

GIS Newsletter

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Information Society

Web portal for ICT indicators provides up-to-date information

The ICT Indicator Web Portal was officially launched on 15 April 2010 at Domaine Les Pailles. Set up by the National Computer Board (NCB), the Portal provides up-to-date information regarding the ICT Industry.

On the occasion, the NCB also launched its first newsletter for ICT Indicators with information and statistics on recent trends and tendencies on the ICT Infrastructure Readiness, Internet, ICT Market Revenue, Employment in the ICT Industry, and ICT Usage in households and schools. The newsletter on ICT Indicators will be issued twice a year.

Important tool of reference

The ICT Indicator Web Portal, which can be accessed at <http://indicators.ncb.mu>, is an important tool for policymakers, stakeholders and potential investors in that it provides a single point of reference for up-to-date sector information. It also provides local and international organisations with the required data on Mauritius.

Indicators are deemed essential in charting the way forward for any sector as they present data that facilitate measure of performance and benchmark development. As such, one of the provisions of the

National ICT Strategic Plan (NICTSP) 2007-11 relates to the setting up of a task force to work on the definition of indicators for the ICT sector as well as to regulate the updates on the definitions of adopted indicators in order to assess the development of the Information Society in Mauritius and ensure that the objectives are met. The task force, set up in 2008, is chaired by the National Computer Board.

147 indicators developed

The task force has thus developed some 147 indicators which are in line with those of international organisations such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS), UNESCO and the Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (DSTI) Committee for Information, Computer and Communications Policy.

The indicators, which have been collected by statutory data collection

organisations like the Central Statistics Office, Information and Communication Technology (ICTA), Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources, Tertiary Education Commission, and Human Resources Development Council, have been classified under broad categories. They are namely ICT Infrastructure Readiness Indicators which examine the state of our infrastructure; ICT Market Revenue Indicators to assess the revenue derived from the sector; ICT Manpower Indicators focusing on the workforce in the sector, especially on requirements; and ICT Usage Indicators in households, business and education to gauge the level of ICT penetration and utilisation.

Second phase being developed

The second phase of the ICT indicators web portal project being developed by the NCB is expected to enable data collection agencies such as the Central Statistics Office to connect directly to the portal and update the information in a timely manner.

The presentation of the web portal was followed by a workshop designed for stakeholders of the ICT sector. The aim was to assess the current state of the industry and finalise the State of Information Society Development Report. Discussions focused on ICT infrastructure and the digital divide, development of ICT exports and manpower requirements for the ICT Sector.



BPO activities - A fast emerging sector

Some ICT Indicators

Indicators	Year				
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Number of subscribers to fixed telephony (in thousand)	357.5	357.34	361.19	364.54	379.06
Number of subscribers to mobile telephony – post paid and prepaid (in thousand)	656.8	772.4	928.62	1033.26	1074.78
Volume of national mobile voice traffic (in million minutes)	703	956	1105	1350	1486
Number of Internet users who have subscribed for a broadband connection	5 398	27 895	61 497	91 734	127 718
Total Internet subscribers – include dialup, fixed broadband, DSL Internet subscribers, leased line subscribers, mobile Internet users and other broadband connection subscribers	128 555	143 479	166 059	199 511	251 453
Employment in the IT / BPO sector	3 801	5 513	6 960	10 440	12 000
Exports of ICT sector	Rs 1 b	Rs 1.5 b	Rs 1.8 b	Rs 2.5 b	n.a
Value Added in the ICT Sector - the contribution of ICT to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	Rs 8.6 b	Rs 9.9 b	Rs 11.5 b	Rs 12.7 b	Rs 14.3 b

Marine Protected Area around Chagos Archipelago

Mauritius condemns decision of Britain to proceed with project

The Government of Mauritius emphatically condemns the decision of the British Government to proceed unilaterally with the creation of a Marine Protected Area around the Chagos Archipelago despite the undertaking given to the Prime Minister of Mauritius by the British Prime Minister that the Project would be put on hold.

