

At the time of attaining political independence from Britain in 1968, a certain number of difficult economic problems was inherited as well. Mauritius, like other countries which have just shaken off their shackles of colonisation, did have to face the various problems of an underdeveloped or a poor economy. These mainly were:

- (1) a low level of gross domestic or national output coupled with a low level of saving insufficient to generate sufficient funds for investment purposes in order to bring about economic development
- (2) a relatively low level of technological know-how (except for the sugar-producing sector)
- (3) a relatively low level of management and technical skills generated through the educational sector which was too academically biased.

The government determination was here to drag the country out of the existing turmoil. Many reports denoted the limitation of our country to sustain its existence. Thus the institutional framework for industrialisation and development was set up in 1970.

A 4 year plan for social and economic development for the period 1971- 75. This first post-independence plan set various economic targets for the economy as a whole and was quite comprehensive.

**Several reasons could account for this very good economic performance.**

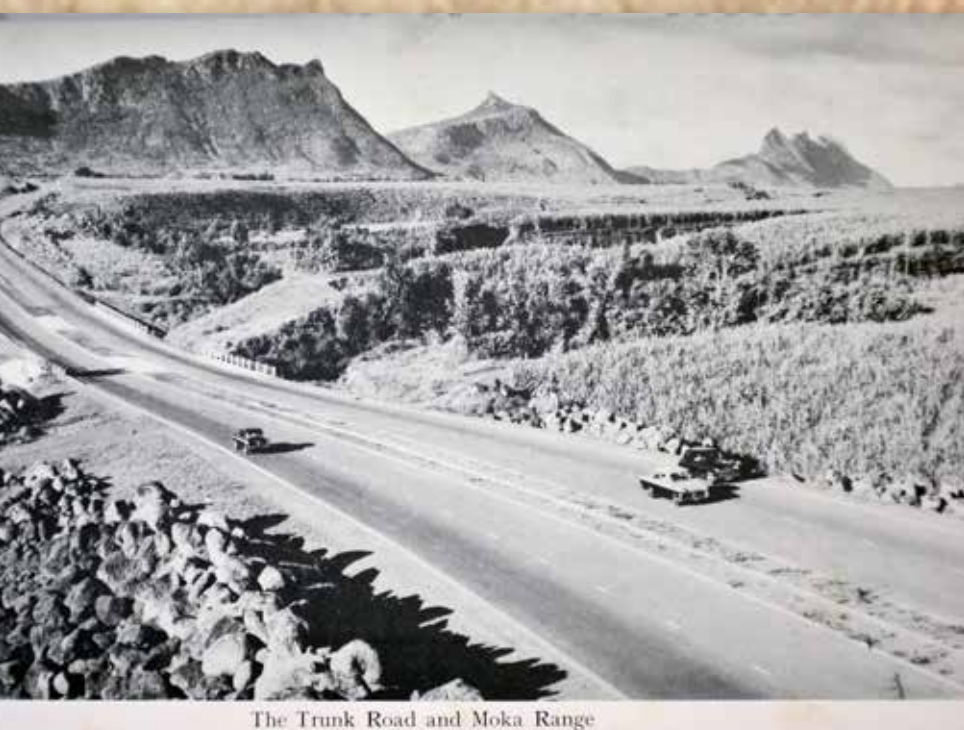
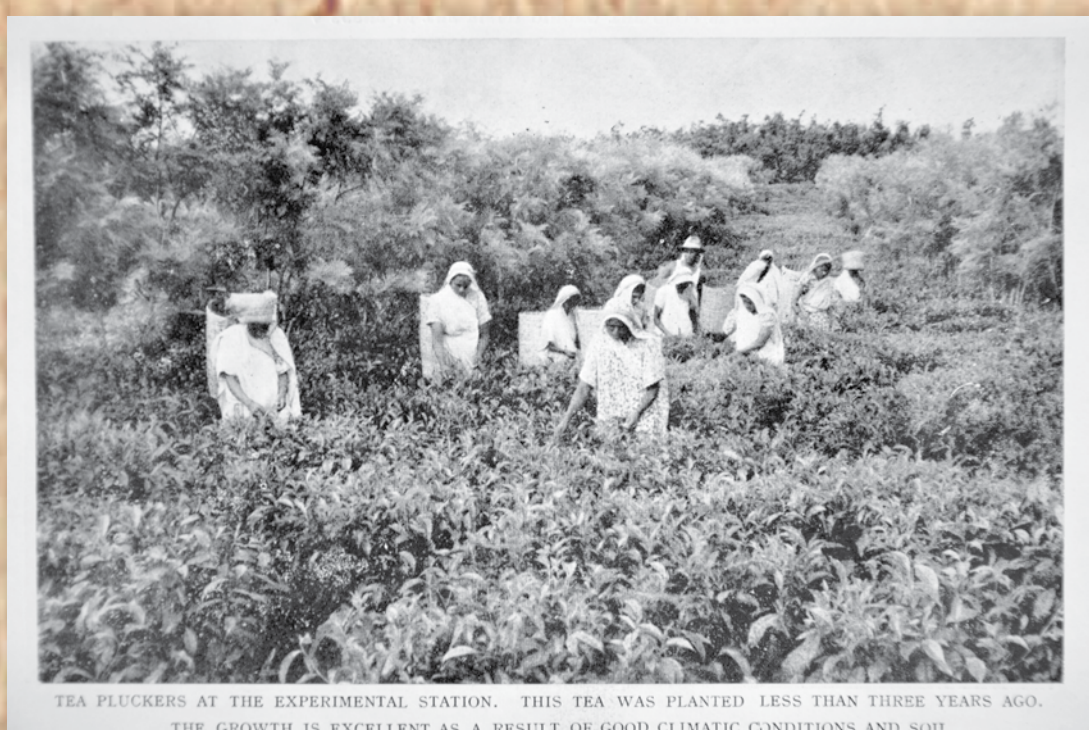
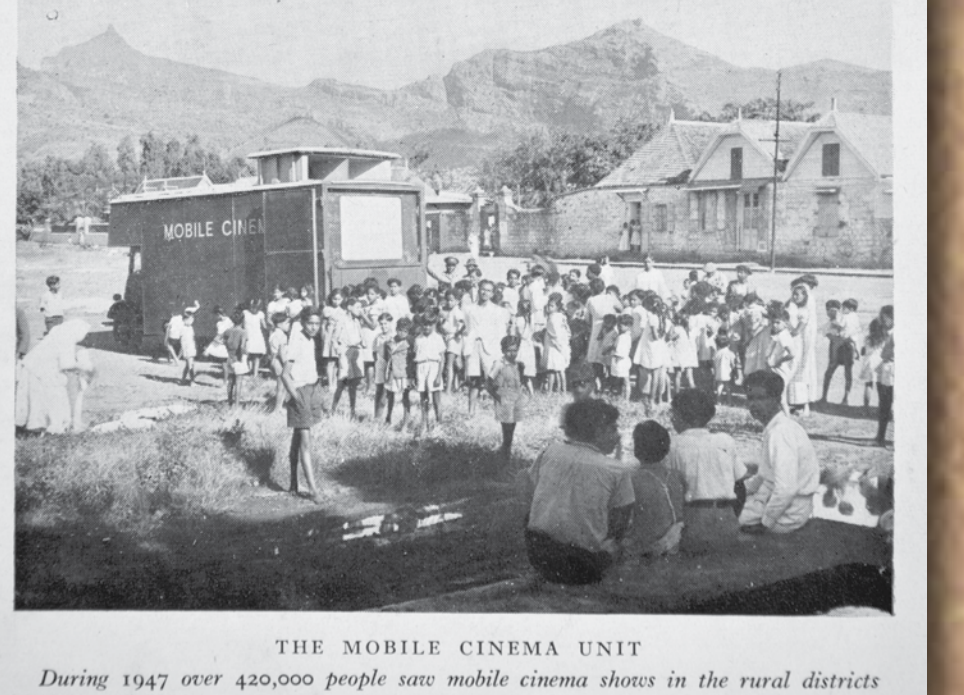
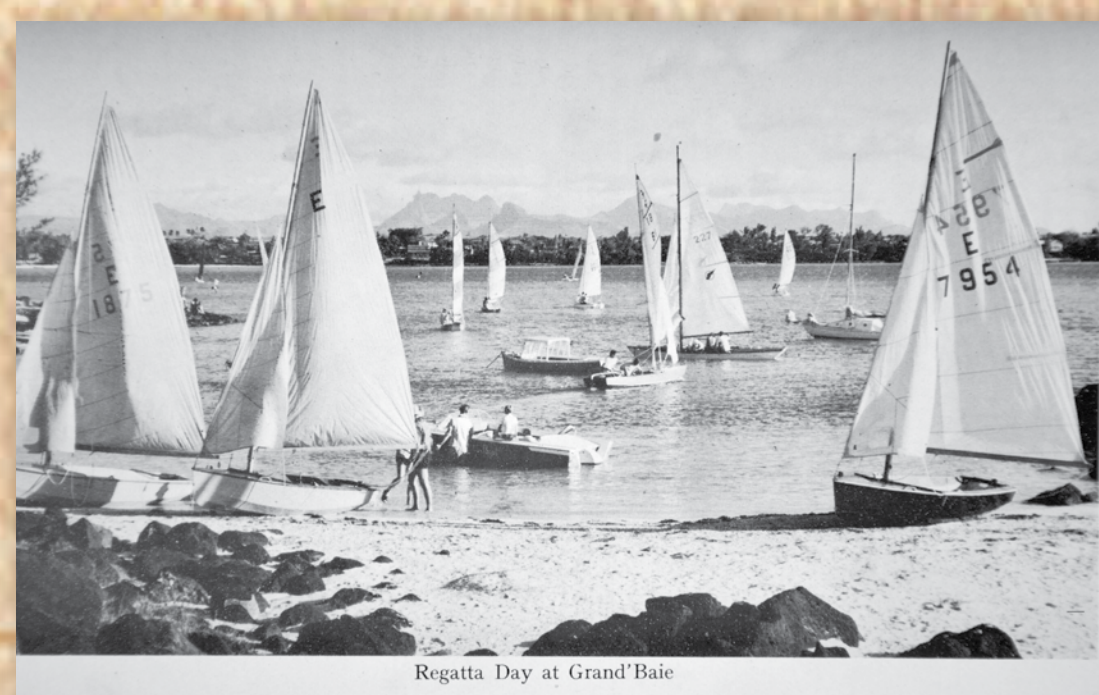
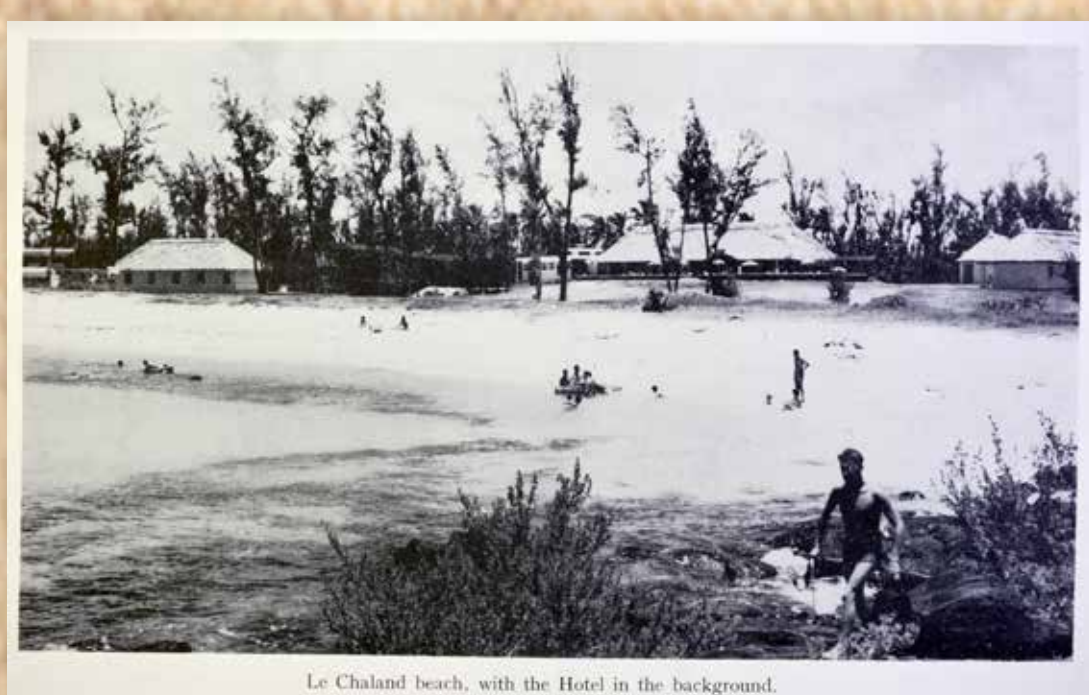
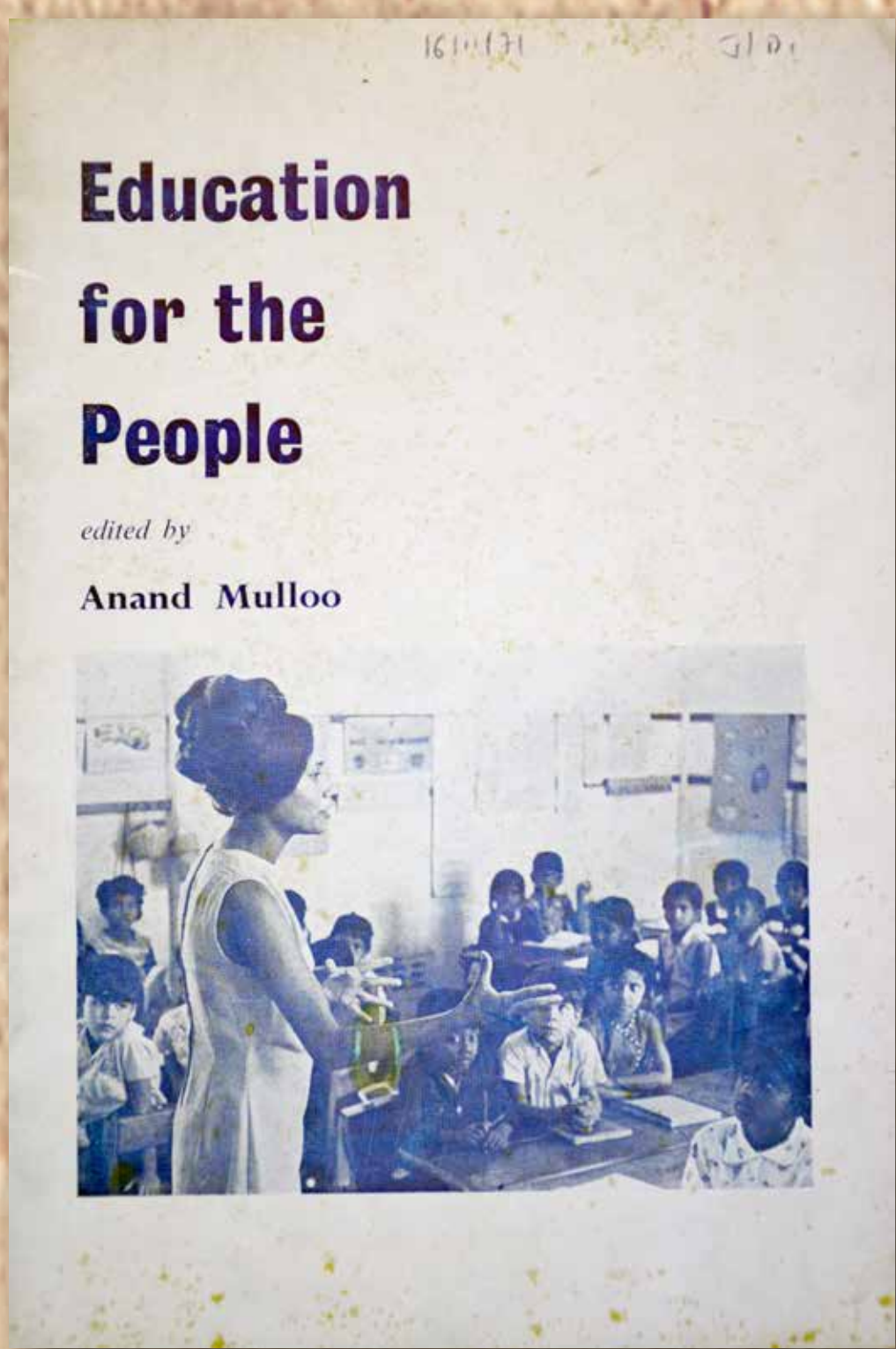
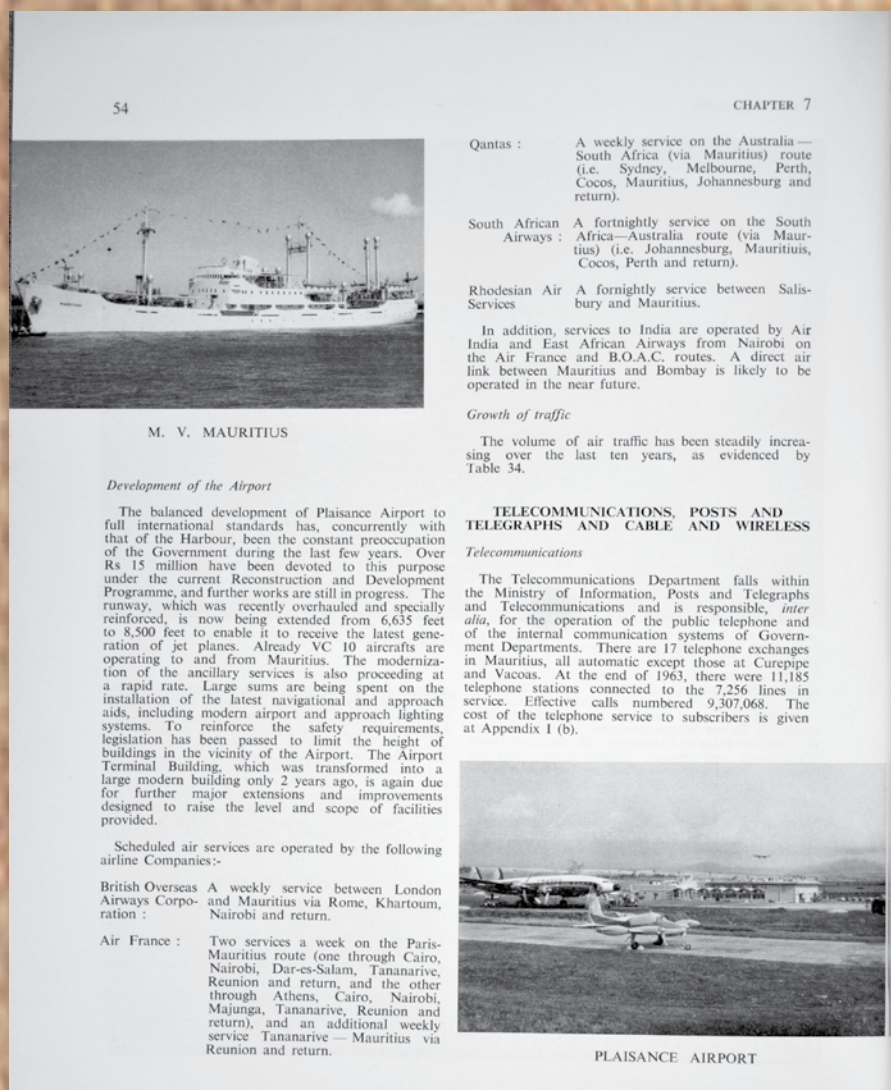
- The successful launching of the EPZ during the first half of the 1970's where the bulk of the employment creation took place. Many manufacturing enterprises were set up in a short span of time-creation of the Coromandel Industrial Zone (60 Arpens allocated) and First Export Processing Zone created. Textiles sector develops in 1971, Inauguration of Floreal Knitwear.
- The tourism sector also played an important role by growing at a very high average rate of about 20%. It contributed significantly to the economy. The beginning of the construction of hotels St. Geran, La Pirogue and Club Med in 1973
- The provision of all the economic infrastructure required (such as roads, electricity and water-supplies, training of labour, internal and external communications such as telephone, telex, air services and sea port facilities) by the government
- By 1974, the contribution to GDP at factor cost by the manufacturing sector had already surpassed the expectations of the government by attaining the level of Rs 214 million whilst employment also exceeded its target by reaching 30,000 with about 11,000 jobs created in the new EPZ industries alone. For the period 1970-74, the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1974 grew to 144, which yielded an annual growth of 9.5% per annum in real terms.

