



**COUNTRY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE FIFTEENTH-YEAR
REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
BEIJING PLATFORM OF ACTION (BPFA+ 15)**

NAME OF COUNTRY	REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS
NAME OF COORDINATING RESPONDENT	Ms M.L How Fok Cheung
FUNCTION/TITLE	PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS, CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND FAMILY WELFARE
ADDRESS	CSK BUILDING CNR REMY OLLIER AND EMMENUEL ANQUETIL STREETS PORT-LOUIS MAURITIUS
PHONE -	<i>(Fixed Land Line):</i> +230 2093732 <i>(Mobile):</i> +230 2508900
FAX	: +230-2162061
E-MAIL ADDRESSES:	hhow-fok-cheung@mail.gov.mu

INTRODUCTION

Country Questionnaire for the Fifteenth-Year Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) +15

The adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in 1995 ushered in a new era in terms of addressing women's empowerment and advancement. The inception of this Platform carried with it, a call for Governments to accelerate their efforts towards addressing gender inequality. In 2004, and in line with the BPFA, African member States reiterated their commitment to the provisions of the Platform and to gender equality in general. African member States committed themselves to addressing challenges as identified in the *Synthesis of the national progress reports on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action* (2004). The current review will therefore cover the extent to which countries have scaled up efforts, post the 7th African Regional Conference on Women (Beijing+ 10).

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly has mandated the UN Regional Commissions, including the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), to follow-up the implementation of the BPFA. At the recent meeting of the Committee on Women and Development (CWD), the process for the African review of the implementation of the Platform was presented to member States. This process was adopted with amendments during the CWD session in August 2008.

The process for the African review will be carried out by a number of stakeholders including the AU and UN Agencies. To ensure that a comprehensive review is undertaken, this questionnaire seeks to solicit information on the status of implementation of policies, programmes and legislation in the area of women's empowerment and advancement in your country. It will be appreciated if this questionnaire could be filled in a collaborative way and in consultation with all stakeholders involved in the implementation of activities related to the empowerment and advancement of women in your country. The national gender machinery is expected to coordinate the completion of this questionnaire and also provide documents supporting information provided.

The completed questionnaires will be analysed and summarized by ECA and the results will be published in the *synthesis report* of the regional report on Beijing+ 15. The report will form part of Africa's contribution to the global review and appraisal of the Beijing +15.

The ECA Executive Secretary would therefore appreciate it if you could submit the completed questionnaire to ECA through the REC and ECA Sub-Regional Office in your region, for onward transmission to:

**The OIC
African Centre for Gender and Social Development
Economic Commission for Africa
P.O. Box 3001
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Fax: 251 11 551 2785/ 4416**

Soft copies in MS Word format should also be emailed to the following address:

eleteane@uneca.org

The deadline for the submission of the report is **31 March 2009**

Thank you in advance for your keen collaboration.

ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
BPFA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CWD	Committee on Women and Development
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Rights
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development (<i>held in Cairo Egypt in 1994</i>)
ICTs	Information Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NDS	National Development Strategy
NGP	National Gender Policy
NDP	National Development Plan
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VAW	Violence Against Women

PART 1: Enabling Environment

Preamble: In this section, countries assess the degree to which there is an enabling environment at country level for supporting effective implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action. This appraisal focuses on the following aspects of the creation of such an enabling environment for the implementation of the BPFA:

- a) Institutional Arrangements
- b) Commitment to CEDAW
- c) Commitment to continental level gender equality protocols
- d) Commitment to sub-regional level gender equality protocols
- e) Adoption of a national gender policy
- f) Emerging issues for Africa
- g) Integration of gender equality principles into national development strategies (NDS) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP)

a) Institutional Arrangements for Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women

- 1.1** Have any institutional arrangements been put in place for promoting Gender Equality, Equity and Empowerment of Women in line with the strategic objectives for the BPFA, and recommendation from reviews of the BPFA.

Yes

No

If yes, please list the various institutional arrangements and mechanisms:

Institutional Arrangement	Year of Establishment	Function(s)
The lead agency of the National Women's Machinery (NWM) in Mauritius is the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare	1982	The Ministry works towards implementation of gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes of the Government
Gender unit	1982	The Gender Unit has adopted a two pronged approach to development, namely through:- (i) outreach activities undertaken at grass-root level through the 15 Women Centers, the National Women Council, the National Women Entrepreneur Council, the National Women Development Center and some 1200 Women's Associations with respect to capacity building, service delivery and sensitisation campaigns for

		<p>the empowerment of women ; and</p> <p>(ii) gender mainstreaming at policy, programming and output level with Ministries/ Departments and other stakeholders in line with the National Gender Policy Framework and the recent reform towards effective public financial management systems</p>
National Women's Council (NWC)	1985	The NWC ensures that government policies and actions meet the needs of women at grass-root level.
National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC)	1999	The NWECC fosters the development and growth of women entrepreneurs by providing them with training and guidance on business development.

1.2 What are the major constraints that prevent the National Gender Machineries from being effective?)

- Lack of skilled personnel
- Lack of coordination between stakeholders.
- Absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- Role of Gender Focal Points undermined and there is the misconception of gender as being solely a woman's issue unless they take ownership of their respective policy document

B) COMMITMENT TO CEDAW

1.3 What additional work has been done on CEDAW since the 2004 evaluation? What are the lessons learnt?

The Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare(MWRCDFW) which is the Lead Agency of the NGM in Mauritius, with the support of the UNDP is implementing a project entitled "Capacity Building for Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women" (2005-2009) . The aim of the project is to create a gender sensitive environment in Mauritius through a strategy of gender mainstreaming. Different activities under the project include inter alia:

- o revival of the Gender Focal Point Mechanism in 2005 and capacity building of 40 GFPs and other stakeholders including Civil Society on gender mainstreaming, the use of gender sensitive indicators and gender impact assessments from 2005 to date .

- setting up of an online Gender Information System (GIS) in April 2009 that will enable GFPs to input sex disaggregated data to monitor gender responsiveness of their policies and programmes.
- participating in the reform of the Government towards programme based budgeting in 2008, therefore providing a key entry point for gender responsive budgeting by engendering the outputs and performance indicators of sector Ministries and their respective sector strategies. In that respect, the Lead Agency has been working with eight (8) Pilot Ministries to engender their PBB exercise. As at date, programmes of those Ministries namely Civil Service and Administrative Reforms; Finance and Economic Development; Youth and Sports; Education, Culture and Human Resource; Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare & Reform Institutions; and Agro-industry, Food Production and Security have been engendered. This process will be replicated in other Ministries in due course. The Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare has also provided technical assistance to three Ministries namely Youth and Sports Education, and Labour to devise their gender sectoral policies. The same process will be extended to four(4) additional Ministries listed above; and.
- adopting in 2008 into an overarching framework that calls upon sectoral Ministries to design there-from their respective gender policies and action plans with gender sensitive performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation.
 - The NGPF stipulates that gender disaggregated data and creation of a related information system are essential for monitoring and evaluation. Such a system would need to generate information about why progress has not been achieved and what factors led to or blocked any progress. Gender-sensitive indicators thus have been developed which explicitly provide quantitative and qualitative information about results concerning the evolution of gender issues. Background analysis of the situation will also be essential; to determine which cluster of indicators need to be considered together, to gauge the extent of progress in unlocking gender disadvantage and to identify new unanticipated developments.
 - With regard to accountability for results, the NGPF stipulates that “accountability for results” also means that the allocations were actually spent and reached the intended beneficiaries and rights-holders were satisfied and there were improvements in gender equality and well-being. These allocations need to be therefore monitored for equity.
- As from July 2008, the Women's Unit of the Lead Agency has been restyled into a Gender Unit (GU) and since the activities of the Women's Unit have witnessed a shift from the Women in Development approach (WID) to a Gender and Development approach (GAD) one of the main objectives of this Unit is geared towards strengthening gender mainstreaming, taking into account the reproductive, productive and social roles of women.

- Moreover, amendments have been brought to the Protection from Domestic Violence Act in Year 2004 and 2007.

Amendment to Protection from Domestic Violence Act (2004)

In 2004, certain amendments were brought to the Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA), 1997. These amendments aim at:

- covering cases of domestic violence committed by any person living under the same roof;
- increasing the time limit before a notice is served from 7 days to 14 days; and
- increasing the penalty applicable in case of offences; and providing for counseling.

