeholders and industry, a targeted Green Jobs Programme for Youth will be worked out. The possibilities of apprenticeship and training will then be evaluated in those green sectors in which Government and the industry might set up an investment strategy such as, energy efficiency, renewable energy, retrofitting, waste management and recycling or natural resource conservation and rehabilitation; and
- (vii) young people will be supported to be entrepreneurs and be provided with the various incentives, in terms of finance and guidance, to be able to launch their own businesses in different areas such as, catering, professional photography, consultancy services, amongst others.

4.5.2 Women's Employment

Gender gaps have always been observed in the labour market, either locally or worldwide. Despite the fact that women/girls are outperforming boys at all educational levels in Mauritius, the rate of unemployment among females is on the increase. For the 3rd quarter of 2013, statistics show that out of 47,300 unemployed, 27,600 are women (58.2%).

The role of women has undergone considerable change from traditional caregiving and domestic chores to the present women working outside the home sphere in most sectors of the world of work. More and more women are, today, willing to join the labour market and assume their equal share of responsibilities. However, they are faced with many adversities in trying to enter the labour market. Various reasons have been brought forward to explain why female unemployment is on the high. Some reasons are:

- The misconception that arise during recruitment of women of childrearing age as their reproductive role may be held against them in their work and careers;

- The lack of workplace flexibility and high child care costs might be major barriers to women willing to enter and stay in the labour market;
- Most young women continue to choose economic activities traditionally perceived as female occupations, which require general and professional skills different from those of men, and which are not highly valued in the labour market. This occupational segregation leads to a lack of awareness of training opportunities and women are only slowly entering the professions traditionally dominated by men.
- Women often have limited access to information channels and job search mechanisms;
- “glass ceiling” effect where equality of employment opportunities is not a reality as more jobs are given to males instead of females in upper levels of management, thus skewing women’s potential in assuming leadership positions.

Policy measures are needed to provide workers with the time and flexibility they need to handle their family responsibilities. Family-friendly measures need to be designed to allow parents-both women and men-sufficient time to care for their families on a daily basis. By allowing individuals to reconcile their work to meet essential caregiving obligations, these measures benefit workers and their workplaces, as well as society as a whole.

The following policies will be adopted to address female unemployment:

- (i) The promotion and monitoring of equal access to training programmes for both women and men so as to ensure that both sexes benefit from equality of opportunities in entering the labour market;
- (ii) provision of specific training programmes for unemployed women to enhance their employability, where required, as well as the provision of refresher courses,

- re-training and new training to increase their chances of finding employment and matching their skills to market needs;
- (iii) emerging sectors and jobs will be identified and training will be provided equally to women and men to equip them for such jobs. In order to overcome gender-based occupational segregation, women will be provided with the same opportunities and treatment when applying for jobs, and encouraged to take up jobs which have so far been occupied by men, provided women would be willing to do so;
 - (iv) targeted counselling, guidance and support to be provided to women to launch their own small enterprises. Emerging sectors, innovative areas of work and environmentally sustainable enterprises should be promoted and encouraged through various incentives to be put up by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority;
 - (v) access to funds will be facilitated as much as possible for women entrepreneurs and the necessary support and guidance to be provided to them especially in the initial phases of the development of their businesses, even if their husbands would not be willing;
 - (vi) access to funds and credit for women should be accompanied with efforts to raise gender awareness of lending institutions in order to facilitate understanding of women's credit worthiness and overcome gender-based discriminatory practices;
 - (vii) facilitate the process for potential women entrepreneurs to gain access to existing business networks, as well as working jointly for the setting up of enterprises and cooperative societies;
 - (viii) financial literacy courses will be given to women entrepreneurs to help them manage their accounts and their funds effectively;
 - (ix) encourage new enterprises as well as existing ones to provide good quality and affordable child care, such as child care facilities so as to enable both women and

men workers with young children to work. Government will strengthen its support for these childcare facilities;

- (x) employers will grant flexi-time to both working parents in order to allow them to reconcile their family responsibilities (especially for those with young children) with paid work;
- (xi) where possible and with the willingness and consent of the workers, structures will be put in place to allow women or men to work from home; and
- (xii) to combat any form of gender bias/discrimination in the labour market in order to enlarge the talent pool, enhance productivity and protect workers' rights.

