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SEMINAR PAPER

*Human  
Security,  
Poverty and  
Conflict in  
SADC*

**Human Security - Poverty and Conflict  
A Mauritian Perspective**

SEMINAR

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**Human security: the new vision**

Human security, poverty and conflict resolutions have become a new concern for the world and figures prominently on the agenda of many world forums, international institutions, states and civil society organizations

For the coming years, the challenges for most of the world independent nations will be to ensure the overall human security and livelihoods of their people, as well as the respect of their basic human rights and to protect them from the threat of diseases, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression, and environmental hazards, while sustaining the traditional state security and sovereignty

The new vision to human security is that of a humane world where people can live in security and dignity, free from poverty and despair, a world, where the individual is guaranteed the freedom from fear and from want, with equal opportunities and the best conditions possible to develop his full human potentials.

In essence, human security means "freedom from pervasive threats to people rights, their safety and their lives". It is a not concern with weapons; it is a concern with human life and dignity

**The principles of human security**

Human rights and humanitarian law are considered to be the foundation for building human security, protection and promoting human rights, the rule of law, democratic governance and structures, a culture of peace and the peaceful resolutions of conflicts are the necessary conditions for human security to evolve and be sustained over time

Building human security is the promotion of sustainable development through alleviation of poverty; the provision of basic social services for all and sustaining the goal of people centred development

## **Human security: a national and universal concern**

Human security is a human concern that cuts across the rich and the poor nations. There are threats that concern all people, such as unemployment, drugs, crime, pollution, human rights violation and terrorism. The only difference is that they differ in scope and scale from the different parts of the world.

Whenever security of people is at stake, wherever it may be, there is a tendency for other nations to get involved in. issues like famine, diseases, drug trafficking, terrorism, ethnic disparities and social disintegration, are often not confined within borders but dealt at a global level.

## **Human Security Poverty and Conflict: the Mauritian Perspective**

### **Economic security**

The economic security of people is the assurance of their basic income, secure employment usually from productive and remunerative work or in the last resort from some form of publicly funded safety nets. At world level, it is estimated that only one quarter of the world may presently be economically secure.

The state of the economy, the natural, human, material and financial resources available, the types and nature of political regimes in place influence the degree and intensity and quality of human security.

To present the Mauritian perspective of human security, it is imperative that we make an analysis of the state of the economy and identify the threats, challenges and constraints with regards to human security, poverty and conflict resolutions.

### **The state of the Mauritian economy**

#### **Mauritius: a Small developing Republic Island**

Mauritius is a Small Island Developing State and is located among the most vulnerable regions of the world, in relation to the intensity and frequency of natural and environmental disasters. It is also subject to the adverse effects of constraints and factors such as: Small domestic market, diseconomies of scale, distances from major growth centres, high costs of transporting exports to overseas markets, limited resources, limited arable land, narrow production base, high infrastructure costs, ecological fragility, proneness to natural disasters and heavy dependence on international trade

These adverse conditions and constraints threaten the sustainable development, livelihoods and human security of the people of the island.

#### **Economic Growth: *a brief perspective***

Over the last two decades, Mauritius, a fragile independent nation that was caught in the vicious circle of poverty and an exploding demographic explosion, has experienced rapid growth. The country has been transformed from a low-income mono crop economy, with a narrow production base at independence to middle income country, with a more diversified structure, relying on four main pillars, namely the manufacturing, sugar, tourism and the financial service.

According to the Human Development Report, Mauritius is classified among the first 20 medium Human Development countries, ranking from 71<sup>st</sup> in 1999, 63<sup>rd</sup> in 2000 and 67<sup>th</sup> in 2002. The ICT sector considered as the fifth pillar of the Mauritian economy is expected to create 15,000 new jobs within the next 5 years. With the diverse economic growth the

country witnessed increased employment creation, rising income and improvement in living standard

### **The Export Processing Zone**

The EPZ exports represented 70% of the domestic exports in 2001 and contributed 10, 2 % of the GDP

### **The tourism sector**

Tourism has evolved as the third pillar of the economy and contributes significantly to the economic growth and development of Mauritius mainly in terms of employment and export earnings. 660,300 tourist visited Mauritius in 2001 as compared to 291,500 in 1991. Tourism contributed 3% of the GDP in 1995 and 13% in 2001. The sector 40,000 direct and indirect employment. Tourism receipt has reached 18,166 million annually