Further Amendments to Protection from Domestic Violence Act (2007)

In line with Government Programme 2005-2010 which highlights the need to strengthen the enforcement mechanism of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, further amendments were brought to the Act. The Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2007 which was passed in the National Assembly on 04 December 2007 aims at bringing the following amendments:-

- an increase in the penalty for the offence of willfully failing to comply with any order made under the Act;
 - in exceptional cases to order a person who has willfully failed to comply with an order made under the Act, to attend counseling sessions instead of being sentenced; and
 - An ancillary order is being introduced under clause 5 to enable an aggrieved spouse and any child of the parties to whom a Protection Order has been granted to apply for alimony.
-
- The Government of Mauritius has also come up with a new legislation known as the Equal Opportunity Act in 2008 which incorporate all the different grounds of discrimination covered under sections 3 and 16 of the Constitution as well as age, pregnancy, mental and physical disability and sexual orientation in areas dealing with employment, education, the provision of accommodation, goods, services and other facilities, sports, the disposal of immovable property, admission to private clubs and premises open to members of the public. The Act also provides for the establishment of an Equal Opportunities Commission and an Equal Opportunities Tribunal.

1.4 Has the Government ratified the Additional Protocol to CEDAW?

a. Ratified? Yes Year of ratification [2008] No

c) Commitment to Continental Level Gender Equality Protocols

1.5 Indicate actions taken to implement the following continental level policy/strategy/framework in your country:

1. *AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa* [2004] Year
- 1.1. Frequency of reporting: Always Sometimes Never
2. *The African Women's Protocol* []
- 2.1. Frequency of reporting: Always Sometimes Never

d) Commitment to Relevant Sub-regional Level Policies and strategies

1.6 State the relevant sub-regional level policy or strategy and actions taken at country level

Instrument	Action taken at country level
African Charter	Mauritius has also signed the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa and its ratification is in process.
SADC Gender Protocol	Policies have been formulated in line with the SADC Gender Protocol

e) Adoption of a National Gender Policy

1.7 Has the Government developed a national gender policy or reviewed an existing one to conform to the BPF+10 Recommendations?

(a) Developed Yes Year of adoption [2005] No
which has further been revisited as National Gender Policy Framework in 2008

f) Emerging Issues for Africa

1.8 Has your Government adopted Gender Responsive Budgeting as a mechanism?

Yes Year of adoption [2002] No

1.9 What are the lessons learnt in formulating, implementing and monitoring the National Gender Policy?

The formulation of the National Gender Policy Framework has been a very time consuming process specially the consultation and validation phases and now since the document has been nationally adopted in 2008, preliminary work has already been started with the core Ministries and Departments. The Lead Ministry has been fully assisting eight(8) Ministries as mentioned above to engender their PBB and Three(3) Ministries have devised their sectoral gender policies and same process is being extended to additional four Ministries.

Regarding the implementation phase, the Ministry has already initiated action thereof which have been elaborated above whilst for the monitoring phase, the Lead Agency is now envisaging to set up a Steering Committee to monitor outputs of the Pilot Ministries with regard to their gender sensitivity and implementation of their sectoral gender policies. The Steering Committee will comprise sectoral Ministries and stakeholders of the National Gender Machinery, including the Central Statistics Office. The monitoring process will be as follows:

- (i) **Gender Focal Points** will play an active role in monitoring and evaluation of gender mainstreaming into their policies and programmes and also form a peer review mechanism. Similarly, GFPs will further be trained on gender responsive budgeting so that they act as watchdog to their sectoral Ministries to monitor implementation of gender mainstreaming in their policies and programmes.
- (ii) Monitoring of gender sensitive allocation of resources and outputs will be done through the **PBB** reform and key performance indicators.
- (iii) Data obtained from the **GIS** would also prove useful to monitor the status of gender equality at national level.

g) Integration of Gender Equality Principles in the NDS/ PRSP

1.10 Has the Government formulated a National Development Strategy (NDS) / PRSP?

NDS:	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Year [_____]	No <input type="checkbox"/>
PRSP:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Year [_____]	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If Yes, please indicate which of the following areas articulated in the NDS and budgeted for in the national programme of activities? (Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No')

	Gender Issues Articulated In the NDS/ PRSP	Gender Issues Budgeted for in the NDP
BPFA 12 Critical Areas of Concern	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Yes</u>

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Women and Poverty | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Women in the Economy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Education and training for women | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Women and health | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Violence Against Women | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Women in Conflict Situations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Women in Power and Decision Making | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Human rights of women | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Women in the media | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Women and the environment | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. The Girl Child | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. HIV/AIDS | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Emerging Issues for Africa

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 13. Financing for Gender Equality | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. Other (Specify) | | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Feminisation of AIDS

Femisation of poverty

Gender implications of globalisation and global financial crisis

1.12 Please rate availability of the following statistics and data in your country?

Very effective	Good	Average	Poor	Ineffective
1	2	3	4	5

Availability of gender statistics in following areas	Response				
	1	2	3	4	5
Sex disaggregate data on social issues (education, health)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex disaggregate data on economic issues (production, income, trade, employment, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex disaggregate data on environmental issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex disaggregate data on Time-Use	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statistics on GBV/Violence Against Women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Statistics for women in decision-making positions (cabinet, parliament, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.13 How effective is the dissemination strategy of Gender Statistics in your country?

Very effective	Good	Average	Poor	Ineffective
1	2	3	4	5

1.13.1 Does it involve use of ICT? Yes No

Please elaborate: report on gender statistics is available on website.

For the time being there are no gender statistics available on the website However, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) having Statisticians are posted in the Ministries/Departments, is responsible for collecting and compilation of sex-disaggregated data and these officers are called upon to collect data in their respective line Ministries.

During the training conducted by the Ministry with the GFPs, it was found that there was lack of sex-disaggregated data which often limits the formulation of appropriate policies pertaining to women's empowerment. To that effect, the National Gender Machinery (NGM) has been sensitising pilot Ministries on the needs to address these shortcomings. The GFPs and the personnel of Central Statistical Unit of various Ministries are being encouraged to collect sex-disaggregated data, whilst recognising that this exercise will be time consuming and the NGM is convinced that the compilation of sex-disaggregated data thus be done in a holistic manner.

The GIS which will be operational shortly will also contribute significantly to that effect. In addition to that the NGM regularly publishes a magazine by the name of "Statistics in Mauritius-A Gender Approach" highlighting the sex-disaggregated data in various sectors which is widely disseminated to all Ministries and Departments

PART 2: Review of the 12 Critical Areas of Concern and other Emerging Issues

Preamble: Part 2, provides a set of guiding questions that can be used to assess a country's performance against expected actions to be taken by governments as stipulated in the BPFA for 1995. All the 12 critical areas of concern are covered. Countries will also review their performance against cross cutting and emerging issues for the BPFA for Africa.

Section 1: Women and Poverty

a) Measures taken by government empower women and reduce poverty

2.1.1 Indicate actions taken by your government through review of macro policies, development of new legal framework and other socio-economic measures and strategies all aimed at empowering women and reducing their level of poverty. (Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No')

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Reallocation of public spending in favour of programmes and projects aimed at empowering women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-Finance of micro credit programs. - Finance of Community development Projects.	706 micro credits / 336 women beneficiaries. 177 projects throughout 24 village councils.
Design social protection tools (gender-sensitive safety nets in favour of women and girls)	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-Empowerment programme.	The 2006-2007 budget includes Special programmes for unemployed women, creation of an Empowerment Fund with a provision of Rs 750 m for the current

			year.
Provision of services (training, legal services, credit) to women to enable them to start up businesses.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-Skill development for female prisoners. -Re- skilling of retrenched female EPZ workers. -Seed money. -exhibition sales	56 women in prison benefited from various training in 2004 274 EPZ workers trained. Grant of Rs5000 to be used to start up micro enterprises. Organised since 2000

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.1.2 For the critical area of Concern “Women and Poverty”, please indicate if any of these issues were addressed in efforts to empower women and reduce poverty. (*Tick the appropriate response*)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Effective Result Based Management mechanism	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs for women and poverty	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Food security	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality to reduce poverty	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

- The MWRCDFW is presently implementing the Rural Diversification Programme (RDP) comprising of two sub-components namely Micro Credit / Micro Finance and Community Development. The RDP is a government programme funded under a loan from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to the tune of **Rs 17.5 Million (USD \$530,000)**.
 - The Micro Credit / Micro Finance Sub Component was launched on 18 July 2001 geared towards the socio-economic empowerment of the poorest of the poor segment of the population. Soft loans up to maximum of **Rs 50,000 (USD \$1515)** without collaterals were disbursed to people of low income groups (earning up to a maximum **Rs 6000 (USD \$181)** per month.
 - The ‘Community Development Sub Component’ was launched in August 2000 with the objective to improve village based population’s economic and social livelihoods by promoting and supporting financial and technical interventions and stimulating local growth and development. This component was implemented in **24** Village Council Areas across the island.
- The National Women Entrepreneur Council (NVEC) under the aegis of the MWRCDFWCP provides entrepreneurship development skills to women. Business Development Officers of the Council assist

women to start up their own businesses, as part of poverty alleviation and eradication. The NWECC has witnessed an increase in the registration of women entrepreneurs; Ongoing Support Services to women entrepreneurs in key areas like skills development, marketing, human resources management, finance and entrepreneurship development are also provided; and incubators for some 30 women at 2 regions of the country (Triolet and Phoenix) are being finalised and aggressive awareness campaigns on women entrepreneurship at grass-root levels as well as training programmes to improve managerial skills are being carried out.