Additional training programmes which will be carried out by the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare are as follows:

- Training in the manufacture of Jute products, soap making, bags making and catering services, amongst others;
- Professional course in garment making;
- Agro-processing and dehydration of Agro products;
- Production of healthy food preserves from fruits and vegetables; and
- Training in Information, Communication Technology.

4.6 Policy Measures for specific Vulnerable Target Groups

Jobseekers facing barriers to employment should be given the necessary support to overcome. The policy should, as far as possible, be one for empowering them to earn a decent living in all dignity, rather than making them dependent on Government aid and social grants for a living.

The target groups include:

- Poor persons;
- Persons with disabilities
- Coastal people;

- Ex-detainees; and
- Rehabilitated drug users, amongst others.

The following measures are proposed:

4.6.1 People with Disabilities

- (i) specific themes for training, as well as placement programmes will be mounted;
- (ii) due consideration will be given to facilitate access in existing and new buildings for people with disability, on wheel chairs, etc;
- (iii) the provisions regarding employment of people with disabilities in the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act will be reinforced. An information campaign and sensitisation of employers to be conducted on a regular basis;
- (iv) the Employment and Training of Disabled Persons Board to set up an appropriate unit with the required staff to provide a networking platform for people with disabilities to interact with employers and to follow up on any placement effected;
- (v) the Employment and Training of Disabled Persons Board will be provided with the required resources to set up and run more workshops and activities for disabled persons; and
- (vi) facilities to be provided to disabled persons for the acquisition of working tools and other facilities to enable them to be self-employed.

4.6.2 Policies for Coastal People

Coastal people are mostly involved in lagoon fishing activities. In order to make them more employable, they should be provided with appropriate training as follows:

- Training in aquaculture and fish processing;
- Initiating them to eco-tourism;

- Provide them with the opportunities to develop their capacity in artisanal activities (jewellery and artisanal products with seashells).

4.6.3 Ex-detainees and Rehabilitated Drug Users

- (i) provide proper counselling to these categories of people so that they can be easily re-integrated in the world of work;
- (ii) find ways and means to change the mind-set of employers, in general, so as to facilitate their employment. Such employment may initially be on a probationary period or on contract and renewable thereafter;
- (iii) provide psychological support to ex-detainees when required and as appropriate;
- (iv) the close collaboration of relevant NGOs to be enlisted with a view to facilitating the integration of ex-detainees in jobs; and
- (v) facilities to be provided to ex-detainees for the acquisition of working tools and other facilities to enable them to be self-employed.

4.7 Labour Migration Policies

With globalisation, the migration of people, especially for employment purposes, has been on the rise over the past years. Mauritius being both a receiving and sending country proposes to implement, in collaboration with employers' and workers' organizations and other relevant stakeholders and taking into consideration the ILO's Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, the following strategies in respect of foreign workers coming to work in Mauritius and Mauritian nationals proceeding for work purposes abroad:

4.7.1 Inward Migration/Employment of Migrants

- (i) As Mauritius requires persons having various skills presently unavailable locally, training programmes will be mounted in these skills scarce areas for the

- unemployed to enable a pool of trained labour to be available locally to meet the demand and reduce the dependence on foreign labour;
- (ii) The policy regarding employment of foreign workers for some occupations to be reviewed. The types of occupations where there is a real shortage of local skilled and available workers will have to be identified. Recruitment of foreign workers will be allowed for only those occupations where employers would have submitted justifications/ evidence that they have been unsuccessful in recruiting locally;
 - (iii) The legislation governing the employment of foreign workers will be reviewed to make it more modern and responsive to present challenges;
 - (iv) Action will be taken for the revalorisation of certain sectors and jobs, such as, the manufacturing and construction sectors, so as to attract local jobseekers. Job appellations, salaries and other working conditions will have to be reviewed to that effect;
 - (v) The employment of professionals and of technical expertise, not available locally will be facilitated. Work permits, where applicable, will be issued within the shortest delay for these categories;
 - (vi) Local jobseekers will be encouraged to acquire knowledge from foreign professionals to be able to serve in these sectors to minimise dependence on foreign workers;
 - (vii) The required legal and administrative framework will be set up to ensure that recruitment agencies operate within the ambit of the prevailing legislation and assume their responsibilities as regards the recruitment of foreign workers for employment in Mauritius. With a view to reducing the costs of recruitment and placement, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment is looking into the possibility of amending the legislation so that no fees are charged by private recruitment agencies from jobseekers in connection with their recruitment and placement services.