### **Manufacturing**

The manufacturing sector in Mauritius comprises of the sugar mills, production activities meant for the Export Processing Zone and the non EPZ Sector. It represents 20% of the GDP in 2001. The EPZ sector is predominantly based on the export of textile and clothing to Europe, where Mauritius enjoyed full access under the Lome convention

### **The financial services**

Over the years, the contribution of the financial and business services sector (excluding ownership of dwelling) to the earning rose from 10.1 in 1992 to an estimated 16.8 of the GDP in 2001

### **The labour force**

There has been significant transformation has been observed in the labour force. Statistics are confirming that the rate of unemployment is increasing. The estimated number of unemployment in the year 2002 was estimated at 51,000. State employees constitute about 13 percent of the local labour, 137, 00 in the manufacturing sector with 91,000 from the EPZ sector, 40, 000 in the tourist sector

### **Earnings**

Nearly 60 % of the population earns monthly income of RS6000 or less  
Less than one quarter (23.7 %) earning Rs6000 to RS 8000  
9.6% between Rs15, 000 to RS30, 000  
0.9% between Rs30, 000 and RS50, 000.  
0.3% above Rs50, 000.

### **Inequity in wealth distribution: A threat to Human Security**

Inequity in wealth is equal to social inequality, poverty and threat to human rights and human security. Business statistics in Mauritius reveal that much of the agricultural land, textiles, financial services, luxury hotels on beaches and units in the EPZ are controlled by a handful of families with better conditions in terms of education, skills and economic resources, gained from the country's rapid development. We witnessed social and spatial mobility of the more affluent families to high profile localities. On the other end, the disadvantaged tend to segregate into poverty prone settlements.

Prosperity and relative poverty become both highly visible over time in the rapidly changing Mauritius .The table on earnings clearly indicates the income disparity.

**The economic inequity has been highlighted in the new Government's programme 2005-2010. *The statement reads as follows:***

The concentration of ownership of assets, especially over the last years, is one of the factors accounting for the present downturn in the national economic situation. This concentration of ownership of assets is not only unfair, but also gives rise to misallocation and inefficiency in the utilization of resources and thus impedes growth.

**The economy is in the red today: *A threat for human security and poverty alleviation***

During the last few years, the economy has been affected by a number of events at both local and international levels and the negative impacts are badly felt today

In the new Government programme 2005-2010-read by the President of the Republic in July 2005, it is confirmed that the *economy is at red*. The statement (ref. page 6 chapter 47) reads as follows:

*My government recognizes the importance of maintaining a stable macro economic environment, so critical to boost investor's confidence and fuel investment. On many fronts, the economy has deteriorated - all key macro-economic indicators are at red. Unemployment has soared to unprecedented levels: inflations, balance of payments disequilibrium and rising debt continue to impact adversely on the economy: social inequality keeps widening, our international competitiveness continues to be seriously eroded.*

The economy which some years back permitted high levels of growth and full employment, is now facing new challenges of the globalisation and liberalization of trade in line with the WTO. Many of the semi-protectionist advantages enjoyed by Mauritius under the GATT is adversely affected. The current Lome Convention (Lome 1V) is over. The Multi Fibre Agreement (MFA) that has enabled Mauritius to receive higher prices for its clothing exports to the European (EU) and US expires in 2001. Clothing and textiles will be subject to the same rules of the free and fierce competition. Mauritius has already lost its comparative cheap labour to the emerging nations such as China, Vietnam and Bangladesh. The Mauritian Labour market is shrinking rapidly, giving rise to unemployment. Reference is often made to jobless growth and the emergence of the knowledge intensive industries

**Structural Crisis of the Sugar Industry: a threat to economic security**

The sugar Industry is in a deep crisis and this will deepen during the three coming years, probably into an expected cataclysm. The sugar protocol under the Lome Convention has reached its limit. The price of sugar will go down to one third of its actual price

In term of export earning, for 2001, the total sugar exports constituted 7% of the total sugar exports, compared to 70% two decades ago. The crisis is so deep that it cannot be alleviated by the depreciation of the rupees. Many sugar mills have been closed down, with more and more job losses, leaving the countryside without any serious employment prospects at all.