## Education

- After the country became independent in 1968, education became one of the main preoccupations of the Mauritian Government to meet the new challenges awaiting the country.
- The first step after independence was taken by Sir Kher Jagatsingh in the 1970s with the setting up of 15 Junior Secondary schools. In May 1975, a student revolt that started at the University of Mauritius swept across the country.
- The students were unsatisfied with an education system that did not meet their aspirations and gave limited prospects for future employment. On 20 May, thousands of students tried to enter Port-Louis over the Grand River North Westbridge and clashed with the police.
- Then came free secondary education under SSR in 1977.

### Key events which have marked the period (1968 – 1977)

- 1970** - Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi on state visit to Mauritius, lays foundation stone of the Mahatma Gandhi Institute.
- 1972** - Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra visits Mauritius and inaugurates the University of Mauritius as Chancellor. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II & Prince Philip visit Mauritius.
- 1973** - Bilateral Agreement - The funding of the project SSR Airport and the Northern Highway, creation of CWA, Opening of highway road for construction - Place du Quai and Pailles, Organisation of the l'OCAM Conference.
- 1974** - The introduction of coloured T.V in Mauritius, Inauguration of the Mauritius College of the Air.
- 1975** - Cyclone Gervaise devastates the island with many homeless and worths of damage. Rose Belle Accident, lorry crashes into home, the voting age at 18 years (review from 21 to 18), Landing of Boeing 747 for the first time in Mauritius, Institution of the Local Government Service Commission, Strike in sugar Industry.
- 1977** - Telecommunications: first data transmission to London from Mauritius, Construction of Housing State at la Tour Koenig by the MHC.





# THE ECONOMIC BOOM (1978 – 1987)

By the end of the 1970's, in 1979, the country was almost in a bankrupt situation and its future was gloomy. Despite the successful creation of the Export-Processing Zone launched in 1970, the level of unemployment was still quite high.

The second half of the 20th Century is marked by reforms brought to the economy which led to the economic boom after 1982 and to the transformation of the island from an underdeveloped, third world country, into a developing country.

After agreement with the IMF and with the help of the World Bank, Mauritius underwent a series of structural adjustment programmes between 1979 and 1986. Starting in 1980 however, a number of measures started to come on line that set the stage for the rebirth of the Export Processing Zones as a major player in 1983.

These included a more stable macroeconomic situation;

