Navigating the COVID-19 Pandemic

What’s inside?

Workshop on “Mapping Manufacturing Skills for the Future”

Enterprise visit at Leather Land

Fashion & Design Institute - Winner of the 7th Edition of SITA

... and more inside
The United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD) organised a Webinar themed “From Vulnerabilities and Inequalities to Prosperity for All” as part of the preparatory work of the UNCTAD 15 event, which was held in Barbados on October 2021.

Mrs B. F. Abdool Raman-Ahmed, Permanent Secretary of the Industrial Development Division, participated as Panelist in the Webinar. The vulnerabilities of SIDS, relevant policy strategies to boost economic activities and ways to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 were discussed. The role of South-South Cooperation in assisting SIDS towards their efforts in achieving 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda was also highlighted.

The Permanent Secretary delved on the vulnerabilities of Mauritius in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the major policy responses adopted by the country to counter the negative impacts on the economy. She further underlined the instrumental role played during the lockdowns by the Mauritian manufacturing sector in ensuring an adequate supply of basic commodities and sanitary items such as face masks, sanitisers and Personal Protective Equipment.
The Industry Development Division participated virtually in the 3rd Ordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee for Trade, Industry and Minerals (STC-TIM) organised by the African Union Commission from 31st August to 3rd September 2021.

The main objective of the STC-TIM was to develop concrete policy actions and measures to deepen economic integration, promote industrialisation and develop continental value chains in line with the vision and aspirations of the African Union Agenda 2063.

Given the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on African countries, the Committee highlighted the need to:

- upgrade and diversify African economies with a view to enhancing Africa’s position in the global economy; and
- improve competitiveness in all productive sectors so as to take advantage of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) market and achieve a strong, green and sustainable growth in Africa.
On 14 September 2021, Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives effected a visit at Aremo Ltd, a jewellery making company situated at Goodlands. The enterprise is a joint venture between the Goetze family of Germany and the De Grivel Group of Companies.

Aremo Ltd, with a workforce of 140, is involved in the manufacture of jewellery parts and finished jewellery for the export market. This company is among the pioneer enterprises having shown remarkable resilience throughout its 40 years of existence where it took up the challenge to join our then nascent Export Processing Zone (EPZ). It has since acquired a strong client base comprising reputed brands in countries such as USA, France, Germany, Denmark and Hong Kong.

Honourable Soomilduth Bholah further pointed out that the jewellery sector was facing a dearth of skilled workers. On that score, the Fashion and Design Institute (FDI) which falls under the aegis of the Ministry, was called upon to collaborate with enterprises to mount appropriate courses to respond to the demand for skills and to ensure the availability of skilled labour in the sector.

It was highlighted that the company is on an ascending trend with the setting up of a sister company, Goetze & Goetze Ltd, which will cater for a niche clientele in Europe. On that note, the Honourable Minister reiterated Government’s unwavering support and assistance to manufacturing enterprises in their quest to ensure business continuity and to adopt a higher growth path.

During the visit, the Honourable Minister commended the achievements of the enterprise, currently ranked 3rd in terms of exports in the jewellery sector. He underlined that despite the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, Aremo Ltd is regaining its momentum as reflected in its export performance.
27th Meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee of Senior Officials and Experts (ICSOE) of Southern Africa

13 to 14 October 2021


During her intervention, the Permanent Secretary provided an overview of the manufacturing sector in Mauritius with emphasis on its industrialisation journey. She then elaborated on the challenges and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the manufacturing sector and shared with the other panelists, the policies and strategies of the Ministry to promote industrial development.
Thereafter, the following eight (8) Sub-Committees were set up to come up with implementable actions:

- Three (3) Sub-Committees on Focus Areas namely, Industry Foundations (including Upgrading of Value Chains), Regional and Global Export Growth and Advanced Technology Absorption; and

- Five (5) Sub-Committees on Sectoral Plan of Action namely, Domestic Enterprises, Textile and Clothing, Food Processing and Fish Preparations, Jewellery, Medical Devices, Pharmaceuticals and Medical Products.
The Industrial Development Division organised a workshop under the theme “Mapping Manufacturing Skills for the Future” at the Westin Turtle Bay Resort & Spa, Balaclava. The objective of the Workshop was to identify the current and future skills needs of the manufacturing sector and chart out concrete actions that will address the skill requirements of the sector.

Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives proceeded with the opening of the Workshop and highlighted the importance of skills development in the manufacturing sector. He pointed out that the Workshop would serve as a foundation to service the sector with a pool of technically qualified workforce.

The event provided a platform for the high-level presentations by key stakeholders and the active contribution of participants during sectoral working groups. Concrete proposals and recommendations were identified for further implementation.
The Honourable Minister Soomilduth Bholah, visited enterprises at Leather Land, an industrial building situated at Riche Terre on 24 November 2021. Leather Land comprises three companies, namely Filao Ltée, Cover Tech International Ltd and Longchamp Mauritius Ltd, manufacturing luxury leather goods for exports.

During his visit, the Honourable Minister was impressed with the high quality of products manufactured locally and exported to niche markets in Hong Kong, United States of America (USA), France and Switzerland.

The Managing Director of Filao Ltée, Mr Marday Venkatasamy outlined that the three companies aspire to set up a Leather Training Academy with Government support through the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development for ongoing training.

A walk on the production floor
Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives, held two press conferences, at the seat of the Industrial Development Division on 30 August and 29 November 2021 respectively. The performance of the Export Oriented Enterprises (EOEs) for the periods January to September 2021 was highlighted. Exports of EOEs amounted to Rs. 31.3 billion compared to Rs. 26.2 billion for the corresponding period of the previous year. This represented an increase of 19.4%.

The Minister highlighted that this has been possible due to the resilience of the operators and the regular meetings with relevant industry stakeholders. Furthermore, he reiterated that Government continues to foster the right environment and provide the necessary incentives and packages to improve the business climate.
On 2 December 2021, Mrs. B.F. Abdool Raman-Ahmed, Permanent Secretary of the Industrial Development Division, participated as Panelist in a virtual Side Event entitled “Revival of Industrial Policy - Prospects for Establishing a Global Industrial Policy Forum for Multilateral Policy Learning and Knowledge Sharing” organised by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) in the margin of the nineteenth session of its General Conference. Ms. Izumi Ohno, Professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (Japan) and Mr. Rainer Engels, Head of the Sectoral Programme for Sustainable Economic Development at Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) also acted as Panelists in the online event.

The main objective of the event was to discuss the establishment of a Multilateral Industrial Policy Forum (MIPF) at UNIDO which would serve as a common platform to exchange ideas on industrial policies among Member States. During the course of her intervention, Mrs. B.F. Abdool Raman-Ahmed shared the experience of the Ministry in the formulation of the Industrial Policy and Strategic Plan (2020-2025). She also provided insights into the proposed functions of the MIPF.

It was highlighted that an adequate mechanism for reporting and follow up be set up at the level of the Forum to ensure that recommendations were translated into actionable projects for the benefit of Member States.
CECPA

TARIFF RATE QUOTAS IN CECPA

Mauritian exporters now benefit from preferential access on 615 products comprising duty-free access for 376 products, reduced duties on 127 products and Tariff Rate Quotas (TRQs) on 112 products.

The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between Mauritius and India is the first trade agreement signed by India with an African country.

The CECPA entered into force on 1st April 2021 and aims to either reduce or eliminate duties on several products.

The products subject to TRQ, include, inter-alia, the following:

- 40,000 tons of special sugar at 10% duty compared to 100% applicable to import from all sources
- 2 million litres of beer at 25% duty, compared to 150% duty
- 1.5 million litres of rum at 50% duty compared to 150% duty
- 5,000 litres of fruit wine at 50% duty compared to 150% duty
- 7.5 million pieces of garments at zero duty
- 7,000 tons of canned tuna at zero duty.
Dear Reader,

I joined this Ministry in late August 2021 but it seems so far away as many things are constantly happening. The Industrial Development Division is on the move!