Instead of going for an alternative agricultural diversification programme to preserve and create new employments, a Voluntary Retirement Scheme has been proposed, and to date, 10,000 workers have already retired. In the coming years 10,000 more employment in sugar sector will be lost. The re-structurisation and centralization process do not create employment but on the contrary is reducing sustainable employment. This crisis is in some way the chronicle of an anticipated crisis

**The anticipated Free Zone Industry Crisis: A threat to some 70,000 workers security**

The free Zone textile industry is also in an absolute major crisis. Many factories have already shut down and there will be many more in the days to come. The Multi Fibre Agreement ended in January 2005 making the crisis another chronicle of an anticipated crisis.

The budget speech 2005 -2006 gives the following economic indicators to highlight the state of the economy. The global economy expanded by 4 % in 2004, the highest growth rate in 30 years. Growth in the domestic economy for 2004 is estimated at 4.2 percent. This will result in an increase of 3.1 in per capita GDP, a significant progress in our standard of living. Foreign Direct Investment in 2004 amounted to 1.8 billion indicating that investor's confidence in our economy is high and improving. Inflation rate is at 5.7 for the fiscal year ending June 2005. The major causes of increase in Consumers Price Index are the strengthening of the major currencies, increase in freight rates and rise in petroleum price. Unemployment rate was 8.4 percent in September 2004

### **The impact of the lost of employment in the EPZ sector on the household and family security**

A study carried by the UNDP in the EPZ sector on the impact of the closing down of factories on workers confirms the following

- 30% of the overall workforce in the sector has decreased
- 84% are women and 16% man and most of them come from the rural areas this confirms that women are very vulnerable in the sector.
- The lost employment has affected the overall household economic security
- The motivation for most of the women to work in the EPZ sector is to meet the family expenses related to the education of their children, child care and housing project
- One third of the workers had their contract of employment terminated without any prior notice as per existing legislation
- The EPZ Sector is not covered by provisions of labour laws concerning payment of compensation in case of closures as in other employment sectors .47% has not been paid compensation as per labour legislation.
- To cope with the reduction of family income, cost related to food item like meat fish, clothing, and leisure were cut down. (46.9 % claims to have reduced cost on food item, 31.8 % on clothing and 20% on leisure and 9% has stop sending their children to secondary school.
- Health Security: many suffered stress, hypertension, and psychosomatic diseases and needed psychological counselling.

### **Poverty: a threat to human security and peace**

In spite of progress, modernization and improvements in the overall welfare in Mauritius, there are still people living in rather sub-human conditions. In some areas, there is still lack of modern structures, recreational facilities and scarcity of decent human housing. Drug traffickers further pollute many poor regions

This situation is clearly depicted in one of the statements made in the New Government Programme 2005-2010 that reads as follows:

*It is a cause for concern that pockets of poverty have increased in many parts of our society. Vulnerable groups do not have access to resources and facilities enjoyed by most of our citizens and continue to lag behind in the mainstream of sustainable development. This has led to the serious problem of social exclusion*

### **The poverty line in Mauritius**

There is still no established poverty line in Mauritius. Very low income group households are defined as those whose consumption expenditure is below the half median assumption expenditure of all households in the country, based on the household survey. One in ten Mauritian is out of work. Nearly 60% of the population earns less than Rs6000 (200USD) per month and one out of four households are indebted.

On the basis of this assumption and data derived from the Household Budget Survey of 1996/1997, about 14.5% of households were living below poverty line at the time of the survey. Visible sign of poverty can be noted in suburbs of cities, mainly in the capital, in form of increasing number of social casualties. Poverty in Mauritius is often localized rather than widespread. The persistence of squatter's camps in city suburbs and some coastal areas confirms that a large proportion of the population are living in unacceptable and extremely inhuman conditions.

The majority of the poor and poorest households comprises of the landless, labourers, resource poor small farmers or cane planters, unemployed youth, female headed households, all of them have few assets, endowments or human skills

### **Commercial exploitation of children**

The commercial exploitation of children has been an issue of great concern for quite some time in Mauritius. It is difficult to confirm the figures, but based on fieldwork carried out by the authorities concerned, it is estimated that there must be 2600 girls below the age of 18 are currently involved.