- (viii) Bilateral labour agreements will be signed with the main sourcing countries to ensure that the employment of foreign workers for employment in Mauritius is done in the most responsible manner, including proper pre-departure briefings, briefings on the provisions of the contract of employment and on the ways of life in Mauritius.

4.7.2 Outward Labour Migration

- (i) The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment will set up a dedicated unit with the required human resource and logistics to promptly process any request from overseas employers for Mauritian labour;
- (ii) A proper employment promotion campaign in respect of Mauritian labour to be mounted and conducted in countries with potential for employment. The collaboration of all stakeholders, especially, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the International Organisation for Migration and the International Labour Office to be sought to that effect;
- (iii) Bilateral agreements will be signed with other countries offering employment opportunities for Mauritian nationals;
- (iv) Possibilities and opportunities for collaboration in the field of labour with neighbouring countries/countries in the region will be explored. Mutually beneficial strategies for the movement of people among countries in the region will be formulated. The negotiation and signing of labour agreements, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, such as employers' and workers' organizations, promoting the employment of nationals in neighbouring countries will be considered;
- (v) Appropriate incentives and other facilities will be provided to countries willing to carry out recruitment exercises in Mauritius;

- (vi) The responsibilities of recruiting agencies placing Mauritian nationals in employment abroad to be redefined to ensure that all placements made are decent and safe;
- (vii) A mechanism to be put in place for the tracking of Mauritian nationals who have taken up employment abroad. Such system will also enable the gathering of information on the workers, namely, as to whether the workers, have come back to Mauritius or taken up another employment in the receiving state or renewed their contract, amongst others; and
- (viii) Further facilitate the sending and inflow of remittances to Mauritius by Mauritian nationals working abroad through simplified formalities at the level of banks.

4.7.3 Diaspora Mobilisation

- (i) A mechanism will be put in place with the relevant stakeholders to map the Mauritian diaspora and to gather information on them. Information gathering will include details on the expertise and skills of the Mauritian nationals abroad; and
- (ii) Encourage the Mauritian diaspora to share their knowledge and expertise with local Mauritians.

4.8 Promotion of Green Economy

4.8.1 Ocean Economy

The vision of Government is for Mauritius to be a nation fully conscious of its immense potential as an ocean state within the next ten years. Laying the foundations of an ocean economy will be an unprecedented move towards the expansion of our spatial boundaries, the development of scientific knowledge and business opportunities. Government will significantly extend the economic space for investors, businesses,

workers and the entire population by setting out a concrete and practical plan for developing the Ocean economic space.

The development of the ocean economy will have significant positive impact on other industries including land and sea transportation, cargo and port services. The ocean economy is expected to be amongst the most important future contributors to GDP. The potential of the ocean economy is enormous, in creating high productivity jobs and improving the living standards of the community. Depending upon the investment capacity, actions could be initiated to develop the following sectors:

- Offshore wind, tidal and wave energy;
- Ocean related tourism and leisure activities;
- Marine aquaculture;
- Marine biotechnology; and
- Marine transportation.

4.8.2 Green Jobs

The '*Maurice Ile Durable*' (MID) policy advocates that the promotion of 'Green Jobs' offers new employment opportunities and will enable the transition towards a greener economy. It advocates structural change towards a resource efficient and less energy dependent economy, poverty alleviation, socio economic development, environmental integrity and adaptation to environmental change. Green jobs help to protect and restore ecosystems and biodiversity, reduce energy consumption, raw materials and water, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimize or altogether avoid the generation of all forms of waste and pollution. Green jobs include the provisions for decent work and proper living conditions to all those involved in production as well as respecting workers' rights.