Despite the fact that my mother had a career of over 30 years in the textile industry, one must admit that the manufacturing sector in Mauritius was not of particular interest to me. However, after joining this team, I now realise how vibrant this Division is.

Notwithstanding the prevailing sanitary situation, we have participated in local & international events, effected ministerial visits and held workshops & seminars among others. Our departments & statutory bodies also kept the momentum going. They have shone their way through participation in various events. While some are on a revamping mode, others have established collaboration with other institutions. They also have organised and won competitions.

Being a product of Industrialisation, one feels proud to notice the dynamism of our Division. On behalf of the editing team, I seize this occasion to thank everyone who has helped in the realisation of this E-newsletter including our departments and statutory bodies which have provided their respective inputs.

STAY TUNED AND STAY SAFE!!!

Pritish Singh SEEBOO
Assistant Permanent Secretary
(Member of the E-newsletter editing team)
ASSAY OFFICE

VERIFICATION OF GEMSTONES

The Assay Office has recently upgraded its state-of-the-art technology by acquiring an X-Ray Spectrometer with advanced features to determine the finesse of precious metal alloys and jewellery.

It has also acquired the DiamondCheck, another state-of-the-art instrument developed by the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) which is one of the world’s most renowned institution in the field of gemstone testing. The DiamondCheck is used for differentiating a natural diamond from its synthetic counterparts and its simulants and is extensively used in the Gemmology laboratory at the Assay Office.

In line with its mandate, the Assay Office of this Ministry has carried out for the period 01 July 2021 to 28 September 2021 the verification of 97 gemstones. The results are as shown: -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treated</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Gemstone Verified: 97
MAURITAS

WORLD ACCREDITATION DAY

9 June 2021

MAURITAS staff and stakeholders including accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (Laboratories and Certification Body) participated in the online event organised by IAF/ILAC/IAS on World Accreditation Day 2021.

The World Accreditation Day has been celebrated since year 2010 to foster awareness on accreditation worldwide.

The theme of the World Accreditation Day for the year 2021 was:

‘Accreditation: Supporting the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals’.

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic, the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), International Laboratory Accreditation Forum (ILAC) and International Accreditation Service (IAS) initiated online seminars pertaining inter alia to accreditation and how it supports Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Videos released by IAF/ILAC on the occasion of World Accreditation Day 2021 can be accessed on the website of MAURITAS at www.mauritas.org.

Statistics

The below table illustrates the Key Performance Indicators monitored by MAURITAS for the period July 2020-June 2021.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Performance Indicators</th>
<th>Figures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Types of accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies</td>
<td>24 General Testing Laboratories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Calibration Laboratories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Medical Laboratories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Certification Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of parameters accredited</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of visits carried out</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new accreditation granted</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of complaints received</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MAURITIUS STANDARDS BUREAU

ACTIVITIES 2021

Essay Competition 2021
The Mauritius Standards Bureau launched an Essay Project Competition on 16 June 2021 to create awareness on the importance of standards in Mauritius and to showcase the role of the Bureau in the socio-economic development of the country.

The Essay Project Competition was open to students of Higher School Certificate (HSC) (or equivalent) from both State and Private Secondary institutions.

The themes chosen for the Essay Project Competitions were:
• Standardisation and standards lead to innovation.
• Impact of standardisation on public policies.
• Use of standardisation in consumer protection
• ISO 9001 creates value in the public sector.
• Role of the Mauritius Standards Bureau as a business facilitator.
• Standardisation can promote gender equality.

Eleven essays were received from 9 colleges. The winner was: Queen Elizabeth College (Team B) under the theme “ISO 9001 creates value in the Public Sector.”

The two runners-up were as follows:
2nd - New Educational College under the theme “Use of Standardisation in Consumer Protection.”
3rd - Sir Abdooll Raman Osman State College under the theme “Standardisation and Standards lead to innovation.”