- The Family in Distress Scheme (2005) is also offered to women and men whose spouses have suddenly died tragically. A grant (once off payment) of Rs 9,000 (US\$ 360).
- The NWC Regional Committees operating under the National Women's Council which is an executing arm of the MWRCCDFW, have identified, through the Ministry of Agro Industry & Fisheries, State Property Land for women to set up appropriate agricultural projects such as banana plantations
- A **subcommittee for women's empowerment** has been set up under the National Empowerment Foundation. A Special Programme for Unemployed/ Retrenched Women Workers has also been set up by the Government. The Programme provides for capacity building of female retrenched workers and those who have opted for Voluntary Retirement (VRS) in traditional and non traditional sectors.
- The Empowerment Programme enunciated in the 2007/08 budget is reinforced by the National Empowerment Foundation. This permanent structure paves the way for sustained support to those unemployed women who are above 45 years as compared to men of 50 years. The Empowerment Programme will thus address a gender gap in favour of women.
- The creation of the Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme (EAP) with an envelope of Rs 395 million in the 2008-2009 budget is testimony that Government's policies are consistent with macro economic frameworks.
- The Government has set up in 2008 a Food Security Fund to cater for programmes pertaining to these issues. The Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare is a member of the said Committee and its involvement is focussed on preventive and informative measures to sensitise women on the wise consumerism

Section 2: Education and training for women

a) Measures taken by government for education and training of women

2.2.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure education and training of women. (Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No')

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Elimination of barriers that hinder boys and girls' access to education	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Education Act amended in 2004.	Education compulsory up to the age of 16 for both boys and girls.
Measures to increase tertiary enrolment and retention of women and girls, especially in sciences, mathematics and technology-related disciplines	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-Emphasis is laid on Science and Technology	Government also provides scholarships in irrespective fields equally to boys and girls
Eliminate gender gap in basic functional literacy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	-Literacy and numeracy strategy introduced	In place since 2006
Support and develop gender studies and research	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Eliminate gender disparities in all areas of tertiary education by 2015	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Free transport thus giving girls equal opportunity to education at all levels.	In place since 2005
Measure to eliminate barriers to schooling of pregnant adolescents	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	Rare cases of pregnant girls at school but the choice to continue schooling depends on the girls/parents.	

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.2.2 For the critical area of Concern "Education and training of women", please indicate if any of these issues were address in efforts to empower women and reduce poverty. (Tick the appropriate response)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Effective policy development and implementation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs for women and education	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Addressed food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality education and training of women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded "yes" to the question above, please elaborate:

The MWRCDFW has always been fully involved in the process of women's empowerment through various means and one of the means is through training and capacity building programmes.

The Gender Unit of the Ministry has thus adopted a two-pronged approach to development which comprise the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women, namely through:-

(iii) outreach activities undertaken at grass-root level through the 15 Women Centres, the National Women's Council, the National Women Entrepreneur Council, the National Women Development Centre and some 1200 Women's Associations with respect to capacity building, service delivery and sensitisation campaigns for the empowerment of women ; and

(iv) gender mainstreaming at policy, programming and output level with Ministries/Departments and other stakeholders in line with the National Gender Policy Framework.

The mission of the Gender Unit is to be an active Coordinating body of the National Gender Machinery for policy making and monitoring of gender mainstreaming, and to be a modern service provider for the enhancement of the status of women and promotion of gender equality.

National Women's Council

The National Women's Council (NWC) which is a parastatal body operating under the aegis of the Ministry was set up by an Act of Parliament in November 1985. The National Women's Council (NWC) ensures that Government policy and action meets the needs of women at grass-root level. The National Women's Council plays a vital role in encouraging women to participate in activities and projects that would empower themselves to contribute to the development of Mauritius. The Council continues to empower women in leadership and negotiating skills and in the creation of Credit Unions and Co-operatives.

National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWECC)

The National Women Entrepreneur Council, another parastatal body operating under the aegis of the Ministry, was set up in 1999 to promote women entrepreneurship. Its main objective is to increase the technical, organizational and management capacity of women in the entrepreneurship sector hence enabling them to improve their economic livelihood with the collaboration of different stakeholders.

Section 3: Women and health

a) Measures taken by government for women and health

2.3.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure quality health services for women (Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No')

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the Copenhagen Declaration	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The Programme of Action for the next 20 years as adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development was based mainly on decisions that Mauritius had already taken prior to the ICPD for some recommendations. They were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of Infant, Child and Maternal Mortality; • Education especially for girls; • Provision of universal access to reproductive health services, including family planning; and • Employment of women and gender equality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The infant mortality rate has dropped from 6.01 in 1962 to 15.3 in 2007 • The maternal and child health services have been strengthened at both primary and secondary levels with specialised care being available in regional hospitals. The maternal mortality ratio has been reduced to 0.37 per 1000 live births
Design and implement and monitor gender-sensitive health programmes, including affordable sexual and reproductive health care services and education for women and girls, and increase resources for women's health	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Reproductive health services are free of user cost and are provided through a network of health services at Primary Health Care Level, which are easily accessible. Complicated cases are referred to the hospitals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual population growth rate which was about 3.1% in the 60's has been brought down at about less than 1% at present. • The infant mortality rate has dropped from 6.01 in 1962 to 15.3 in 2007 • Fertility among adolescents has reduced from 107.3 in 1962 to 34.2 in 2007 • The total fertility has

			<p>reduced from 5.86 in 1962 to 1.63 in 2007</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high contraception prevalence rate of 75.9% among currently married women aged 15-49 years in 2002
<p>Reduce maternal morbidity and mortality, deal with health impacts of unsafe abortions, ensure that girls have continuing access to necessary health and nutrition information and services, and address harmful traditional practices that harm women and girls' health including female genital mutilation</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>There were no deaths registered as a result of abortion between 2005-2007. Management of complications arising from induced or spontaneous abortion is provided at regional hospitals.</p> <p>As per record available there is no practice of female genital mutilation in Mauritius.</p> <p>The maternal and child health services have been strengthened at both primary and secondary levels with specialised care being available in regional hospitals. Regular outreach programmes and IEC Programmes are carried out by various organisations including NGOs on women's and girls health related issues</p>	<p>Maternal mortality Ratio per 100,000 live births 0.37 in 2007</p>
<p>Support interventions to curb the spread of malaria, cardiovascular diseases, STIs and cancer that affect women, including provision of free and subsidized reproductive health care services</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Intensified screening of diseases and immunisation programmes in place.</p>	<p>In 2006, BCG immunization coverage during first year was 89.3 per 100 live births; DPT + Hep B immunization coverage was 89.6 per 100 live births; Polio immunization coverage was 89.8 per 100 live births; and MMR was 92.2 per 100 live births. No case of neo-natal tetanus has been found.</p>
<p>Medical school curriculum include gender-sensitive mandatory courses.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>		

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.3.2 For the critical area of Concern “*Women and Health*”, please indicate if any of these issues were addressed in efforts to ensure quality health for women. (*Tick the appropriate response*)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs for women and health	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Addressed food security issues	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality for women’s health	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of support for elderly women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Provision of support for HIV/AIDS affected girls	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

- Health services are free of user cost and easily accessible to the public including women and girls
- Above 99% of all deliveries are done in Health Institutions
- Reproductive Health Services have been strengthened and there is involvement of men and boys
- Mauritius being a Welfare State, all elderly including women are provided with a basic Retirement Pension and also medical home visits for those who are bedridden
- All HIV cases are provided with free treatment including anti retroviral.