Keeping in mind the MID objectives, the NEP will also advocate green jobs in line with the development of the green jobs policy and action plan. The policy will be instilled from the outcome document of the 2 days employment conference on Green Jobs convened by the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment in 2011

The NEP will include the following initiatives:

- (i) Identification of sectors with potential for creation of green jobs. Sectors having a high potential for green job creation include the agro-industry, tourism sector, the ocean economy, energy sector, green building and retrofitting, waste management and recycling, amongst others;
- (ii) development of the ocean economy which is high on the agenda of Government, the human resource requirements, including marine protection and restoration will have to be determined for the timely preparation of relevant courses and training;
- (iii) the construction of green buildings and retrofitting leading for the promotion of energy conservation and modernization of the building stock to be further encouraged;
- (iv) sensitisation of the household, industry, independent power producers (IPP), the Central Electricity Board (CEB) and Government investment regarding renewable energy and energy efficiency. The roll out to be accompanied by enterprise development and entrepreneurship in the respective industries in equipment manufacturing, installation and maintenance including the training of investors, managers and workers;
- (v) partnership with the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Agriculture as well as the sugar industry and the Mauritius Export Association (MEXA) to incentivize high productive organic agriculture and export of certified produce including strategies to support nascent domestic production and employment creation in the organic fertilizer and integrated pest management industries;
- (vi) partnership with Ministry of Tourism and Leisure and the hotel industry for the development of an eco-tourism strategy. This will comprise the training of hotel management and staff in the greening of the industry including the promotion of high-end certified eco-tourism and resourcing of local produce;

- (vii) further collaboration with the textile industry to increase energy and water efficiency following best practice in advanced plants in Mauritius. Provision of the necessary support network, exchange of best practices, as well as the training of management and workers, to enable investment and employment creation;
- (viii) inclusion of the green concept in school curriculum as well as in the various training programmes, at the technical and vocational training institutions and at university level, so as to inculcate the notion of green culture in children at an early stage and develop skills for the greening of jobs throughout the industries;
- (ix) the Employment Service to work closely with school leavers and the Career's Guidance Unit as regards the choice of appropriate fields of study and career paths, including green jobs, as appropriate;
- (x) sensitisation campaigns on the concept of green jobs and the opportunities available for employment so as to reduce concentration on traditional courses like management, accountancy, etc. and to increase interest in green jobs;
- (xi) students to be encouraged to take up science subjects for more research to be undertaken for the greening of the economy;
- (xii) the support of the Mauritius Employers Federation to be enlisted to further develop their 'Green Enterprise' strategy and programmes while also providing them with the necessary incentives for the use of green technologies for the creation of green jobs;
- (xiii) legislation to be promulgated to cater for the greening of jobs and enterprises;
- (xiv) collaboration with relevant Ministries and industries to evaluate the idea of a first 'Green Export Processing Zone' in the world to stimulate domestic employment and take advantage of an early move towards an increasing world trade in environmentally goods and services; and
- (xv) to learn from other countries about good practices and apply them, as appropriate, in Mauritius.

4.9 Social Protection and Working Conditions

The enhancement of institutional and management capacities of authorities closely involved in employment promotion and labour administration is a pre-requisite to the successful implementation of the National Employment Policy. The Labour Department has to be strengthened to ensure the following:

- Improvement of working conditions and occupational safety and health (OSH);
- Promotion of collective bargaining and decent work;
- An efficient and effective inspection service; and
- Education and sensitisation of employers and workers on a regular basis.

The Government of Mauritius is committed to ensuring that sound industrial relations and decent work prevail at work places and it is proposed to:

- (i) enforce the labour and OSH legislation, in particular with regard to compliance with the terms and conditions of employment;
- (ii) strengthen the inspection service in terms of personnel, training and facilities;
- (iii) formulate appropriate regulations on specific OSH issues to further safeguard the health and safety of workers;
- (iv) review the Remuneration Orders in respect of the sectors where no changes/ amendments have been brought to the legislation despite the increase in the cost of living.
- (v) promulgate new Remuneration Orders for emerging sectors, to ensure that employees in these sectors earn a decent living;
- (vi) ensure that decent work and accommodation conditions are provided to foreign workers;
- (vii) ensure that there is no discrimination on any basis against any worker;
- (viii) promote equal pay for work of equal value;