It is estimated that 60% of the sexual workers are minor, with a few is still at school. About 30% of victim interviewed were in the age group 12-15 years old  
Out of 12 children interviewed, 18% is still in school

### **Human settlement -Security and poverty**

Housing is a basic necessity and human rights. The level of housing in Mauritius is quite satisfactory by international norms. 86% of household's are owner's occupants and more than 70% have housing units with concrete walls and roofs

According to the Human settlement Country report 2004, Mauritius is classified as one of the most densely populated island in the world with 591 persons per square kilometre

Built up areas are estimated to cover about 16% of the land in Mauritius and this percentage is increasing year by year. 6000 to 8000 permits representing around 1 million square meters of residential space are granted each year. The value of land for construction and for industrial development is so high that there is constraint pressure on agricultural land. The increasing importance of other sectors of activity in the economy, besides sugar, such as intelligent parks and business activities, tourism and industry will expand pressure on agricultural land as well as other areas of critical importance to the environment and raise other sustainability issue. 44% out of those who do not own housing stated that they could not make any savings at all in order to buy or build a house

### **Indebtedness and housing**

The Household Survey of 2002 confirmed that 85.2% of the households are in some kinds of debt. The major debt was on purchase or construction of a house.

### **Housing poverty and security**

The income of a household is thus taken into consideration in repayments of loans or the total price housing. Housing poverty affects the poorer sections of society and particular

land squatters. The construction materials used in squatter settlements is often very poor and there is either no income or motivation to upgrade the housing. Land squatting is very common in many coastal and suburb regions. Very often this issue has been considered as a law and order problem and the police have been requested to intervene

Before the general election in Mauritius, some 540 families squatted in the new housing complex that was near completion. The families have been forced to leave the housing complex and are currently living in sub human units without the basic health and sanitary amenities. Negotiation with the state is on going. This is a case of extreme poverty and human distress

### **Government Commitment**

The new government in its programme 2005-2010 has committed itself to protect the rights of every family to a house as well as protection against the disintegration of the family unit, against violence and insecurity and to create the necessary condition for the setting up of decent housing at reasonable costs.

### **Health security -the Mauritian Perspective**

Health is one among the major objective for sustainable development, livelihood and human security.

### **The Health Status of Mauritius**

Health has been an important focal point for reform over the last few years

Over the past decades Mauritius has witnessed diverse social and economic transformations. Parallel to the economic transformation the public health care system has ensured the availability of basic health services freely to every one without distinction through an extensive network of:

- ❖ Three district hospitals
- ❖ Specialized hospitals for psychiatry, chests, ear and nose
- ❖ A cardiac centre
- ❖ An impressive network of primary health care centres
- ❖ 2 medi-clinics
- ❖ 23 areas health centres and 108 community centres

Health indicators confirm a decline in the mortality rate, a constant birth rate, a low death rate and significant increase in overall life expectancy. The rate was 17.4 in 1998, 27.3 in 199, 19.8 in 2000 and 23 in 2002

- Life expectancy for woman is 74.2 years and 66.5 for men
- Immunization starts with babies and also occur at other ages

### **The threat and challenges of health security in Mauritius**

In spite of the rapid progress in Mauritius and its relatively high human development index, the rate of non-communicable diseases has witnessed significant rise during the past years and remains a very important issue of concern.

Heart, circulatory system and cardiovascular diseases have become the leading causes of mortality. According to official statistics, bad nutrition, and lack of physical exercise, tobacco abuse and alcoholism seems to be the main causes of such diseases.

**The White Paper on the Health Sector Reforms confirms the following:**

Among the adults aged 30 years: 20% have diabetes, 30% have hypertension 42% of the men are smokers and 16% are heavy drinkers

Approximately 13 percent of the Mauritian population suffers from diabetes, causing Mauritius to hold the world record on this count. This impact also on cardiovascular and kidney problems

The health system, which has successfully deal with the communicable disease in the past, has now to face the new challenge that is to eliminate the non-communicable diseases

### **Health problem is often associated with lifestyles and food habits.**

There has been a shift from the epidemiological patterns of diseases to non-communicable diseases. Chronic degenerative conditions due to changes in life style and diet have prompted increase in the prevalence of diabetes, heart diseases and cancer. Stress, psychiatric and mental disorders, alcohol related diseases is another area of concern.