The Government of Mauritius consequently sent a Note Verbale to the British Government on 02 April 2010. On the same date, the Government decided it would not recognise the Marine Protected Area and would resort to other options to exercise its sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago.

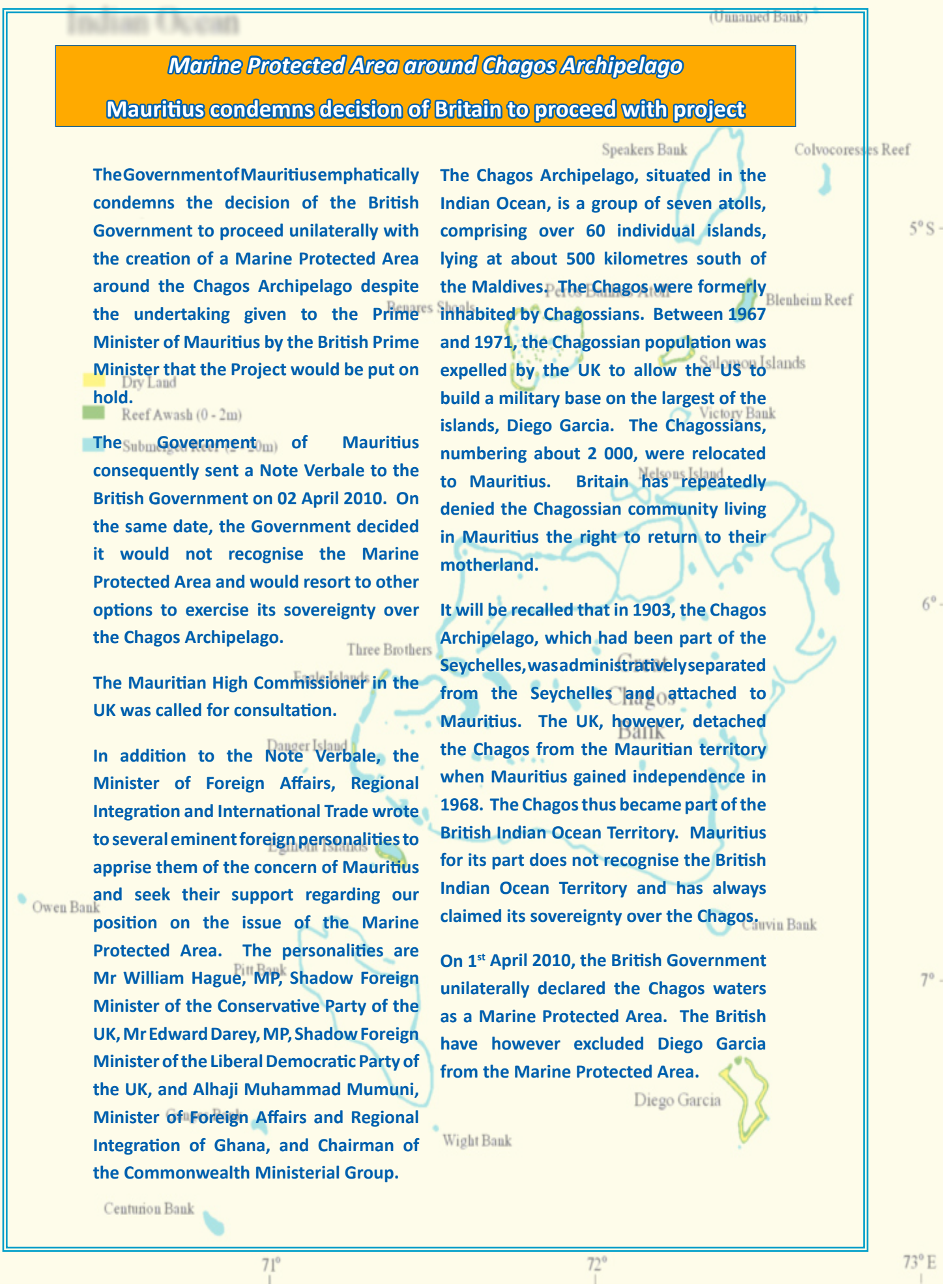
The Mauritian High Commissioner in the UK was called for consultation.