- (ix) ensure that the National Tripartite Forum operates efficiently, especially the Technical Committees which are expected to meet on a regular basis and make recommendations, particularly with regard to employment creation, skills and training as well as on labour and industrial relations issues, amongst others;
- (x) carry out regular information and sensitisation campaigns for both employers and employees on OSH and labour issues;
- (xi) bring about improvement in the quality of jobs in terms of salary, basic social security and work-life balance;
- (xii) establish a platform and other mechanisms aimed at strengthening dialogue amongst social partners as a means of instilling trust and cooperation in the world of work;
- (xiii) study the possibility of aligning the salary at certain levels in the private sector with what prevails in the public sector (NRB-PRB) to reduce disparity and inequality between these two sectors; and
- (xiv) revalorise jobs in various sectors in the private sector by reviewing the terms and conditions of employment, the job appellations so as to improve the image of these sectors/jobs with a view to attracting jobseekers thereto.

4.9.1 Maternity Protection

The Employment Rights Act makes provision for the following with regards to maternity protection:

- 12 weeks' maternity leave with pay after 12 months' continuous employment, to be taken either before confinement or after confinement provided that at least 6 weeks' leave is taken immediately after confinement;
- two weeks' leave on full pay in case of miscarriage, irrespective of the length of service;

- still birth is considered as a confinement and leave entitlement of 12 weeks on full pay after 12 months' continuous employment is applicable;
- no performance of overtime is allowed 2 months before confinement unless the worker so requests;
- a female worker is not required to perform duties necessitating continuous standing as from the beginning of pregnancy, provided that there is a recommendation to that effect from a medical practitioner;
- an employer is prohibited from giving a notice of dismissal to an employee on maternity leave or giving such notice which will expire during her maternity leave except on ground of redundancy; and
- maternity allowance which formally varied from Rs 300 to Rs2,000, has now been standardized to Rs 3,000 and is now payable in all sectors of employment.

It is worth noting that in the Employment Rights Act there is no limitation of 3 confinements, for entitlement to paid maternity benefits. Such limitation, which exists in most Remuneration Regulations, is gradually being removed as and when the Regulations are being reviewed by the National Remuneration Board. For instance, in the recently reviewed Remuneration Regulations governing Attorneys' and Notaries' Employees; Cleaning Enterprises; Electrical, Engineering and Mechanical Workshops; and Office Attendants, such limitation has been removed.

The possibility and implications of ratifying the ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), will be looked into.

4.9.2 The National Tripartite Forum

The National Tripartite Forum (NTF) was set up in October 2010, with a view to imparting a new boost to social dialogue in Mauritius. The NTF is an apex body comprising representatives of Government, employers and workers and operating

under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment with two Vice-Chairpersons, one from the employers' organisations and one from the workers' organisations. It comprises seven representatives of Government Departments, seven representatives of employers' organisations and seven representatives of workers' organisations. It acts as a permanent forum for discussion among social partners, with special focus on work issues such as labour and industrial matters, employment creation, skills and training; occupational safety and health, productivity and competitiveness as well as social and economic policies in light of changes in the world of work.

To this end, the following five (5) different tripartite Technical Committees (TCs) have been set up to examine specific issues and make proposals thereon to the main Committee, namely, the:

- (i) TC on Labour and Industrial Relations Issues – chaired by Government representative
- (ii) TC on Labour Market, Employment Creation, Skills and Training - chaired by employers' representative
- (iii) TC on Occupational Safety and Health - chaired by workers' representative
- (iv) TC on Productivity and Competitiveness - chaired by employers' representative
- (v) TC on Economic and Social Development - chaired by workers' representative

4.9.3 Improving Working Conditions under Occupational Safety and Health

With a view to creating a sustainable and inborn safety and health culture, the Ministry has taken and is taking a number of measures in line with the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, C155, as follows:

- (i) all tertiary as well as technical and vocational institutions have been requested to include compulsory modules on occupational safety and health in their curriculum;

- (ii) a Guideline on Occupational Safety and Health Management System has been prepared based on the ILO guidelines of 2001, with a view to vulgarise this concept among employers.
- (iii) It is envisaged to include in the training courses followed by retrenched workers, a module on occupational safety and health so as to ensure that when they are being trained for a new job, they also acquire the required knowledge and skills to perform the job safely.