Section 4: HIV/AIDS and its Gender Implications

a) National Institutional and Policy Framework

2.4.1 Has the Government put in place the institutional framework to address HIV/AIDS or adopted any recent strategies or measures including changes in legislation to address HIV/AIDS concerns?

Yes

No

If yes, please indicate as follows:

- | | Yes | No |
|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Existence of an engendered national HIV/AIDS policy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Engendered service delivery guidelines and standards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Availability of adequate human resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Others (please specify): | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

An HIV and Aids _Act __was passed in December 2006 and proclaimed in August 2007to provide measures and control in the prevention of HIV Transmission and to guarantee people living with HIV/AIDS

2.4.2 Has your government established, enforced and monitored strict legal frameworks to address the vulnerability of girls and women

Yes

No

If Yes give details

Provision of Post Exposure Prophylaxis to victims of rape. HIV and AIDS Act enacted in 2006. It also provides for the punishment of any person who knowingly or recklessly places other persons at risk of being infected with HIV or who is in possession of syringe, needle or other article with intent to infect other persons with the virus.

The Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission project was set up in December 1999

b) HIV/AIDS Prevention and Treatment Strategy

2.4.3 Has the Government adopted any recent measures and strategies including changes in legislation as part of the country's HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment strategy?

HIV Prevention and Treatment Strategies	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Counselling and voluntary testing	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mobile screening services scaled up through mobile clinics and in all Area Health Centres across the country	Decentralisation to Area Health Centres
Male and female condom availability and use	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regular information and contraception methods are made available easily.	Teenage pregnancy in 2007 is 47 compared to 80 in 2006
Targeted intervention to women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A Needle Exchange Programme and	

and other vulnerable groups		monitoring and Evaluation Framework is being finalized.	
Prevention of mother to child transmission	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	HIV test are offered after counselling to all pregnant women.	Accepted by most of them,
Provision of antiretroviral therapy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Free Antiretroviral prophylactic treatment given to pregnant women.	Out of 88 babies born to HIV positive mothers who had the treatment none were contaminated
Behaviour change communication	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Regular IEC Programmes are being carried out under the UNFPA Prject specially by the Ministry of Youth and Sports	
Medical, psychological and social care to HIV/AIDS victims	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Introduction of methadone as a substitution therapy for opiates addicts. Rehabilitation of sex workers. Rehabilitation of drug uses and ex detainees.	Is being worked out at the level of the ministry. Support of the project through a monthly grant of Rs100,000 as from 2004
Home based care	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Other (please specify)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		

Section 5: Violence Against Women

a) Measures taken by government for elimination of violence against women

2.5.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure elimination of violence against women (*Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No'*)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Legal sanctions for violence against women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amendment of The Protection From Domestic Violence Act.	2007
Enacted or reinforced country legislation to punish offenders and support women subjected to violence with justice and legal services	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Protection From Domestic Act enacted and fully proclaimed.	Enacted in 1997 and fully proclaimed in March 1998
Mainstreamed gender perspectives in all policies and laws related to VAW	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Women with disabilities have access to information on services for violence against women	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Provide well funded shelters and relief support for girl and women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6 Family Support Bureaux. Family in Distress Scheme. Shelters provided by NGOs and government shelter.	Placement in a shelter following an Interim Protection order. Allowance of Rs3000 upon their discharge and Rs9000 for a spouse whose husband died in accident or murder.
Promote research, collect data and compile statistics on domestic violence	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The UNDP has commissioned the Centre for Applied Social Research (CASR), University of Mauritius to conduct " <i>a detailed analysis of the nature and extent of Domestic Violence in Mauritius as well as generating data for future policy choices</i> "	
Measures aimed at preventing sex tourism and trafficking	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Encourage the media to examine the impact of gender role stereotyping including those encouraged by commercial advertising.	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.5.2 For the critical area of Concern "*Violence Against Women*", please indicate if any of these issues were

addressed in efforts to ensure elimination of violence against women. (*Tick the appropriate response*)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Effective policy development and implementation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality for violence against women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

In line with the UN recommendations that States should set up appropriate mechanisms to implement policies and programmes in favour of families, the Ministry set up a Family Welfare Unit since July 2003 to promote family welfare, to safeguard and to consolidate the family.

STRATEGIES

The Family Welfare Unit uses a twofold approach to address the issues related to family welfare and domestic violence through intervention and preventive strategies.

LEGISLATION: Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA)

In line with commitment taken at Beijing in 1995, the Ministry enacted the Protection from Domestic Violence Act in 1997 to provide protection to victims of domestic violence.

In 2004, amendments were brought to the Act so as to extend protection to other members of the family living under the same roof, and not to spouses only, as was the case before. Provision for counseling with consent of the parties concerned was also included.

The Government Programme 2005-2010, highlights measures to strengthen the enforcement mechanism of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act. Consequently, further Amendments are being brought to the Act whereby issues like alimony, counselling in lieu of sentence and harsher penalties for failing to comply with orders.

Projects

A series of innovative projects to combat domestic violence have been undertaken by the Ministry. These are:

1. Zero Tolerance Clubs

Zero Tolerance Clubs have been set up with a view to empowering the community to act as watchdogs to ensure that their locality is violence free. To date five zero Tolerance Clubs have been set up and monthly activities are organized to sensitise the public at large on issues related to domestic violence.

2. Partnership Against Domestic Violence

A Partnership Against Domestic Violence Committee was set up in 2004 with the aim enlisting the collaboration of key stakeholders to combat domestic violence. For the period 2005-2006, four projects have been implemented by Media Watch, Pils, Prisons Department and MACOSS. Some 1525 persons have benefited from these projects.

3. Protocol of Assistance to victims of Sexual Assault.

The Protocol is operational since March 2006 to provide prompt and timely assistance to victims of sexual assault. The Protocol has been established in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, and the Police Department. Under the Protocol, the Ministry ensures psychological and legal assistance to victims of sexual assault. A hotline 119 is operational on a 24 hours basis to assist victims of sexual assault.

Capacity Building

Intensive training to service providers and ongoing awareness campaigns aiming at reducing the incidence of domestic violence have been organized. Some 500 Officers were trained on issues related to domestic violence. A series of Information Education and Communication materials have been launched.

Action Plan to combat Domestic Violence

The Family Welfare Unit has also formulated an Action Plan to combat Domestic Violence in August 2007. This Action Plan spells out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders concerned and it is envisaged that its implementation will go a long way to combat domestic violence

SERVICES

The Family Welfare Unit operates from the Ministry's Head Quarters and has a network of 6 Regional Offices, known as Family Support Bureaux (FSBx) and works in collaboration with six Police Family Protection Unit of the Police Department. The FSBx provides an integrated services to children victims of abuse, victims of domestic violence and family counseling services among others. A hotline number is also operational on 24 hours basis to respond to cases of domestic/family violence.

PROMOTION OF FAMILY WELFARE

National Policy Paper on the Family

The National Policy Paper on the Family was launched on 15 May 2006 on the occasion of the celebration of the International Day of the Families. The objective of the National Policy Paper on the Family is to address the problems faced by families and to provide strategies and guidelines for Ministries/Departments and civil society to promote the well being of families.

PROJECTS

- **Men As Partners(MAP) Project**

The Men As Partners(MAP) Project which is a gender sensitive project has so far been implemented in 13 localities.

- **Pre-Marital Counselling & Marriage Enrichment Programme**

Pre-marital Counselling and Marriage Enrichment Programmes are being conducted to equip engaged and married couples with coping skills in their conjugal life.

Moreover, a simplified version of the CEDAW has been published and distributed widely across the island and is also available on the Website of the Ministry. Training of service providers including medical practitioners, magistrates and police officers has been carried out to improve responses to cases of violence.

