**BEYOND 2020 - A PRAGMATIC ECOLOGICAL ROADMAP FOR MAURITIUS**

**Preamble**

The African Network for Policy Research & Advocacy for Sustainability (ANPRAS) has been championing environmental advocacy at grassroots ever since its establishment in 2008. ANPRAS has spearheaded a number of innovative actions and it is also the focal point for Earth Hour Global, Earth Day Network and the Let’s Do It World/World Cleanup Day in Mauritius. In 2014, ANPRAS was also entrusted to conduct the national consultations for the Post-SDGs Agenda under the UNDESA framework. Since 2017, ANPRAS has extended its scope under the Let’s Do It Mauritius umbrella which has now become a reputed national advocacy platform to bring about meaningful change for a cleaner & greener Mauritius.

**CALL FOR ACTION**

As the Republic of Mauritius will shortly be heading for the polls, ANPRAS-LDIM has come up with a number of pragmatic recommendations which it is advocating to be part of the electoral manifesto. ANPRAS & Let’s Do It Mauritius recommend the following:

**(A) Organizational Structuring**

Creation of a super ‘Ministry of Agriculture, Ecological Environment & Disaster Risk Management’

As a SIDS we need to develop a climate resilient economy; Climate Smart Agriculture and disaster-readiness should be high on the agenda.

**(B) Circular Economy**

* A paradigm shift to the ‘Circular Economy’ – providing incentives to businesses to break away from the linear economy
* Reintroduction of Deposit-Refund Systems (DRS) as the best way to ensure materials are preserved
* Ban unnecessary items and redesign products to be durable, repairable, and re-usable.

**(C) Land and Housing Development**

* Curb all industrial and residential development/ projects along the lower portions of the river which threaten the land and water quality.
* Strict control of authorities regarding wetland areas before construction permits are allowed
* Make it mandatory to plant endemic tree(s) as part of Building Permit procedures and Compliance Certificate.
* Enhance Rain water percolation to have permeable ground to allow underground water collection, at least
  + 50% of a given plot under development in rural areas
  + 25% of a given plot under development in urban areas

*Where the above is not achievable, particularly in urban areas, any such % shall be defined by the professions designing the project and as may be accepted by the authorities. Green roofs and urban farming could be considered as acceptable alternatives*

**(D) Protection of Forests/Trees**

* Classify tree cutting as a ***criminal*** offence
* Implement process for permission from Forestry Department / ‘Police de l’Environnement’ for clearance before any tree transplantation, else tree cutting where there is no alternative
* Enforce heavy penalties for tree cutting, both in form paid fines and as a mandatory activity under the “citizen environmental responsibility” dedicating a reasonable number of works proportional to the crime

**(E) Waging War Against Plastics**

* Government’s commitment to completely phase out ‘single use plastics’ by 2024
* Banning of single-use plastics at all governmental events/activities as from 2020
* Enactment of legal framework for the ‘food’ sector to provide eco-friendly alternatives at all restaurants & other eating outlets

**(F) Waste Management**

* Revamp the existing Waste Management Strategies
* Prioritize waste reduction with set thresholds for amount of waste produced.
* Reengineer waste collection by local authorities; waste segregation should be compulsory and local authorities to provide ‘coloured bins’ for same. Staggered waste collection (on separate days) is also recommended
* Incentivize the setting up of recycling plants, even fully state funded if required

**(G) Education Sector**

Changing the narrative, from ‘connecting to www’ to ‘connecting to earth’;

* The reintroduction of ‘Agriculture/Kitchen Gardening’ as a core component in the school curriculum, even at Primary level, especially related to Climate Smart Agriculture.
* Distribution of ecological goodie bags containing ‘steel/BPA free water bottle’, ‘reusable straws’, eco-friendly toiletries etc to all new child entering the primary/secondary cycle.
* Inclusion of a compulsory one-week component at Grade 12 (Lower 6) for students to undergo an Ecological Youth Service Camp (EYSC) where they will need to stay in unfamiliar surroundings and be called upon for cleaning and planting trees

**[H] Protection of Oceans & Seas**

* Increase government regulation on use less fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides in personal gardens as well as in the fields; Fertilizers enhance the growth certain algae that suffocate the corals and inhibit their growth.
* Ban ‘environment-unfriendly’ sunscreens and provide incentives for shops and hotels to sell reef-safe sunscreen (tax free)
* Creation of ‘Coral farms’ around the island and the establishment of a ‘National Reef Restoration Plan’
* Enforcement on ‘aquarium trade’; i.e. a prohibition on taking fish from the reef for the aquarium trade
* Complete ban on purse seine net fishing, it is just too destructive
* Creation of ‘Sea Rangers’ by enrolling ‘retired’ fishermen upon payment of stipends to monitor the coastal zone, using their former fishing boats and work in close collaboration with National Coast Guards.

**[I] General**

* Enact legal framework to combat ‘Green Washing’ by companies; this may require a thorough rethinking of CSR regulations
* Provide employment opportunities – Ensuring that there is sufficient expertise available to conduct inventory work, including taxonomists, biosystematists, ecologists, geneticists, and other experts.

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