The Ministry has also promulgated several regulations to further strengthen its legislative framework. Presently, the following Occupational Safety and Health Legislations, among others, cater for the safety and health of employees at work:

- Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005;
- Occupational Safety and Health (Employees Lodging Accommodation) (Amendments) Regulations 2013;
- Occupational Safety and Health (Work at Height) Regulations 2013;
- Occupational Safety and Health (Ship Construction and Ship Repairs) Regulations 2013; and
- Occupational Safety and Health (Safety of Scaffolds) Regulations 2013.

Besides the above mentioned measures, the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment has prepared several guidelines and leaflets on Occupational Safety and Health. Examples: Guidelines on Risk Assessment (2011), Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Training (2012), the policy for HIV/AIDS at the workplace (2012) and a leaflet on the main provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 (2013).

An “Assise” on “La Securite au travail” was held in December 2013. The objective of the event was to create a platform where all stakeholders having an interest in safety at work met to take stock of the current situation, discuss the various challenges and

prospects of safety at work. It came with innovative, realistic and achievable recommendations so as to instil a safety culture in Mauritius. Participants included stakeholders from the world of work. Some of the major recommendations of the “Assise” are as follows:

- Capacity building of Occupational Safety and Health Officers/Safety and Health Practitioners required in specific fields from specialists abroad;
- Need for regional office for Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate to give proximity service to stakeholders;
- Safety and Health Council for registration of Safety and Health Officers to be established (similar to Council of Registered Professional Engineers);
- Appropriate measures to be taken by management to retain staff at Occupational Safety and Health Inspectorate ,e.g. entry requirement for Safety and Health Officers is still a diploma since 1980 (to be upgraded to degree level in Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005);
- Occupational Safety and Health Management System to be implemented progressively in enterprises;
- Occupational Safety and Health to be included in education at all levels; and
- Government to ratify more Conventions on Occupational Health and Safety.

These measures will contribute to improving safety and health in all workplaces and ultimately have a positive bearing on the overall quality of life of the individuals and the society at large

5.0 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STAKEHOLDERS

It is a fact that the National Employment Policy cannot be implemented by only a single Department or Ministry, as employment is a cross cutting issue. The concerted efforts and commitment of all stakeholders are essential to attain the desired results within the set time frame. It is, therefore, imperative that employment be mainstreamed in growth strategies, macro-economic and sectoral policies. Given the multidimensional nature of the employment challenges, the implementation of the National Employment Policy requires the active participation and involvement of many actors as well as their effective coordination by Government.

This Policy outlines the roles to be played by the major actors in policy implementation, namely, Government, Employers and Workers Organizations, the Private Sector, Civil Society Organizations, Financial Institutions, Academic, Training and Research Institutions and Mass Media.

5.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders

Since employment is a crosscutting issue involving various stakeholders, coordination among the various Institutions is of utmost importance. It is necessary to have in place an enabling environment, the appropriate system and mechanisms conducive to facilitating interventions at all levels of operation. The roles of the various stakeholders would basically be as follows:

5.1.1 Government

Government will be responsible for creating the conducive macro-economic environment to foster employment growth at all levels and will, amongst others:

- Coordinate and monitor the employment implications of national investment decisions, to ensure that socio-economic development policies and programmes are employment intensive.

- Implement vigorously and effectively the public current and development programmes aiming at more employment creation impacts.
- upgrade the system of collection, analysis and dissemination of relevant information on employment creation as well as the National Labour Market information database.
- Provide regular labour market information for informing the public of on labour market trends.
- Promote employment intensive direct investment in sectors and areas with employment potentials.
- Will set up an inter-Ministerial Committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Labour, I.R & Employment to ensure the effective implementation of the NEP.

5.1.2 The Private Sector

The private sector is expected to take the leading role in employment creation and become the potential major employer and key stakeholder in achieving the National Employment Policy objectives.

