

**World Environment Day celebration organised by the Min. of Social Security,  
N.S & E. & S.D on Saturday 8 June 2019 at 10:00 at Ebene Cyber City 1**

**Honourable Etienne Sinatambou, Minister of Social Security, National  
Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development**

**Hon. Parliamentary Private Secretaries and other Members of the National  
Assembly present**

**Mrs. Amanda Serumaga, Resident UNDP Representative**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps**

**Your Worship the Mayor of Quatre Bornes**

**The Permanent Secretary and Staff of the Ministry**

**Representatives of the community, Women's Associations, Senior Citizens,  
Students/Teachers**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning

1. I am pleased and honoured to be with you again this year for the launching of the World Environment Day celebrations. I must thank the Honourable Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Environment and Sustainable Development for giving me this opportunity.

2. I have always been a staunch supporter of actions for the protection of the environment which is our home. You may recall that last year during the celebration of the World Environment Day I mentioned that I have given my patronage to the production of a DVD on Climate Change. I am happy that this DVD will be launched later today during this function.
3. The United Nations, having been convinced by scientists and researchers that the degradation of the human environment has become a major issue which affects the well-being of peoples and the economic development of countries throughout the world, designated 5 June as World Environment Day in order to raise awareness and usher in necessary remedial actions for the protection and improvement of the environment.
4. The celebration of Environment Day provides us with opportunities to reflect on current and future state of our planet, which would provide a basis for an enlightened opinion to ensure responsible conduct by individuals, enterprises and communities in preserving and enhancing the environment. Since World Environment Day was launched in 1972, it has grown to become a global platform for public outreach that is widely celebrated in more than 100 countries, now.
5. The theme for 2019, “**Beat Air Pollution,**” is a call for action to win over this global crisis. This year’s topic invites us all to consider how important it is for us to change our everyday way of life to reduce the amount of air pollution we produce, and thus reduce its effects on global warming and on our own health. We can't stop breathing, but there is a lot we can do to improve the quality of air that we breathe.

6. Integrating environmental sustainability with economic and social development is one of the world's biggest challenges. Sustainable Consumption and Production aims at 'achieving more with less', by reducing resource use and minimising degradation and pollution along the life cycle of goods and services, while increasing the quality of life for all. We are, therefore, called upon to have recourse to technological shifts and behavioral change so as to increase resource efficiency in the usage of energy and water. We must go for sustainable buildings and constructions, minimization of waste, increase the demand and supply of sustainable products and services in the market, adopt more sustainable lifestyles and consumption choices.
  
7. In Mauritius we are not spared from the impacts of climate change. The recent floods in Cottage, Fond du Sac and Rodrigues are examples. Another environmental concern is how to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Though Mauritius has a relatively low level of greenhouse gas emissions per capita, we need to take necessary steps to further minimize such emissions.
  
8. I understand that various awareness campaigns and activities such as tree planting, beach clean-ups, exhibitions, community events are organised for World Environment Day across the country.
  
9. Moreover, it is imperative that we advocate sustainable agriculture in order to be resilient and self-sufficient in cases of droughts and floods.

10. One of the simplest and easiest actions which anyone can do to improve the environment is planting trees. To mark the visit of Pope Francis on 9 September this year, some 100,000 trees will be planted in Mauritius. Trees constitute one of the Earth's greatest natural resources. They provide food, timber, fuel and raw materials. But what is more important is that trees absorb Carbon Dioxide which is the agent causing global warming and climate change. They give out life sustaining oxygen.
11. They also reduce air and noise pollution, improve water quality by filtering and absorbing impurities, help prevent erosion and act as wind breaks in coastal areas.
12. We have always privileged the planting of more and more trees. Besides the benefits I mentioned earlier, tree planting will help to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change. It is worth noting that a single mature tree can absorb up to 24 kgs of carbon dioxide per year. Tree planting also helps to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.
13. To conclude I would like to emphasize that we can beat pollution. We can follow Mahatma Gandhi's great advice: "To be the change we want to see in this world".
14. Let us all pledge to harness in ourselves the goodwill to be responsible and caring patriots and citizens of the world.