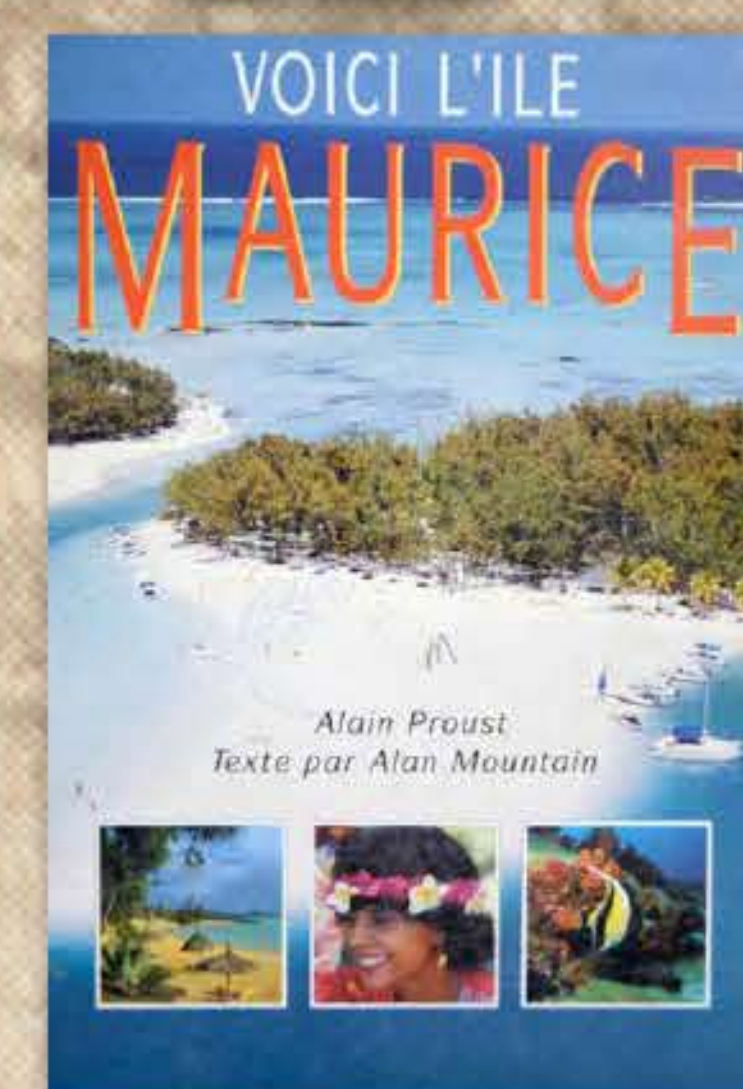
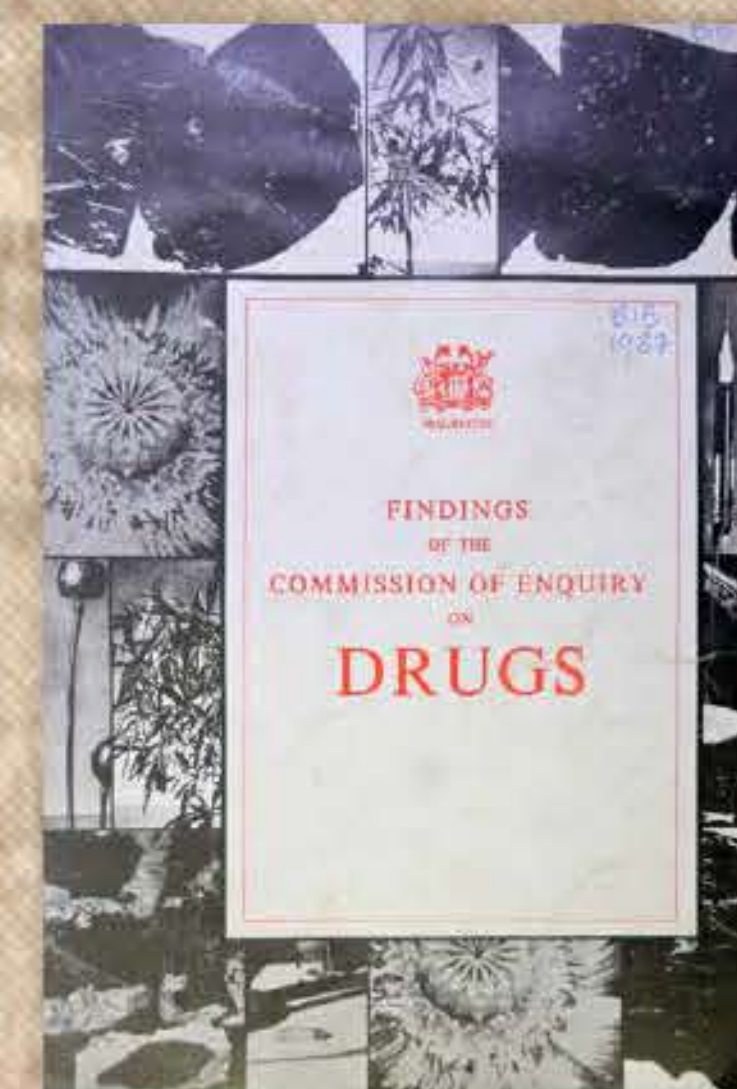
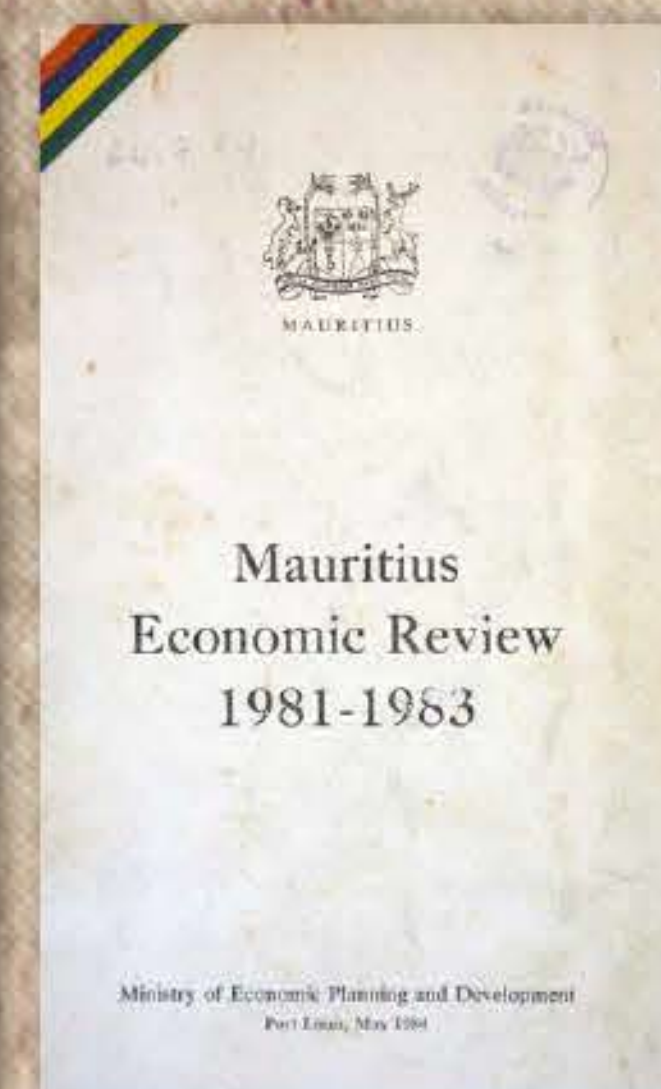
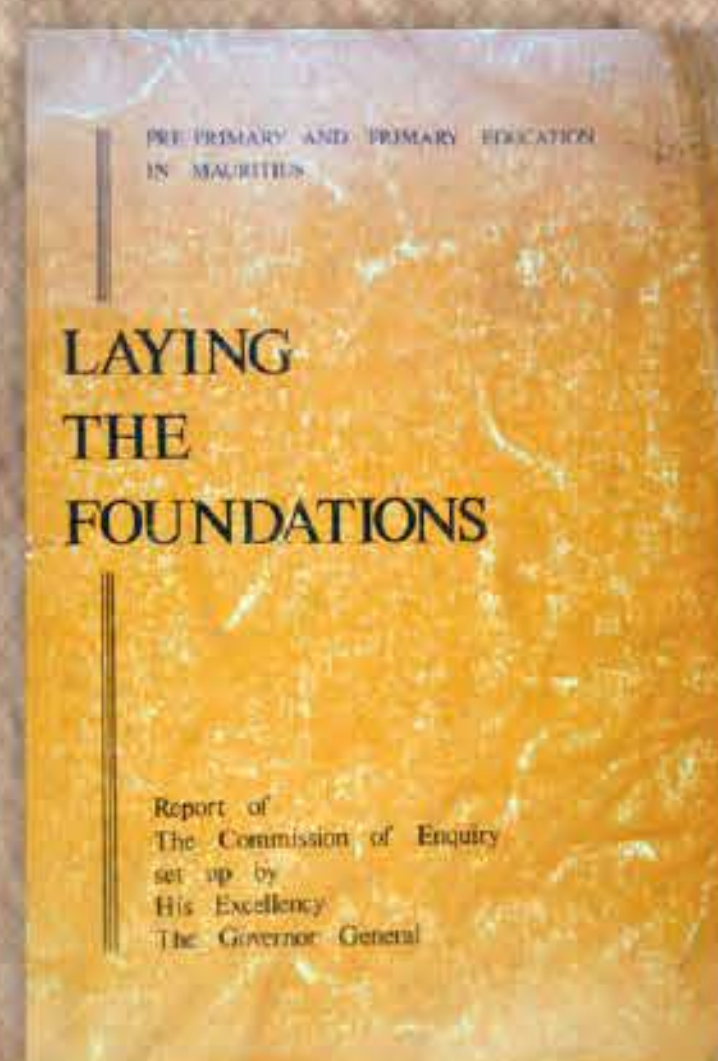
- The creation of the Mauritius Export Development and Investment Authority in 1984 to organize and promote exports of the EPZ firms.
- The minimum wage for men in the EPZ sector was abolished in 1980.
- The tax holiday was extended from ten to twenty years; in June 1985 the government introduced a 15 percent corporate tax for the life of the company plus dividends were exempted from tax for ten years.
- Important infrastructure improvements that came on line on or about the early 1980's. Three new Industrial Estates were completed after 1978.