The private sector could:

- expand investments and enhance productivity in employment intensive sectors for assurance of achieving the National Employment Policy objectives through continuous dialogue with Government and other stakeholders.
- ensure compliance with the labour standards as prescribed under the relevant laws so as to safeguard the national interests including that of employers and employees

5.1.3 Employers' Organizations

The Employers have a central role to play in the following areas:

- Maintaining industrial peace for continuous production and employment, as well as improving the working environment at work places
- Advocating all employers to comply with labour and employment standards
- Enhancing employment intensive investment and increase labour productivity
- Strengthening social dialogue and improving labour relations at work places
- Ensuring better employment and income security for employees
- Promote corporate governance and accountability at workplaces
- Providing updated information on labour market trends on regular basis to be included in the national labour market database.

5.1.4 Workers' Organisations

No concrete results will be obtained if the Workers' Organisations do not collaborate fully with Government and the Employers.

The Workers' Organisations will be responsible for:

- Maintaining industrial peace for continuous production and employment, as well as improving the working environment at work places
- Promote industrial peace for continuous production and increased labour productivity at work places
- Advocating employment investments:

- Sensitization and educational programmes on rights and obligations of workers as prescribed in the National Employment policy and respective employment and labour instruments

5.1.5 Academic, Training and Research Institutions

- Provide relevant knowledge, and training/skills that meet the demands of the labour market, in consultation with employers.
- Adjust their curricula on a regular basis, as appropriate to reflect labour market needs.
- Design and mainstream entrepreneurial culture at all levels in the educational sector and in the training programmes to impart entrepreneurial knowledge and culture to students
- Provide demand driven training and the required skills
- Undertake research and studies and make recommendations to policy makers on areas with employment potential

5.1.6 Civil Society

- Complement Government's efforts in employment creation and raising national awareness in support of employment creation.
- Sensitization of the public on the need for combatting poverty through productive and gainful employment.

5.1.7 Mass Media

- Promote advocacy and awareness on employment issues including the contents and operationalization of the National Employment Policy, the National Employment Creation Strategies, Programmes and initiatives at all levels.
- Provide information to the Public on regular basis on employment opportunities as well as on the rights and obligation of the relevant stakeholders as prescribed under the respective laws and regulations guiding the employment and labour sector.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 Structures for Policy Implementation

The effective and efficient implementation of the strategies and policies enunciated in this National Employment Policy will require that the appropriate structures be put in place, accompanied by the human and financial resources to ensure that all stakeholders work together towards promoting full, productive, decent and freely chosen employment for all.

Over and above the Inter- Ministerial Committee to be set up by Government, there will be a National Employment Promotion Committee (NEPC) which will be chaired by the Permanent Secretary of MLIRE to steer the NEP. The NEPC will comprise Ministries/ Departments responsible for economic and sectoral development as well as resource allocation and other relevant stakeholders, namely, the social partners (employers and workers representatives).

6.2 Policy Monitoring and Evaluation

The Ministry will work in close collaboration with the Inter- Ministerial Committee, the National Tripartite Forum and the National Employment Promotion Committee, which may meet every 3 months, to ensure the smooth implementation of the National Employment Policy.

The National Employment Promotion Committee will carry out evaluation exercises and prepare regular reports to be submitted to the Minister and eventually to Government as regards progress achieved and any remedial action to be taken. Employment indicators will be developed and made available to enable stakeholders at all levels to monitor and assess employment promotion/creation outcomes on regular basis.

6.3 Review of the National Employment Policy

It is a fact that with globalization and changes occurring in the world of work and technological advancement, there is need to review policies on a regular basis to suit current needs on the labour market.

An evaluation of the outcome of the NEP will have to be made accordingly and as appropriate, after 3-4 years, if need be. The policy review will enable MLIRE to be aware of the extent to which the NEP will have been successfully implemented and of remedial action to be brought, if any, for the way forward.

6.4 Conclusion

The ultimate vision of Government is for all Mauritian citizens, men and women alike, who are available and willing to work, to attain secured and sustainable livelihood through productive and freely chosen employment and decent work. This National Employment Policy seeks the full collaboration and commitment of one and all to achieve this vision successfully to the satisfaction of all stakeholders and the population at large for the enhanced socio-economic development of our country.