The UNDP has commissioned the Centre for Applied Social Research (CASR), University of Mauritius to conduct a detailed analysis of the nature and extent of Domestic Violence in Mauritius as well as generating data for future policy choices

**Section 6: Women and Armed Conflict
NOT APPLICABLE FOR MAURITIUS.**

a) Measures taken by government for protection of women in armed conflict situations: Emelang

2.6.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure elimination of violence against women (*Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No'*)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Women's voices in conflict prevention are heard and they are meaningfully involved in peace processes, including in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of refugee projects	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Train women in conflict resolution, reconciliation and tolerance	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Integration of a gender perspective in the resolution of armed and other forms of conflict	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Investigate and punish policy, security and armed forces involved in acts of VAW	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Protect the safety and integrity of women refugees	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Train military officials on the human rights of women and measures to assist women refugees deal with the trauma of rape and rejection	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Implement provisions of UNSC Resolution 1325	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Implement provisions of the AU Protocol on Women's Rights	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Ratified and domesticated international Conventions and Protocols	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.6.2 For the critical area of Concern "*Women in armed conflict*", please indicate if any of these issues were address in efforts to protect women in armed conflict. (*Tick the appropriate response*)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Gender and ICTs for women in armed conflict situations	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Addressed food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality for women in armed conflict	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

Section 7: Women and the Economy

a) Measures taken by government for women and economy

2.7.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure full participation of women in the economy. (Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No')

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Adopt and enact laws that guarantee an equal access to employment opportunities and social protection benefits.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex Discrimination Act protects individuals against discrimination based on sex, marital status, pregnancy...	Passed in 2002 and subsequently a Sex Discrimination Division was set up.
Ensure equal access to capital and trade opportunities.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sales outlet, trade Fairs, Micro Credit schemes.	
Build capacity in gender-sensitive economic analysis.	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Women Entrepreneurship Development (NWECC)	Established in 1999. To date some 1200 women registered at NWECC
Ratified and domesticated International Conventions that guarantee the participation of women in the economy		Ratification of the Additional Protocol to CEDAW SADC Declaration on Gender and Development	2008 In 1997

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.7.2 For the critical area of Concern "Women and the Economy", please indicate if any of these issues were address in efforts to ensure equal participation of women in the economy. (Tick the appropriate response)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Effective policy development and implementation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs for women and the economy	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Addressed food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality for women and the economy	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate

As mentioned above, the Gender Unit of the Ministry serves as a focal point to empower women in various spheres and one of which being the economic empowerment of women. It therefore operates through a network of 15 Women Centres/Empowerment Centres, the National Women’s Council, the National Women Entrepreneur Council, the National Women Development Centre and some 1200 Women’s Associations

National Women Entrepreneur Council(NWEC)

The National Women Entrepreneur Council is a Parastatal body operating under the aegis of the MWRCDFW. Established under the National Entrepreneur Council Act 1999 as a corporate body, the NWEC aims at promoting economic development of women in Mauritius and Rodrigues through Entrepreneurship Development.

Membership

It has today a membership of about 1800 women entrepreneurs

Training

Existing and potential women entrepreneurs face a range of problems related to Marketing, Technology, Finance, Skills Development, Innovation, Infrastructure, Networking, Productivity and availability of information. Development of women entrepreneurs being very high on the agenda of the government, the National Women Entrepreneur Council has implemented a series of new programmes to improve assistance to both existing and potential Women Entrepreneurs. The new programmes and services aimed at creating more jobs and stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit of the women folk. It is useful to add that core programmes like grass-root sensitisation, enhancing access to finance, providing market linkages, technical, Marketing and regulatory advice, awareness workshops and seminars are common programs which have been ongoing since the establishment of the Council. The Council is also working very closely with the Empowerment Fund and other institutions. Some 1300 women entrepreneurs have been assisting to improve the skills and management aptitudes. Training in Information and Communication Technology has been provided to some 300 women entrepreneurs.

Tailor- made Entrepreneurship and skills development Programs

Existing Women Entrepreneurs suffer from inadequately trained human resource whilst potential Women Entrepreneurs do not have enough tailor-made entrepreneurship development programmes. The National Women Entrepreneur Council focus on short skills development programmes as well as the new and innovative, **Women Entrepreneurship Development Programmes** (WEDP) to stimulate start-up among women.

Short training programmes are organised on a need based such as, Marketing, Finance, Human Resource, Quality, Export Management and Effective Business Communications. All these programmes cover gender-related issues and are implemented with the support of other Ministries and institutions.

WEDP

The WEDP aims to provide the necessary skills to potential women entrepreneurs for start ups, business growth and employment creation. So far the Council has organised five Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (WEDP) and four hundred (400) women have successfully completed the programmes. It is encouraging to note that following the programmes thirty new women enterprises have been established and are operational. . Other Sectoral Entrepreneurship Development programmes focusing on Tourism, Handicraft, Agro-Industry, Manufacturing and Services are being developed.

Marketing and Infrastructure

The National Women Entrepreneur Council organised various programmes related to marketing. In particular it organises trade fairs on special occasions and sells products of Women Entrepreneurs in its sales shops.

As part of its strategy to improve market assistance, 2 women business and incubator centres have been established to assist Women Entrepreneurs in the production and sales of their products. These centres have space for sales of products which are manufactured on site. The incubators house entrepreneurs who sell a wide range of products including handicraft. The 2 business incubators nurture some 30 potential entrepreneurs yearly. They

benefit from comprehensive training and business counselling and facilitation. Some common facilities are also provided..

Networking

Many women entrepreneurs are grouped in associations and a forum is needed to coordinate and synergize efforts of women associations.

The Council is investing on specialised projects related to Marketing, Skills Development and Technology which are identified by the women associations.

The above projects complement efforts of the Council while associations I ensure that agreed programmes are implemented in a sustained fashion and enhance networking between women entrepreneurs.

STRATEGIC THRUSTS / Multi –Sectoral Approach

The National Women Entrepreneur Council works in close collaboration with the private sector and other parastatal bodies and the Trust Fund for the Social Integration of Vulnerable Groups, Women Associations and the Empowerment Fund amongst others to enhance women entrepreneurship.

The programmes outlined above complement action being taken by these institutions and involve a multi-sectoral approach duly recognising for specific needs of women. Indeed, the implementation of new products, services and programmes have helped to create more jobs for women through enterprises and addressed core weaknesses and constraints preventing women entrepreneurs from achieving their real potential.

Recognising that some sectors are saturated, the National Women Entrepreneur Council advises Women Entrepreneurs on key pitfalls to avoid. It will continue to encourage traditional and value-added enterprises and the new mixture of programmes will reconcile the need to develop small and micro enterprises with the need to develop a few sophisticated enterprises which can keep pace with the changing context of a globalized, competitive and market-driven world.

The increased attention to Women Entrepreneurs, the implementation of the new programmes identified and delivering on projects under the Empowerment Fund particularly related to sector based training, industrial estates and 'Village Touristiques' will place a lot of pressure on the National Women Entrepreneur Council. The key objectives are to empower Women Entrepreneurs and ensure that more and more women start and develop enterprises in various sectors. As women empowerment is an ongoing and dynamic process, projects are monitored and evaluated prior to implementation.

Young Women Entrepreneur Award

A young woman entrepreneur award has been initiated for the recognition of the most outstanding woman entrepreneur in 2006.

Special Help Desk

In August 2005 a Special Help Desk was established where technical and business support services are provided to women entrepreneurs. (some 1000 women counselled)

Discount on Air Tickets for Women Entrepreneurs

An agreement was signed in 2006 with Air Mauritius to provide discounted air fare and freight charges up to 30% to women travelling and participating in international fairs. (12 women entrepreneurs benefited so far)

Retrenched EPZ Workers

An amount of Rs 315,000 was given as grant to an association of retrenched EPZ workers known as **Chemin du Sud Multipurpose Cooperative Society** to implement projects in pastry and catering.

Table d'Hote

The Council is implementing a Table d'Hote project with the collaboration of the Ministry of Tourism and the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority.

Section 8: Women, governance, power and decision making

a) Measures taken by government on women governance, power and decision-making

2.8.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure meaningful participation and involvement of women in power and decision-making. (Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No')

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Encourage and promote stronger representation of women in political and diplomatic circles	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SADC commitment has been disseminated at nation level.	Mauritius has already achieved required percentage set by SADC summit for 2007. Proportion of seats in nation parliament held by women 17.1%.
Encourage greater involvement of women, in particular indigenous women, in decision-making processes	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Mauritius has already achieved the required percentage set by the SADC Summit
Support research to help identify adequate ways and means to politically empower women			

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.8.2 For the critical area of Concern “Women in power and decision making”, please indicate if any of these issues were address in efforts to ensure equal participation of women in power and decision-making. (Tick the appropriate response)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Institutional mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Effective policy development and implementation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs for women	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

Regarding participation of women in the national decision making process, Mauritius is committed to the decision taken by the SADC Summit to increase Women’s participation in Politics and Decision Making to 50%.