**1979**

- Cyclone Claudette devastated island.
- Mauritius approaches IMF and World Bank for assistance. Country has deficit of \$111 million.
- Creation of the National Transport Corporation (NTC).
- Start in operation of “goutte à goutte project at Medine on an experimental basis (sugar cane irrigation).

**1980**

- The National Transport Corporation started its activities.
- The Pepsi cola launched a collection publication called Mammals.
- Diffusion by the MBC of satellite image for the daily news on 30 March 1980.
- The famous “zosefek so palto l'arkansiel” is presented (Comedie musicale encréolerealisé par Gerard Sullivan) on 15 May 1980.



**1981**

- Arts - Realisation of the film “l'Aigle et la flamme by the Mauritian HarikrishnaAnenden - awarded first prize of the International Competition of “Long Metrages” organised by l'Agence des CooperationCulturelle de Technique
- Inauguration of MCB Building at Port-Louis on 11 June 1981.
- A major port modernization project completed in 1981 that constructed deep-water quays and a separate bulk sugar terminal, freeing up space for MEPZ trade.

**1982**

- In 1982 General Elections were held, the MMM- PSM party won the election.
- A Ministry fully dedicated for the cultural affairs of the country (Ministry of Arts and Culture) was created.

**1983**

- The beginning of economic revival.
- Growth of the EPZ -The EPZ revival played akey role in the economic success of our country.
- MEDIA- EPZ welfare fund introduction of the small scale unit.
- Agriculture is at a cross road of modernization to face up development and coupled with sugar diversification.
- It is in this year that the population of Mauritius and other islands reached the total of 1,004,778
- On the 28 December 1983 Sir SeewoosagurRamgoolam became Governor General of Mauritius.
- The harbour of Mauritius is on a continuous development. It is one of the most active port and is a gateway to Africa market. It is a port which is adapting to modern technology and ensure quality service. From a static port in the year 1970's, it had become a robust port competing with nearby competitors.

**1984**

- Mauritius was considered as the tiger of the Indian Ocean. The Mauritian economic model was highly appreciated by many countries for its economic success.
- On the tourist side one of the remarkable event which contributed to enhance largely to its image was the ‘Festival de la Mer’.

**1985**

- In 1985 the 2nd Indian Ocean Island Games denoted the improvement of our sport to international competition. This event represented the pride of our nation and national unity.

**1986**

- Begininng of a new style of living- a new turning point in the way of living of Mauritians.

**1987 - The Cultural Revolution.**









# MAURITIUS IN THE 21ST CENTURY (1998 –2007)

At the dawn of the 21st century, there has been a profound change in the sectoral composition of the Mauritian economy. A strong structural change could be noted, with the decline in sugar, the rise of financial services and real estate, and the mixed performance of textiles as the service sector has strengthened.

## Further modernisation

By the 2000s, diversification of the economy took a new turn with the transformation of the ICT sector into one of the main pillars of the economy, making the island a preferred ICT-BPO destination. Mauritius became a “cyber island” with the creation of ‘Ebène Cybercity’ to house all ICT operations such as data management, call centres, BPO companies, software development, etc. The financial services sector was further consolidated, with Mauritius aspiring to be an ‘International Financial Sector of Substance’. Furthermore, this decade also saw another sector emerge, a sector that brought more than Rs 40 billion of Foreign Direct Investment: The real estate sector, with luxury residential units built for sale to foreign citizens who then qualified for permanent residency.

## 2000

- Mauritius secures a seat on the United Nations Security Council for the first time.
- Mauritius together with 188 other UN member states, signed the Millennium Declaration setting out the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce extreme poverty in its many dimensions -income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion- while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability by the target date of 2015.

**2001** – Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd (BPML) was created in 2001 as a government-owned private company to spearhead the development of ICT by providing state-of-the-art facilities for advanced software promotion and IT-enabled services on a par with the best in the world.

**2002** – Karl Hoffman elected president by National Assembly.

**2002** – “Cyber Cities” plan launched to create concentrations of hi-tech facilities and boost economy.

**2003** – The most visible manifestation of Mauritius’s push to become an ‘information society’ was the Cyber City Project set up by BPML in 2003. The aim of the Cyber City has been to make Mauritius the preferred destination for business and professionals, and to create wealth and employment through the use of information technology. The Cyber City is a modern development on a site of 152 acres, strategically located at the centre of the island at Ebene and provided with world-class facilities.