In addition to the Note Verbale, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade wrote to several eminent foreign personalities to apprise them of the concern of Mauritius and seek their support regarding our position on the issue of the Marine Protected Area. The personalities are Mr William Hague, MP, Shadow Foreign Minister of the Conservative Party of the UK, Mr Edward Darey, MP, Shadow Foreign Minister of the Liberal Democratic Party of the UK, and Alhaji Muhammad Mumuni, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration of Ghana, and Chairman of the Commonwealth Ministerial Group.

The Chagos Archipelago, situated in the Indian Ocean, is a group of seven atolls, comprising over 60 individual islands, lying at about 500 kilometres south of the Maldives. The Chagos were formerly inhabited by Chagossians. Between 1967 and 1971, the Chagossian population was expelled by the UK to allow the US to build a military base on the largest of the islands, Diego Garcia. The Chagossians, numbering about 2 000, were relocated to Mauritius. Britain has repeatedly denied the Chagossian community living in Mauritius the right to return to their motherland.

It will be recalled that in 1903, the Chagos Archipelago, which had been part of the Seychelles, was administratively separated from the Seychelles and attached to Mauritius. The UK, however, detached the Chagos from the Mauritian territory when Mauritius gained independence in 1968. The Chagos thus became part of the British Indian Ocean Territory. Mauritius for its part does not recognise the British Indian Ocean Territory and has always claimed its sovereignty over the Chagos.

On 1st April 2010, the British Government unilaterally declared the Chagos waters as a Marine Protected Area. The British have however excluded Diego Garcia from the Marine Protected Area.



Occupational risks

CCTV cameras to reinforce security in hospitals

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is in the process of installing CCTV cameras at strategic points in hospitals in an attempt to reinforce security of hospital personnel, especially as regards patients and accompanying relatives resorting to violence. Victoria hospital in Candos will be the first to be equipped with such facilities.

This was announced by the Minister, Dr R. Jeetah, on 1st April 2010 at a workshop aimed at addressing issues pertaining to violence perpetrated against hospital staff, held at the Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) in Pamplemousses.

An initiative of the Ministry in collaboration with the MIH, the workshop served as a platform where several topics linked with violence were discussed. The findings and recommendations of a study on violence in hospitals carried out by the MIH were also on the agenda. The findings and recommendations result from a survey on reported cases of violence registered in public hospitals from the period January 2007 to March 2009. The survey revealed an annual average of 20 cases.

The study aimed at exploring the prevalence of reported cases of violence in public hospitals, identifying the nature and scale of the problem and make recommendations for preventive strategies. It has shown that both verbal and physical violence are a common phenomenon in most of the public hospitals in Mauritius, particularly in high risk areas such as the casualty department. The results of the study will serve as a basis for future in-depth research into workplace violence in the health sector.

Risk factors for violence in hospitals, as identified by the study, are mainly: disagreement with patients on treatment, long waiting time, dissatisfaction with staff, lack of communication, hostile attitude of patients and influence of alcohol.

Other measures adopted to tackle the problem of violence are: the setting up of a security management committee at the Ministry to decide on major policies for security in health institutions, monitoring and implementation of security measures, and a regional security management committee at each regional hospital to ensure that security measures taken by the Ministry are effectively being implemented. In addition to these measures, police coverage is also available on a 24-hour basis at the Accident and Emergency departments.

It will be recalled that an average of about 8 000 patients visit the hospitals daily and the public health sector has a total workforce of some 15 000 officers.



The Casualty department - A high risk area

Hydrographic Survey

INS Nirdeshak operating in Mauritian waters

The INS Nirdeshak, an Indian surveying vessel, has just completed a four-week hydrographic survey mission in Mauritian waters. The vessel which reached Mauritian shores on March 26 set sail on April 27.

The hydrographic mission consisted in conducting the bathymetric survey of Flic en Flac, in view of the setting up of the land-based oceanic industry, and the surveying of St Brandon and the southern entrance of Grand Port. Staff from the Ministry of Housing and Lands also benefitted from on-the-job training on board the Indian vessel.