For the last general elections held in July 2005, the main political parties honoured their pledge to increase women's representation in the national Assembly and there was a marked increase in the number of Women candidates. There are now 12 elected women in the National Assembly compared to only 4 in the previous one that is a three fold increase in women's representation. The statistics of women's representation in politics is as follows:-

Women and Politics

	No of females	Total	% female
Ministers	2	20	10
Deputy Ministers	1	7	12.5
Members of Parliament	12	70	17.1
Urban Councillors	16	116	12.7
Rural Councillors	86	1476	5.8

WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

However, Mauritius has already achieved the required percentage set by the SADC Summit

Further actions that are being taken by the MWRCDFW

- The SADC Commitment has been disseminated at national level. The Ministry had in the context of International Women's Day 2006 organised a Symposium with Stakeholders on "Women and Decision-Making" where the issue of greater participation of women in politics was widely debated. A copy of the recommendations emanating from the symposium was handed over to the Prime Minister on 8 March 2006.
- Whilst regarding advocacy programmes at the level of women's organisations and women at grassroots, the Gender Unit through its outstations and the National Women's Council which is a parastatal body operating under the purview of the Ministry, also provides the following facilities in terms of:
 - Dissemination of information on women's rights which are considered as fundamental human rights.
 - Carrying out a more aggressive lobbying and advocacy by women's organisations in a sustained manner to encourage them to participate more actively in democratic/political processes at local levels, regional and national levels).

These Centres act as a platform where women can voice out their views and opinions freely and thereby influence policy decisions.

Moreover, a ‘bottom-up’ approach is adopted through consultation with the public at large on important policy decisions which the Government normally initiate.

Section 9: Human rights of women

a) Measures taken by government for human rights of women

2.9.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to protect human rights of women. *(Tick the box for which the answer is ‘Yes’ or leave box unchecked if answer is ‘No’)*

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Report on schedule to the Committee on CEDAW	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Publicise information on national, regional and international mechanisms for seeking redress of HR abuse	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Amendment made to provide for offences where workers are abused, threatened, assaulted or subjected to other offensive behaviour in the course of or as a result of their work. Provision made for protection of individuals against discrimination based on sex, marital status, pregnancy...	Labour Act amended in 2004. Sex Discrimination Act 2002.
Embody the principle of the equality of men and women in country legislation and strengthen development of programmes to protect the human rights of women	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	An Equal Opportunities Act has been passed in December 2008. Moreover, the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) was passed in 2002 and a Sex Discrimination Division was set up subsequently at the Human Rights Commission to look into reported cases of complaints of discrimination against women.	The Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and freedom (Section 3), and further protects all individuals, irrespective of race, caste, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, from discrimination (Section 16).
Translate to user friendly language information relating to the equal status of women including relevant protocols	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A simplified version of the CEDAW has been published and distributed	

		widely across the island and is also available on the Website of the Ministry.	
Ratified and domesticated International and African Conventions and Protocols that guarantee the human rights of women			

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.9.2 For the critical area of Concern “*Human rights of women*”, please indicate if any of these issues were address in efforts to protect human rights of women in decision-making. *Tick the appropriate response)*

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

A National Human Rights Commission (1998) has been established under **Section 3** of the **Protection of Human Rights Act**. Subsequently, under the **Sex Discrimination Act (2002)**, a Sex Discrimination Division has been established under **Section 22**, as part of the National Human Rights Commission, to investigate upon infringement of the Sex Discrimination Act.

Section 10: Women in media

a) Measures taken by government for human rights of women

2.10.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure effective participation of women in media (Tick the box for which the answer is 'Yes' or leave box unchecked if answer is 'No')

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Measures that support research on women and media and ensure women's access to and participation in media	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The MWRCDFW is collaborating with Media Watch and the Association of Advertising Agencies.	Mass counseling programmes are regularly conducted to educate women about their rights. These programmes are ongoing in Women Centres but are also carried out on a national basis, through the national media (TV, radios and press) to better reach out at the whole women population.
Promote gender-aware media policies and gender balance in appointments at all levels of the media	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A Gender and Media Baseline Study (Mauritius Report) which highlighted instances and areas of gender disparity in the news-item and provides the basis for a gender-sensitive training/awareness of media people	which highlighted instances and areas of gender disparity in the news-item and provides the basis for a gender-sensitive training/awareness of media people in 2002
Encourage and recognise women's media networks	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Encourage the participation of women in the development of professional guidelines and codes of conduct for media	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A Non-Sexist Advertisement Award to sensitize people from the Advertisement industry and students in this field against stereotyping and project a more positive image of women through advertisement.	Two sexist advertisements have been banned by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA).
Promote gender sensitive research and implementation of a strategy of information, education and communication and support research on women and the media	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Enforcement of provisions of the World Summit on the Information Society			

b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.10.2 For the critical area of Concern "Women in media", please indicate if any of

these issues were address in efforts to promote equal participation of women in media
Tick the appropriate response)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Institutional mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Effective policy development and implementation	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

The Government of Mauritius has forged partnership with NGOs who are complementing its actions and one of those NGOs working towards reducing stereotypes in media is the Media Watch Organization. Various pragmatic actions have been initiated by the organization to address the issue of gender disparity in the news-item and provides the basis for a gender-sensitive training/awareness of media people.

Section 11: Women and the environment

a) Measures taken by government on women and the environment

2.11.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure beneficial participation of women in the environment. *(Tick the box for which the answer is ‘Yes’ or leave box unchecked if answer is ‘No’)*

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Measures integrating gender in the design and implementation of environmental sound resource management, especially in rural areas	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Measures to engender MDG 7, empower women as producers and consumers to ensure effective environmental actions	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Access to production and market resources is key requirements that women and men in the agriculture and fisheries sectors need	Effort is being made by financial institutions to set up easier ways to enable women to have access to credit in Mauritius and Rodrigues).
Provide technical assistance to women in sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, small enterprises, trade and industry	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Evaluate policies and programmes in terms of environmental impact and women’s equal	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Crop Diversification	The agriculture, fisheries and

access to and use of natural resources		Policy, there has been a broadening of the agricultural base in the Republic of Mauritius.	forestry sectors, were employing a total of 35,900 males and 13,100 females in the year 2004. Of these, the sugar cane sector employed 15,700 males compared to 3,400 females
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b) Addressing Cross Cutting and Emerging Issues for BPFA

2.11.2 For the critical area of Concern “*Women and the environment*”, please indicate if any of these issues were address in efforts to promote equal participation and benefit in the environment. *Tick the appropriate response)*

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Effective policy development and implementation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

If you have responded “yes” to any of the questions above, please elaborate:

Access to production and market resources is key requirements that women and men in the agriculture and fisheries sectors need. The resources include :

- Land for agriculture (For example, often the land is not registered in women’s names but in that of their spouse. Thus problems arise when women want to use the title deed as collateral in order to obtain credit. Effort is being made by financial institutions to set up easier ways to enable women to have access to credit in Mauritius and Rodrigues).

- Fishing areas in the exclusive economic zone (for the fisheries sector),
- Livestock breeding stock and other necessary in-puts, skills and services.

Sex disaggregated data available.

Section 12: The girl child

a) Measures taken by government on the girl child

2.12.1 Indicate actions taken by your government to ensure beneficial participation of women in the environment. *(Tick the box for which the answer is ‘Yes’ or leave box unchecked if answer is ‘No’)*

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	If Yes Indicate Specific Actions Undertaken at Country Level	Give Brief Description of Concrete Results Achieved and when (year)
Eliminate injustice and obstacles related to	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		

inheritance by girl children			
Enact and enforce legislation protecting girls from all forms of VAW and ensure marriage is by young women's consent	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Mauritius, as a State Party, has the obligation under Articles 34 and 35 of the CRC, to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation as well as to take appropriate measures to prevent the sale of and trafficking of children	Child Protection Act 1994 and amended in 2005. National Children's Council Act 2003. Computer Misuse and Cybercrime Act 2003 Ombudsperson For Children's Amendment Act 2005. Child Development Unit.
Implement policies, plans and programmes for the survival, protection, development and advancement of the girl child	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A National Plan of Action has been prepared.	Streamlining the objectives and action areas ensuing directly from the objectives already outlined in the NCP; Examining the possibility of immediate launching of actions and programmes for each core policy area.
Ongoing research on the situation of the girls and realignment of policies and programmes	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Study on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)	The study recommends the preparation of a National Plan of Action (NPA) in order to prevent and progressively eliminate CSEC and also to protect CSEC victims and ensure their recovery and integration in society. While preparing the NPA, an integrated and holistic approach has been adopted for the implementation of activities on protection of children. It has a broad scope geared towards the overall protection of children from any forms of abuse including commercial sexual exploitation in line with existing legislation and the provisions of the CRC.
Develop and adopt curricula, teaching materials and textbooks to improve the self image, lives and work opportunities of girls	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		
Facilitate the equal provision of appropriate services and devices to girls with disabilities	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>		

2.12.2 For the critical area of Concern “*The girl child*”, please indicate if any of these issues were addressed in efforts to promote the rights of the girl child. *Tick the appropriate response*)

Specific Measures/Actions Taken in the Following Areas	Response	Response
Effective policy development and implementation	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms in place	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Availability of sex disaggregated data	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Involvement of men and boys	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Capacity Building	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Gender and ICTs	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Food security issues	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
Financing gender equality	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

b) Ratification or domestication of relevant global protocols

2.12.2 Has your country ratified and domesticated the Convention on the Rights of the child?

Ratified

Yes

Domesticated

Yes

If you have responded “yes” to the question above, please elaborate:

Therefore, the Ministry is mandated to cater for development and protection of children and their welfare and is responsible for the establishment of appropriate mechanisms for the prevention of child abuse. Mauritius has also acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 26 July 1990 which contains a comprehensive set of international legal norms for the protection and well-being of children.