Accident at work is another health hazards to which Mauritian are increasingly being exposed to. They are closely linked with automation at work and more frequently in the sugar sector

In the Budget speech 2005-2006 by the Hon. P. Jugnauth -former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Development, the following health challenges were highlighted.

*Good health is the single most important pre-requisite for a good quality of life. It is our deepest conviction that all Mauritian should get the best health care that the country can afford. That is why we will continuously implement reform, upgrade services and expand infrastructure in the health sector.*

We have made commendable progress on many health indicators, but health problem that are most common in our country are diabetes, alcohol related and cardiovascular diseases.

Demand for invasive cardiology surgery is already increasing. This will become more intense in the future. Breast cancer is on the increase and early detection can save many lives. Drug addiction, alcoholism and HIV/AIDS continue to disrupt family lives and to undermine the quality of life in our society. Government will make extra effort to fight these social ills with special emphasis on treatment and rehabilitation. There is a fear that sexually transmitted diseases may be on the increases in the years to come especially among the commercial sex workers.

On the other hand, the newly elected Government in his Programme 2005-2010 read by the President of the Republic on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2005 confirms the following issues regarding the health security in Mauritius. During the last few years, health services have been characterized by lack of global vision and lack of targeted primary health care. (Page 20 chapter 169). HIV Aids proliferation statistics are alarming and show that this matter has been sorely neglected.

### **Abortion: a threat to women health security**

Abortion rate continue to rise in Mauritius is a impacting negatively on the health status of women. It is estimated that during the last few years, there may be as many abortion as live birth rate in a year.

Abortions being illegal in Mauritius, many poor women are forced to resort to back streets abortions services, in the most unhygienic conditions or self induce methods, thus exposing themselves to serious health hazards and even in some cases to death.



According to the Situation Analysis of Women and Children in the Republic of Mauritius - October 2003 issued by the Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare, in 2001, 2598 cases of complications after abortions have been admitted to hospital and 739 to nursing home making the total to 3337. It has raised from 1497 in 1988, 2684 in 1998 to reach 3337 in 2011.

It is generally assumed that there may be 6 to 10 cases of complications in 2001 and there can be twenty cases of abortion in the country every year

### **Low Birth Weigh Babies**

During the last few years, the issue of low birth weigh babies has become another area of health concern. The rate of low weigh birth babies was 9.5 % in 1991, 15% in 1996 and 13% 2001. The main causes or risks factors are poverty, unhealthy diets, heavy load works of working women who try to combine their work and their home responsibilities.

### **Food Security: a threat to human Development security and survival**

People go hungry not because food is not available, but because they cannot afford it because they are poor. Food security means that all people at all times have both the physical and economic access to sufficient food to meet the dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.

It requires that people have ready access, entitlement to food by growing it for themselves, by buying it or having access to public food distribution. The availability of food is a necessary condition for human security

### **Food security in Mauritius**

Mauritius has an exclusive maritime zone of 1.9million sq kilometres offering marine resources and sea foods and 186, 500 acres of land for housing, industrial development and agriculture

77% privately owned and 23 % state owned. 48% of the land area that is 90 thousand acres is reserved for agricultural purposes, 82% for sugar cane and 18% for non-sugar agricultural activities

### **Agricultural land Ownership**

50 % Of the big producers so called the sugar barons own the agricultural land. 42,000 small planters own 50%

### **Land conversion**

During the last ten years, 5,500 acres of agricultural land has been converted for other purposes and it is expected that over the coming ten years, 8, 000 acres of land more will be converted.

It is sad to note that instead of using agricultural land to develop agriculture and agro-industry to assure the food security and food for export, concrete has been spread all over. The Cyber City has been constructed on one of the best agricultural land in Mauritius. The project could have been set up on the more rocky land.