It is to be recalled that the mission of INS Nirdeshak to Mauritius is part of the on-going collaboration between the Governments of India

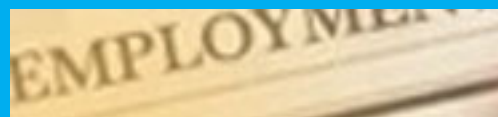
and Mauritius in the field of hydrography, and follows the organisation of the fifth session of the Indo-Mauritian Joint Committee on Hydrography held in Port Louis from 8 to 11 February 2010.

The first session of the Committee was held in January 2006. Since then, several surveys of Mauritian waters by Indian vessels have been completed and the corresponding navigational charts produced.

Regions covered include Port Louis Harbour and Approaches, the fishing port at Bain des Dames, Agalega Islands as well as Port Mathurin Harbour and Approaches. Surveys were also undertaken in the regions of Trou d'Eau Douce and Rivière Noire in the context of the land-based oceanic industry project.



INS Nirdeshak



Labour force and employment

Employment stood at 524 800 in year 2009

The number of people in employment in 2009 stood at 524 800 for a total labour force of 566 300.

The number of employed men was 342 000 and that of women 182 000.

The total number of unemployed people for 2009 was 41 500, of whom 15 800 men and 25 700 women.

It will be recalled that for year 2008, 519 000 people were in employment for a labour force of 559 000 and the number of unemployed stood at 40 400.



Women constitute 35% of the workforce



World Health Day 2010 Urbanisation and Health on the agenda

A concerted effort is required from all organisations and ministries and society at large to tackle health problems linked with urbanisation in Mauritius, mainly as regards lifestyle-related diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer and cardiovascular diseases.

The Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Dr R. Jeetah, made this appeal on the occasion of the launching of a series of activities at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Moka, in the context of the World Health Day 2010, observed on 7 April. The activities included an exhibition on non-communicable diseases, cooking demonstration and demonstrations on physical activity and yoga.

The theme chosen by the World Health Organisation to mark the 2010 World Health Day was: "Urbanisation and Health". The objective was to raise awareness on health problems linked to increasing urbanisation around the world, as more and more people leave villages to settle in towns. World Health Day is celebrated annually since 1950.

Dr Jeetah also stressed that urbanisation is one of the contributing factors towards a substantial rise in non-communicable diseases in Mauritius. According to him, better urban planning, good eating habits, a healthy lifestyle and the practice of physical activity will bring about healthy

behaviours, safety as well as better sanitation among the population. Improved urban living conditions will ultimately bring huge health benefits to all urban residents, he added.

For his part, Professor David Owens, director of the Diabetes Research Unit at Llandough Hospital in Cardiff, Wales in United Kingdom, present at the ceremony, underlined that more investment should be made in health care in parallel with urbanisation and that there is a need to adopt the best practice in health care. In his view, it is imperative that Mauritius comes out of the list of the top ten countries with a high prevalence rate of diabetes.

It will be recalled that 50% of the population in Mauritius are town dwellers and due to the growth and expansion of urban zones there is a high risk of an increase in the number of health problems associated with urbanisation which may also impact on the natural and cultural environment, on social conditions and ultimately on the health determinants of Mauritians.



NCD scening now a basic element of health care

Health

Survey determines prevalence of NCD

According to the findings of a survey on non-communicable diseases and their associated risk factors carried out in 2009, the prevalence of diabetes among the population aged 25 to 74 years was 23.6% and that of hypertension 37.9%. The prevalence of elevated cholesterol was 34.7% while that of smoking was 21.7%, that is 3.7% for women and 40.3% for men.

The study also concluded that, taking into consideration the European Body Mass Index, about half of the population was either overweight or obese. It was found that 56.2% of Mauritians did not practise any physical activity.

The study revealed that 48.5% of the population, of whom 33.8% women and 65.9% men, consumed alcohol at least once weekly.