**2005** – The first initiative of BPML in the development of the Cyber City was the construction of a Cyber Tower. Upon its completion in 2005, the Cyber Towerwas awarded the Intelligent Building of the Year award by the Intelligent Community Forum of New York, from 250 applications received. This prestigious award – the first for a building of its type in the African region – played an important role in placing Mauritius on the map as a regional business hub.

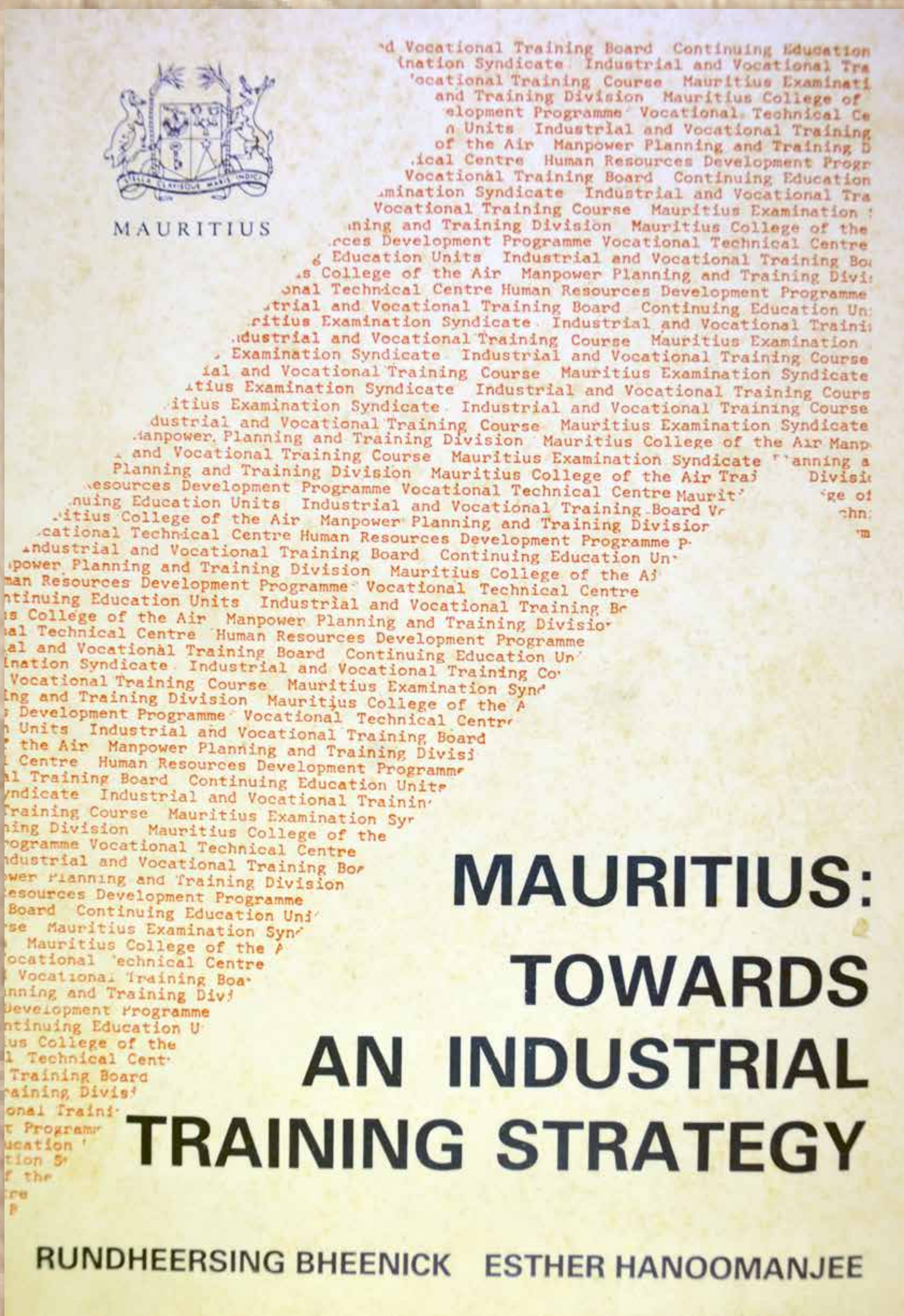
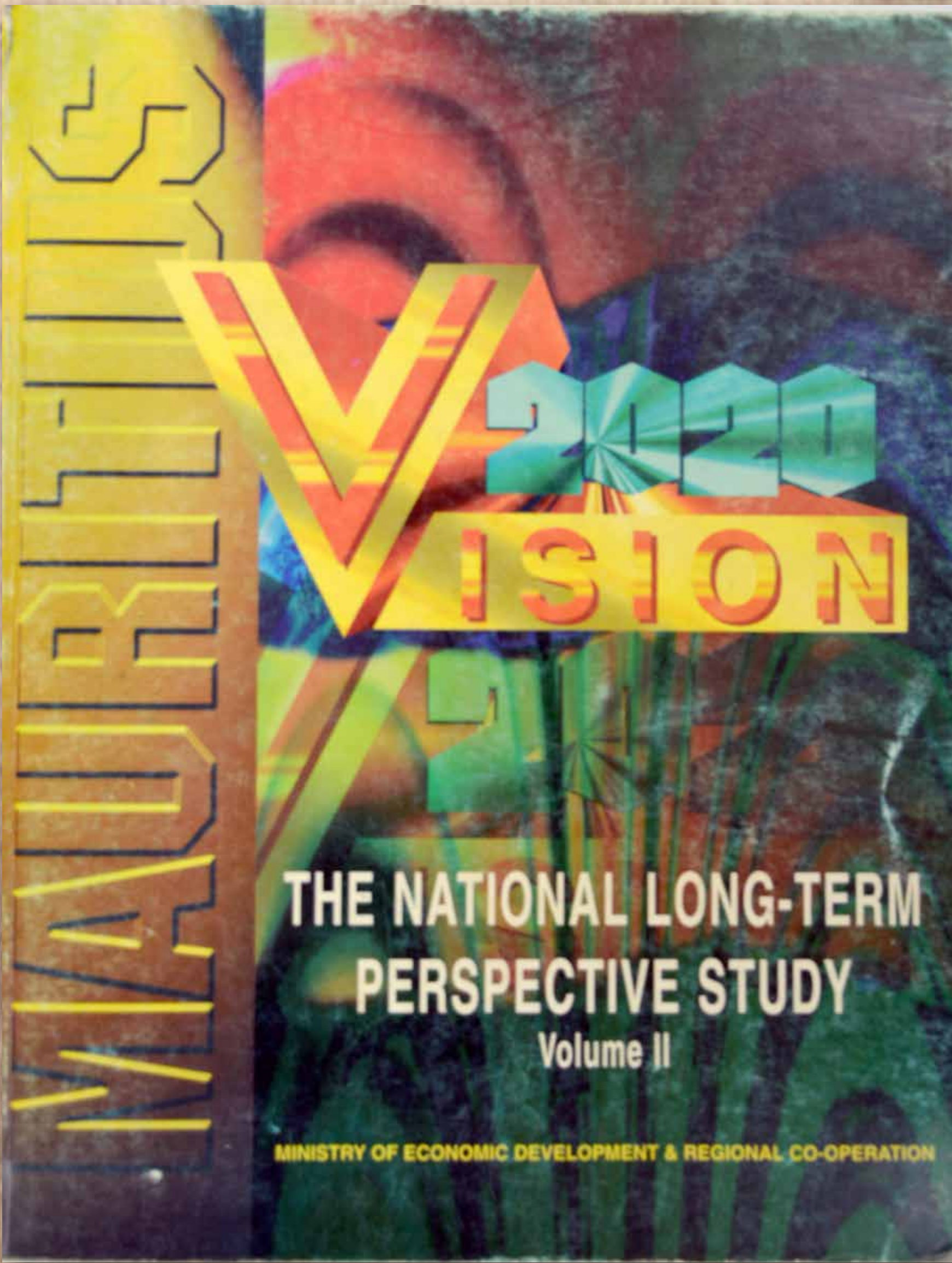
**2005** – August/ September–Since 2005, free transport facilities are being granted to old aged pensioners, the disabled persons aged 60 and above and students.