### **Fresh Water resources**

Mauritius receives annually some 2100 mm of water from rainfalls and 80% is used for agricultural purposes. This is adequate for human, industrial and agricultural consumption if

properly managed, controlled and distributed, but this is not the case at the moment. Mauritius is heavily dependent on its surface and ground water

The increase in the use of water for domestic consumption, industrial and coastal tourism development and the corresponding volume of water which must be disposed of, has given rise to serious concern for water pollution and the protection of the integrity of water

### **Hazardous Waste**

Mauritius potentially produces hazardous waste from many industrial sources. There is an urgent need to create ways of minimising waste as this represent a severe threat to human security. Textile waste, oils and oily waste, inert waste, alkaline, paints, resin, acids, inorganic wastes, organic solvents, contaminated containers, plating metal, reactive wastes, pesticide and organic chemicals are the different form of hazardous waste produced in Mauritius

### **The threats to food security in Mauritius**

Rice and flour is the two most common staple foods in Mauritius. They are both imported and heavily subsidised by government and they depend highly on importation, international market price, freight, and the reserve of foreign currency. Such dependent conditions represent a permanent threat to the food security of the nation.

The crisis of the sugar sector and the EPZ Sector, will affect the reserve of foreign currency, which in turn will impact on the food security in Mauritius

### **The low fertility of land in Mauritius**

It is assumed that the land in Mauritius has low fertility rate due mainly to geographical and climatic conditions. To cope with this situation there has been heavy use of chemicals and fertilizers. 64,000 tons of fertilizers are used annually for a surface area of 90,000 acres of agricultural lands. This is a permanent threat to the food, health and environmental security and the overall sustainable development of the country.

### **Access to quality food**

The economic success has given rise to changes in the consumption patterns, which in turn bring new challenges to the health sector and security. Changes in lifestyles and diet brought significant rise to the prevalence of non-communicable disease. With globalisation, the tendency towards food street strategy has increased significantly thus impacting negatively on the health of people

### **National Food Stock.**

The food security of any population is closely linked with the stock of food available for the country. It is estimated that the stock available for the whole population is up to three months. This is a threat to the overall food security of the nation. Mauritius is a net importer of food; problems related to international market, natural disaster, transport strike or crisis in the availability of foreign currency would pave the way for starvation.

### **Environmental security - the Mauritian perspective**

The Rio Janeiro 1992, United Nations Conference on Environment and Development succeeded to bring the world commitment to the goal of sustainable development. The outcome was AGENDA 21, an ambitious programme of action on 39 environment and development issues and they provides the basis for action

Human beings rely on healthy physical environment to live grow and develop to the maximum of their potential. The degradation of local ecosystem and that of the global system threaten the sustainable development of Small Island.

### **Natural and Environmental Disaster in Mauritius**

Being a small island, natural disasters in Mauritius are mostly cyclones, droughts, flood and landslides. Government has established a central cyclone and other Natural Disaster Committee under the aegis of the Prime Minister Office. Prolonged drought is a phenomenon that affects Mauritius particular the provision of water and other economic sectors

The quality of life in which we live and enjoy depends mainly on the goods and services we consume and the physical environment in which we live in.

The national environment of Mauritius defined as high quality and vulnerable to damages from the effects of economic development, which generates waste; pollute air, and water and produces increasing emissions of greenhouse gases

### **Atmospheric pollution**

Mauritius produces 21 millions cubic meters of industrial waste and 2.7 millions tons of green house gases annually. If this trend continues, it won't be long before our environment, public health and socio-economic development, which depend heavily on tourism, are jeopardized.

### **Climate and Sea Level**

Mauritius is ecologically vulnerable and the localised consequences of a rise in sea level as result of global warming would be dramatic. There are risk of flooding of low-lying areas particularly to agriculture and habitation

The Mauritian ecosystems include sandy beaches, coral reefs, mangroves and coastal wetlands. With global warming associated with sea level rise, the overall system is at risk. Changes in the ecosystem will have major negative impacts on tourism, fresh water supplies, and fisheries bio diversity

Adverse effects can also impact negatively on agriculture, food security and human health (through changes in the geographical distribution of much vector borne disease). The livelihood and economic security of some 6000 traditional fishermen is at stake.

