

PREFACE

When the Republic of Mauritius became the first country to sign and ratify the Convention on Biological Diversity in September 1992, we were making a clear statement that we would try to prevent any more of our unique biodiversity from following in the footsteps of the dodo.

Our biodiversity has been severely affected by humans, either directly through factors such as habitat destruction and conflict with individual species, or indirectly through pollution and the effect of introduced species. The remaining natural systems are now very fragile and degraded, and many species are known from only a handful of individuals, and the future of the biodiversity is dependent upon us for its survival.

With the socio-economic pressures affecting the Republic of Mauritius, it is easy to ignore biodiversity issues in the short term. However, biological conservation is not only about saving unique species from extinction. Ultimately the Country's future depends upon its natural resources – to ensure a reliable supply of water, to maintain productive agriculture and fisheries, to protect the island from cyclones and tsunamis, for sustainable tourism and ecotourism, and to preserve the intangible benefits that biodiversity gives to everyone.

Having signed the CBD, it is our duty to put the convention into practice and this document, the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for the Republic of Mauritius, sets out a ten-year strategy to ensure that we can achieve this. By integrating the conservation of biodiversity, its sustainable use and the fair and equitable sharing of its benefits into decision-making, and initiating active and clear ecosystem management for conservation, we can aspire to achieving a significant reduction in the rate of biodiversity loss by 2015.

The Government, through the National Parks and Conservation Service, must lead in helping to achieve this goal, but the successful implementation of the plan depends upon all of us. Together, we can ensure that the Republic of Mauritius remains a unique paradise island forever.

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