## 2006

- One hundred former residents of the Chagos Archipelago – claimed by Mauritius – make a return visit nearly 40 years after being evicted by Britain to make way for a US military base on the island of Diego Garcia. Their legal battle with Britain continues.
- Inscription of theAapravasiGhat on the World Heritage Site of UNESCO.

## 2008

- Retirement age for salaried workers to be extended from 60 to 65.
- Inscription of Le Morne (now known as Le Morne Cultural Landscape) on theWorld Heritage List of UNESCO.
- British House of Lords upholds a UK government appeal against court ruling that families expelled from the Chagos Islands are entitled to return home. The decision ends the Chagossians’ long-running UK legal battle to return.
- Introduction of Maurice Ile Durable Conceptto make Mauritius a world model of sustainable development, particularly in the context of SIDS (Small Island Developing States)





# MAURITIUS - NEW CHALLENGES (2008 – 2018)

Mauritius has proved to be a success story by transforming itself from a poor monocrop economy into a diversified one, and today featuring among African countries with the highest per capita income. The spectacular success of Mauritius, across several decades, through successive governments, lies in its perfect blend of political stability, strong regulatory framework, open trade policies and favourable business climate, a conducive environment that has shaped the economy to what it is today.

The country has however faced high exogenous shocks to its economy in recent times—the phasing out of the Multifibre Arrangement governing textiles, significant reductions in EU sugar protocol prices, the 2008 food and fuel crisis, and the 2008–09 global financial crisis—yet the economy showed strong resilience, thanks to robust economic measures taken to contain risks.

Over time, there has been a profound change in the sectoral composition of the Mauritian economy. Between 1976 and 2015, the share of primary-sector production declined from 23 percent of the overall economy to 5 percent, while the secondary sector (including manufacturing, electricity, water, and some construction) increased from about 23 to 29 percent and the tertiary sector, which includes tourism and financial services and ICT, is now the dominant feature of the economy in terms of contribution to output.

**2008** – British House of Lords upholds a UK government appeal against court ruling that families expelled from the Chagos Islands are entitled to return home. The decision ends the Chagossians' long-running UK legal battle to return.

**2010** – Mauritius, France agree to jointly manage Tromelin, a tiny Indian Ocean island owned by France but claimed by Mauritius.

**2012** – Britain signs a deal with Mauritius allowing suspected pirates caught by its Royal Navy to be transferred to the Indian Ocean Island to face prosecution

**2012** – European Court of Human Rights rejects claim by Chagos Islanders against Britain over their expulsion.

**2013** – At least 11 people die as sudden rains flood the capital Port Louis.

**2013**

- Mauritius pulls out of hosting the 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting after boycotting the 2013 event in Sri Lanka over the country's human rights record.
- Inauguration of the new Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport terminal and it is fully operational. The high-tech décor hosts an array of modern facilities aiming to improve efficiency and ground service provided to passengers both for departures and arrivals.

**2014** – The Mauritian « ségatiplik » has been inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

**2014** – General Elections

**2015**

- The inscription of the Indenture Immigration Records of the Republic of Mauritius on UNESCO's Memory of the World International Register.
- Mauritius adopted the Agenda for Sustainable Development, replacing the MDGs, which comprises a set of 17 Goals and 169 Targets to be reached by 2030 thus, laying out a path over the next 15 years to end extreme poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect our planet.

**2016** – Britain rules out allowing the Chagos Islanders to return home, angering Mauritius.

**2016** – The Mauritius Bhojpuri Folk Songs, 'Geet Gawai', have been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

**2017**

- The UN General Assembly votes overwhelmingly to refer the dispute between Britain and Mauritius over the Chagos islands to the International Court of Justice.
- The Metro Express project official launch on 10th March 2017, the Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth unveiled the Commemorative Plaque at the Old Train Station in Caudan. The Metro Express Project will have a main line of 26 km in length spanning from Curepipe to Port Louis and will comprise of 19 stations, including four interchangers. Each station will be a cluster of economic activity which will have significant spillovers on its surroundings and provide cost opportunities for small and medium enterprises.
- The 'Sega Tambour' of Rodrigues is inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Roadmap for future socio-economic development is being carved, and the government's 'Vision 2030' will encapsulate the ideas proposed by the nation through an ongoing national endeavour.

Major development has been announced in sectors such as the port, including the fishing sector, the manufacturing sector, the ocean industry, the services sector, the transport sector, infrastructural developments, construction of new roads and the metro express among others. Measures to boost tourism and trade, the enhancing of Freeport activities and of light manufacturing and the transformation of the agro industry sector will largely contribute to the next wave of wealth creation and shared prosperity.