The survey, by determining the prevalence of NCDs, will help the Government to formulate policies for the prevention and control of such diseases.

The survey was carried out in 2009 by the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in collaboration with Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute of Australia, Umea University Hospital of Sweden, St. Mary's Hospital and Imperial College of U.K. and the National Public Health Institute of Finland.

Registry management

Mauritius hosts 7th Corporate Registers Forum Annual Conference

The 7th Corporate Registers Forum (CRF) annual conference on the theme “The Integrity of Corporate Registers” was held in Mauritius from 20 to 23 April at the Sugar Beach Hotel in Flic en Flac.

The theme was based on the need for better governance of information for the benefit of users of company registries namely shareholders and other institutional investors. It also took into account the recent financial crisis, which was partly attributed to regulatory failures, and the fact that users of company information are demanding data that are trustworthy and have called for better enforcement of existing regulation.

The conference, with the participation of both local and international delegates, aimed at providing an opportunity for members of the CRF to reflect on and share their experiences in the field of corporate registers, as well as acquire new ideas and knowledge. It also served as a platform to facilitate communication between registry professionals as regards latest developments in corporate registry management. Processes to prevent fraud in registers and innovative services in business registration were also on the agenda. The overall aim was to enhance corporate registry management.

Speaking on that occasion, the Chief Executive of the Financial Services Commission, Mauritius, Dr. Milan Meetarbhan, stressed the importance of an apex organisation to ease communication and share experiences in the field of corporate registry management given that the companies involved are addressing the same jurisdictions though operating under different legal systems.

Commenting on the recent financial crisis and the issue of regulatory reform, Dr Meetarbhan underlined that there has been a major shift from the earlier debates where a lot was being said about “de-regulation” and “less regulation to the demand”

towards “more regulation” or better enforcement of existing regulation. He added that a normative global framework is recommended and that in the absence of a global regulator, national regulators should exercise both national functions and act on behalf of the international community to enforce global norms.

The Corporate Registers Forum was launched in New Zealand in 2003. Today it groups representatives of the national registers of 33 countries.

General Elections 2010

Registered electors for the May 5 general elections total 879 897 for the 20 constituencies of Mauritius and that of Rodrigues.

The electoral register of 2009 is being used for these elections, the register for this year not being ready yet.

Constituency no 14, Savanne and Black River, is the one with the largest number of electors, that is, 58 341, while constituency no 3, Port Louis maritime and Port Louis east, has the smallest number of electors, 22 488.

Other figures

- Number of political parties registered: 65
- Number of candidates: 561
- Number of polling stations: 301
- Personnel deployed: 13 000

Rural Infrastructure

Camp Thorel – L'Espérance link road officially open

The new road from Camp Thorel to L'Espérance, constructed on the existing track road, was inaugurated on 31 March in the presence of the Prime Minister, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, and the Minister of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping, Mr Anil Bachoo.

The project consisted in the upgrading of the existing 2.6 km track from the village of Camp Thorel to link Camp Thorel Road B53 with L'Espérance. It involved the widening and strengthening of the existing road to 7.0 metres, construction of footpaths and drains and miscellaneous road equipment such as carriageway markings, traffic signs, and handrails to the tune of some Rs 40 million.

Previously, inhabitants of the region had to make a detour of 35 minutes through Nouvelle Découverte and Ripailles to reach L'Espérance. The new road provides a direct link between Camp Thorel and L'Espérance and contributes to ease traffic in the area.

Other road infrastructure projects in the east include the Terre Rouge-Verdun link road, already under way, to ease traffic between the north and the south by skipping Port Louis, and the Flacq bypass, in the pipeline, to ease the traffic flow towards the east.

Another project, aiming at easing traffic from upper Plaines Wilhems towards Moka and Flacq districts, is the upgrading of the Wooton-Quartier Militaire (B6) road. Phase 1 of the project, covering 2.4 km from Wooton to Belle Rive, was completed last year. Works for Phase 2, stretching from Belle Rive to Quartier Militaire over 6.6 km, are due to start by mid-year.



The old track road ...



... and the new road