It has also signed the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography on 11 November 2001. It has ratified the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

Mauritius, as a State Party, has the obligation under Articles 34 and 35 of the CRC, to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation as well as to take appropriate measures to prevent the sale of and trafficking of children. In that context, it has submitted its second Report on the CRC to the United Nations. A report on African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child has also been prepared which provides a status on the implementation of policies and programmes for children.

PART 3: Review on key Achievement, Challenges and Lessons Learnt

Overall, what do you view as your key achievement, challenges and lessons learnt in your efforts to implement the BPFA at country level. For each of the three items highlight 4 priority.

Mauritius has achieved a lot in terms of implementing the areas of concern to which the Government of Mauritius has committed itself at Beijing and which are as follows:-

- mainstream gender in Government's policies and programmes;
- women and health;
- Gender Based Violence;
- Women and education; and.
- Girl child

Actions are being sustained and the abovementioned issues are being taken care in a very systematic manner and regular monitoring are being carried out to ensure that gender gaps do not prevails in the required sectors

Key Achievement in implementing the BPFA- Annex 1

Key Challenges in implementing the BPFA -Annex 1

Key Lessons Learnt in Implementing the BPFA- Annex 1

Final Note:

Are there any relevant issues that were not covered in the questionnaire? If yes, what are your views, comments and observations on these issues? -Nil

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

GENDER ISSUES

Conscious of the need to focus attention on the role of women in the development process, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection produced a White Paper on Women in Development in 1995 which had set the guidelines to a course of action that would ensure equity and full participation of women in all fields of development and in the different spheres of activity for the last decade and beyond the year 2000.

A gender approach to development was the basis of the White Paper. It adopted a transformative approach, which aimed at changing and enhancing the status of women in society.

Pursuant to its commitments at Beijing to foster gender equality, the Ministry has initiated a series of actions, namely:-

- The Sex Discrimination Act was passed in 2002 and a Sex Discrimination Division was set up subsequently at the Human Rights Commission to look into reported cases of complaints of discrimination against women.
- A 'Capacity Building for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women' Project funded by the UNDP is being implemented which aims at enhancing capacity of in-country gender analysis, policy making and monitoring to ensure gender mainstreaming.
- The main activities conducted under this project include, *inter-alia*, the following:
 - revival of the Gender Focal Point(GFP) Mechanism in 2005 and capacity building of 40 GFPs and other stakeholders including Civil Society on gender mainstreaming, the use of gender sensitive indicators and gender impact assessments from 2005 to date .
 - production and wide distribution of the following information brochures on gender terminologies:-
 - (i) A Gender Information brochure entitled 'Did You Say Gender' on gender terminologies;
 - (ii) An information brochure on international women's rights instruments, entitled 'From Commitment to Action';
 - (iii) A publication on the findings on the in-depth analysis of the Time Use Survey.

- setting up of an online Gender Information System (GIS) which will be operational shortly will enable GFPs to input sex disaggregated data to monitor gender responsiveness of their policies and programmes;
- participating in the reform of the Government towards programme based budgeting in 2008, therefore providing a key entry point for gender responsive budgeting by engendering the outputs and performance indicators of sector Ministries and their respective sector strategies. In this context, the Lead Agency has been working with various Ministries to engender their PBB exercise;
- An in-depth analysis of the Time Use Survey (TUS), an international human rights instruments. The findings of the study have confirmed the gender pay gap, the lower status of women in the employment sector, women's unaccounted contribution to the economy as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the glass-ceiling effects and the persistent sex distribution of household tasks in Mauritius;
- revisiting the 2005 National Gender Policy in 2008 into an overarching framework that calls upon sectoral Ministries to design there-from their respective gender policies and action plans with gender sensitive performance indicators for monitoring and evaluation. The **National Gender Policy Framework** (NGPF) provides the broad institutional & operational guidelines for the implementation of gender mainstreaming strategies. It also stipulates that gender disaggregated data and creation of a related information system are essential for monitoring and evaluation. Such a system would need to generate information about why progress has not been achieved and what factors led to or blocked any progress. Gender-sensitive indicators thus have been developed which explicitly provide quantitative and qualitative information about results concerning the evolution of gender issues. Background analysis of the situation will also be essential, to determine which cluster of indicators need to be considered together, to gauge the extent of progress in unlocking gender disadvantage and to identify new unanticipated developments. With regard to accountability for results, the NGPF stipulates that "accountability for results" also means that the allocations were actually spent and reached the intended beneficiaries, and rights-holders were satisfied and there were improvements in gender equality and well-being. These allocations need to be therefore monitored for equity.
- As from July 2008, the Women's Unit of the Lead Agency has been restyled into a Gender Unit (GU). In line with this change in appellation, activities of the GU have shifted from women's traditional empowerment activities to gender mainstreaming to achieve gender equality and equity.

Challenges

This Ministry as the lead agency has assisted the Pilot Ministries (Youth, Labour, Education, MWR, Finance) to design their respective sectoral gender policies. The major challenge forward remains the formulation and the ownership of these respective gender policies.

Moreover, the Ministry has to embark on a national awareness campaign so that all relevant information pertaining to gender trickles down to the grassroots.

WOMEN AND HEALTH

To ensure that women enjoy the highest standard of physical and mental health, the Government has continued to provide free health services from more than **200** service points around the island. Services relating to Sexual and Reproductive Health are provided by the Government and Non-Governmental

Organizations. Recognizing the need to increase access of women to Sexual Reproductive Health Services and Information, to protect them against Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and HIV/AIDS, to promote Safe Motherhood and increase male involvement and participation in the process of women empowerment, the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare has adopted and initiated innovative approaches to ensure that women's health and well-being are fully entertained. These include the "Men as Partners" project, Pre-marital Counselling as well as the Marriage Enrichment Programmes. It is also sustaining the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and lately, it has focussed on programmes related to cervical screening which was carried out in collaboration with the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association.

With respect to the feminization of AIDS, the Ministry is also a key partner in the fight against the HIV and AIDS and is working jointly with the AIDS Secretariat of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to curb down the increasing trend of the pandemic. The National Women's Council operating under the aegis of the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare has conducted various capacity building/ training programmes with its personnel to in turn sensitize women at the level of Women's Associations on the issue and on the risks associated with the disease.

Challenge

In view of the ageing population, the tendency of female related diseases is increasing significantly and therefore, the Government will be called upon to invest adequately into that sector.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

The Government of Mauritius pledged at the Beijing Conference to enact a Domestic Violence Act which is now a reality and today with the enforcement of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act (PDVA), more

and more women are breaking their silence of the issue and willing to report such cases of violence. Women are also more aware of the legal protection. In addition to that, other legal provisions have been made in the Mauritian Constitution to guarantee equality and protection of basic human rights.

Legislation

Gender-based violence has been given special attention in Mauritius. Since statistics reveal that women are the major victims of violence, the Protection from Domestic Violence (PDVA) was enacted in 1997 and subsequently amended in 2004 with the view to protecting other members of the family under the same roof.

In line with the Government Programme for the Year 2005-2010 to strengthen the enforcement mechanism of the Protection from Domestic Violence Act, further amendments were brought to the Act in 2007 and approved by the National Assembly. The aim is to provide harsher penalties to perpetrators and reinforce the institutional mechanism to better support victims. The Ministry is now finalising matters with a view to proceeding with the proclamation of the Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2007.

Institutional Mechanism

In line with that an appropriate mechanism to implement policies and programmes in favour of families and to enforce the PDVA, the Family Welfare Unit was set up at the level of this Ministry since July 2003.