Steady economic growth usually yields higher standards of living, influences the pattern of consumption and put lots of pressure on the environment. New life styles produce new types of waste. The following constraints are key issues regarding Environmental Security in Mauritius

The demographic pressure and increased urbanization and industrialization. Pollution caused by the inefficient and unsustainable urban planning and its adverse effect on health.

The impact of such pollution range from mere annoyance to irritation of the skin, increased cough, exacerbation of respiratory diseases like asthma and chronic bronchitis. Development pressure upon coastal and it's negative impact on our marine ecosystem, and the economic activity of the fisherman community

Development adds pressure upon environmentally sensitive area, areas of landscape beauty, and mountain slopes. The Ferney Valley Saga is just one of the many examples.

The juxtaposition of conflictual activities next to residential areas impacts negatively on the overall security of the community.

The rapid growth of traffic is bringing increasing congestion together with longer journey times, air pollution and emission of greenhouse gases, high emissions of nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and particularly matters that represent high risk factor for the health security of people

The protection of wetland and areas required for retention of flood. Heavy floods, have affected many deprived regions during cyclonic and heavy rainy seasons, causing damage to property and health.

### **Law and Order and conflict resolution in the Mauritian Context**

The issue of law and order and ethnic conflict are of great concern to the Mauritian population as a whole. In the Budget speech 2005-2006 this issue was highlighted as one of the major concern of government. The statement reads as follows. *Crime is taking new forms and grown more sophisticated. The police force has to continuously gear itself to deal with new types of crime*

### **Women and children Victims of Violence: a threat to human security**

Although Domestic Violence has been in existence for more than five years, there is still a rise in the number of women victims of violence and abuses in Mauritius. The sad human stories regarding children and women victims continue to be the sensational news of the media.

Official figures confirm that in 1999, there have been 1510 cases of women victim violence and 1235 in 2000. In 2000, 7065 cases of women complaining of various family problems, with 2006 being in conflict with partner and 1121 domestic violence. There has been 2387 male complaint.

A survey carried out on Domestic Violence in 1998 in 1998 has shown that:

- 95% of the victims of domestic Violence were women
- 56% of domestic violence was due to alcoholism
- 24% to adultery
- 85% violence occurs on daily basis

According to the Probation and After Care Service of the Ministry of social Services, there are 6000 to 12,000 women who approach a magistrate each year in chambers for domestic violence. The artificial number of women victims of violence is far higher than those reported, as many cases not reported for reasons, such as economic dependence, emotional ties, cultural and religious conditioning

The new government in his Government Programme 2005-2010 is confirming that the situation is at red.

The statement reads as follows: *My Government is conscious of the deterioration of law and order in the country and its social and economic consequences. It impacts on the security and comfort of our citizens and visitors, but also on the image of our country as a place to invest. Government will take all necessary steps to consolidate law and order*

### **The Social Fabric: Mauritius a Rainbow Nation -Unity in Diversity**

Mauritius is an ethnically segmented society, bond within a state framework. The country is presented as a model of social cohesion to the outside world, but still we are all anxious

about the fragility of our social foundation and structure. For political reasons, very often this fragile social fabric has been subject to ethnic divisions and conflicts

**In the New Government programme 2005-2010, this issue is clearly highlighted**

Our cultural pluralism has always been a source of pride. Government will focus on reinforcing our multiculturalism, on celebrating our cultural and linguistic diversity as well as our multiple identities. Government will not follow the past practice of compartmentalising and fragmenting our social fabrics, and will instead implement policies aimed at promoting national unity.

**The Diego Garcia Military base: a threat to security and human rights**

In 1968, Britain granted independence to Mauritius on condition that the political leaders of Mauritius ceded part of its territory, the Chagos Archipelago. Around 200 inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago were forcibly exiled or tricked into exile to the three main islands of Mauritius between 1965 and 1973, without no right to return and living in abject poverty. Britain created thereafter, the British Indian Territory, which included Chagos Archipelago

In December 1966, Britain signed a defence deal with the United States and leases the BIOT to them for defence purposes for 50 years with the option for further 20 years. Today, on the atoll of Diego the US have a military base with nuclear weapons. The base was used in the Gulf war and is a threat to peace, human security in the region. The issue of the Chagos Military base is closely linked with the human rights to peace and security, to health and a general satisfactory environment

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#### Notes

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