Services

The Unit operates through a network of six regional offices known as Family Support Bureaux, which provide family, psychological counselling and legal advice services as well as assistance to adults and children victims of domestic violence and abuse in a holistic manner. One shelter is operational by the Ministry to provide temporary protection to victims of violence over a period of 15 days pending alternative arrangements for a place of abode while other NGOs also offer temporary shelter facilities to victims of violence.

Close collaboration has also been established with the Police Department in regard to law enforcement through the setting up of 6 regional Police Family Protection Units. The Ministry of Health also collaborates at the level of 2 hospitals where victims of domestic violence victims admitted to hospitals are referred to the Ministry for follow up either for protection orders and/or counseling services.

The Ministry also assists victims of domestic violence by providing services of barristers as and when required at Court Level; as well as financial assistance when victims leave the shelter. The Ministry further refers victims to the Ministry of Social Security for social aid in cases where the victim has been abandoned by her spouse and is faced with financial constraint.

National Action Plan to combat Domestic Violence

A National Action Plan to combat domestic violence has been launched in November 2007. The Plan contains five strategic objectives:-

- (i) improving legislation on domestic violence and strengthening of the justice system and the agencies response;
- (ii) appropriate, accessible, timely, coordinated multi-agency responses and support to all victims and children who need it;
- (iii) sensitize and change attitudes to prevent domestic violence from happening in the first place;
- (iv) promote responsible reporting, advocacy, sensitization and promotion of a forum by media specialists to encourage the comments at large to discuss domestic violence;
- (v) Undertake research and studies on domestic violence, strengthen capacity building and set up appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan to combat domestic violence for the promotion of family welfare.

A series of projects have also been initiated by this Ministry to address the problem of domestic violence through sustained awareness campaign. This has resulted in an increase of reported cases of domestic violence. Besides, talks and seminars, various projects have been initiated since 2002, namely the Anger Management Programme, Men as Partners Project (MAP), Marriage Enrichment Programme, Premarital Counselling Programme and the Setting up a Zero Tolerance Clubs.

Challenges

There is a lack of data collection as data available through the MWRCDFW and the Police Family Protection Unit are often not collected in a systematic way. The quality of the data is poor, inconsistent over time and not entirely representative. Double counting is a common problem, whereby women seeking repeated services from the same agency are counted more than once. These problems are largely the result of inadequate training, lack of resources and poor coordination among agencies. The challenge is to harmonize data collection so that the extent of domestic violence can be gauged.

Services and prevention efforts to address domestic violence require a sustained funding stream and the main sources of funding is the State. State funding for such initiatives are often inadequate and funding from donors is often project-driven and sometimes not sustained. There is, thus, the need to network with funding agencies such as UNIFEM for support to combat domestic violence.

Another challenge concerns an appropriate perpetrators' therapy programme geared towards long term solutions of gender-based violence.

THE GIRL CHILD

Convention on the Rights of the Child – Child Development Unit (CDU)

In 1990, Mauritius became signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which stipulates that Governments must strike for a society fit for children and in this endeavour; the Ministry's policies actions have been geared towards ensuring that the best interests of the child are safeguarded. Thus, in 1995 in addition to the responsibility of women affairs, Government mandated the Ministry to cater for the protection, welfare and development of children and four years later, the Child Protection Act was enacted.

Institutional Mechanism

The Ministry has the mandate to cater for the protection, welfare and development of children – hence in 1995 the setting up of the CDU.

Consequently, the CDU was set up to be the executive arm of the Ministry to intervene in cases of child abuse and neglect. The Unit is responsible for the enforcement of legislation pertaining to children and for the implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to the survival, development, protection and participation of children. This Unit works closely with other agencies such as the Police Department and provides a 24-hour service through hot lines in six regional centres i.e, Family Support Bureaux:

A psychological counselling to children at risk/in distress, as well as to their parents are given and families are disposed with free legal assistance whenever required.

The main areas of intervention have included legislation, infrastructural mechanism; capacity building for parents, child care givers, and other stakeholders, IEC programs and developmental activities as well as projects/programs for children.

Legislation

The enactment of Child Protection Act (CPA) in 1994 has been a major instrument in establishing the guiding principles and procedures for the protection of children. Further, the Amendment to the CPA in **December 2005** has enlarged the scope of operation with respect to cases of abandonment, abduction and trafficking of children and provide for harsher punishment for those who contravene the law. Regulations have been made under the Child Protection Act 1994 to provide for the implementation of specific projects and programmes:

- The Institution for Welfare and Protection of Children Regulations 2000 makes provision for the regulation of the Early Childhood Development Sector (3 months to 3 years) including the provision for the registration of Day Care Centres (DCC) with the Ministry and for the monitoring of their services/activities.
- The Child Protection Act (Foster Care) Regulations 2002 were made to enable children victims of abuse/neglect/abandonment to be placed with registered foster families and to monitor process of registration of foster parents and placement of children therewith.
- In accordance with the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Act 2000, the Ministry acts as Central Authority with respect to this issue. Our main role is to secure the

prompt return of children wrongfully retained in another State and to ensure that the rights of custody and of access under the law of one contracting State are effectively respected.

- The Ombudsperson for Children Act 2003 was enacted to ensure that the rights, needs and interest of children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities and individuals.
- The Ministry has brought amendments to the CPA in Dec 2008 with a view to implementing the Child Mentoring Programme. Registered child mentors would act as role models and provide individual guidance and care in the living environment of children in difficult circumstances.

Various Projects/Programmes are implemented at the level of CDU

- Protocol of Collaboration
- Tardy Declaration
- Early Childhood Development (ECD)
- Outreach Programmes
- Community Child Protection Programme (CCPP)
- Protocol of collaboration to victims of sexual assaults

WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Mauritius committed itself to the formulation of policies to encourage girls to take up non traditional subjects including Science and Technology; as well choosing careers which have been hitherto considered as male domains.

Since 1976 the Government of Mauritius has introduced free education at primary and secondary level. The enrolment of both boys and girls has increased steadily over the past years. As at 2008, enrolment of girls at primary level was 65,879 as compared to boys which stood at **58,128**. Enrolment in secondary schools was **48%** for boys and **52%** for girls. At the tertiary level, **3861** males were enrolled at the University of Mauritius as compared to **4607** females.

Mauritius has undertaken to provide educational facilities to students (boys and girls) till they reach the maturity age to enter the world of work. The pre-vocational sector caters for around **8011** students ejected out of the system after the primary cycle. The Pre-Vocational Scheme makes provision for Certificate of Primary Education drop outs to ensure equity in educational services in the State and Private Sectors.

The Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) was set up in 1989 and is responsible for the planning, designing, monitoring implementation and evaluation of training programmes at national level. Training is imparted by both IVTB owned and registered private institutions which offer in house training as well as apprenticeship and on the job training in about 18 different sectors. The IVTB offers a variety of technical and vocational courses. The number of girls attended the IVTB courses in 2007 stood at **1898** as compared to **6623** boys

A Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has also been set up to foster and plan the development of post secondary education and training. Since its creation, the TEC has also taken initiatives to promote research in tertiary institutions.

In line with its policy to encourage both boys and girls to opt for Science and Technology, the Government of Mauritius is providing laboratory facilities and computers to primary and secondary schools. Government also provides scholarships equally to males and females and financial assistance to needy students for the purchase of books and payment of examination fees.

Training

The Government of Mauritius, through the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, and the Industrial and Vocational Training Board (IVTB) are providing various training programmes for empowering women and girls at all levels. A variety of courses including dress-making, home-economics, handicraft, adult literacy and Information Technology are offered by the Ministry for the period **2003 to 2007, 60,000** women have benefited from the various training programmes.

The National Women's Council which operates under the aegis of the Ministry has widened the scope of operation of its Units, namely, the Adult Literacy Unit and the Dressmaking and Related Craft Unit, to apply a more holistic and coherent approach to implement activities and projects with a view to addressing women's issues by:

- facilitating their involvement in economic activities;
- promoting self development and employability through literacy;
- strengthening capabilities through training in capacity building; &
- facilitating women's access to information.

Challenges

The challenge is that of upgrading and/or re-skilling of redundant women of the EPZ sector to ensure that they have access to alternate jobs or the possibility of starting a micro enterprise.

Other pertinent challenges in regard to our education system are that of formalizing continuous development programmes in both public and private sectors to give women the opportunity to occupy higher levels of responsibility. Open learning, distance learning as well as selected training programmes could be an integral part of all tertiary education programmes to allow women to adjust work and family responsibilities with learning.