Awareness Workshop MS ISO 9001:2015 - 5 August 2021
MSB organised an Awareness Workshop on MS ISO 9001: 2015 on 5th August 2021 for the Local Authorities in the presence of Honourable Dr. Mohammad Anwar Husnoo, Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management and Honourable Soomilduth Bholah, Minister of Industrial Development, SMEs and Cooperatives and representatives of Local Authorities.

In his keynote address, Vice-Prime Minister Husnoo underlined the importance for Local Authorities to deliver enhanced services to the population. He recalled that Local Authorities have embarked on a series of digitisation and technological innovation projects, through the implementation of the I-Council project in all local communities. The Vice-Prime Minister also indicated that it would greatly contribute to enhance customer satisfaction, motivate staff, improve image of Local Authorities, and help to review process and policies.

During his intervention, Honourable Soomilduth Bholah highlighted the importance of conformity assessment and certification. He further emphasised the advantages of ISO 9001 certification and the multiple ways to strengthen an organisation.

On her part, the General Manager of MSB, Mrs. Deveena Boygah concurred that ISO 9001 Quality Management System would enable Municipalities and District Councils to gain a centralised oversight on their daily activities. A presentation on the MS ISO 9001 Management System was also conducted by the Deputy Director and Head of Quality Assurance.
Mauritius Standards Bureau

Activities 2021

Continued

World Standards Day - 14 October 2021

The Mauritius Standards Bureau held a low-key celebration of the World Standards Day on its premises in view of the prevailing sanitary situation on 14 October.

World Standards Day 2021 is celebrated every year to pay tribute to the collaborative efforts of thousands of experts worldwide who develop the voluntary technical agreements that are published as International Standards. It is also an opportunity to create awareness about the importance of standardisation to the community as a whole.

The theme of World Standards Day 2021 was about “our shared vision for a better world”. It revealed the necessity of addressing the Sustainable Development Goals in an inclusive way, as the world continues to come to grips with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Training on Quality - July to September 2021

The Mauritius Standards Bureau has trained around 65 people of the Public and Private Sectors from July to September 2021, on the improvement of quality of products and quality-related subjects.

The courses were as follows:

- MS ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS) Internal Auditor Course
- Internal Auditor Course – ISO 9001:2015 QMS
- ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Course for Laboratories (For Staff)

The Bureau is further expanding its training portfolio to respond to the need of its audience. You may access more information at https://msb.intnet.mu.
FASHION AND DESIGN INSTITUTE

NEWS & EVENTS 2021

Revamping of the Fashion and Design Institute
The Fashion and Design Institute aims at promoting Design in the field of Education with a focus on the development of the Fashion Industry. The Institute reckons more than 20 years of existence and has taken a big leap towards a new vision since October 2020.

In an effort to revamp the institute, several action plans have been undertaken including:
1. It is presently undertaking renovation works to accommodate more students and upgrade its services.
2. The Institute has initiated a list of courses as from October 2021 for unemployed people in collaboration with the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), under the National Training and Reskilling Scheme (NTRS).

The courses are as follows:
• Creative Fashion / Textiles Design & Entrepreneurship
• Basic Jewellery Manufacturing
• Photomedia & Advertising Design
• Creating Artefacts Using Upcycling materials and natural fibres
• Basic Stone Setting
• Interior Design

3. The launching of incubators project that will allow entrepreneurs to use the Institute’s resources such as specialised industrial machines, the Mac lab and other equipment to manufacture and market their products.

Creative Fashion / Textiles Design & Entrepreneurship - October 2021 to April 2022
The Creative Fashion / Textiles Design & Entrepreneurship course is designed to train unemployed people in view of developing their creativity and thus enabling them to become self-employed. The outline of this course is designed to create awareness of the role of clothing, textiles, and fashion in daily lives. The modules have been developed for the participant who has the desire to learn to sew and/ or design clothing and textile products.
FASHION AND DESIGN INSTITUTE
NEWS & EVENTS 2021

New Intake 2021-2022
The Fashion and Design Institute welcomed the new cohort for the Academic year 2021-2022 in Mid-October 2021 for different programmes such as:
- Jewellery Design, Manufacturing and Stone setting
- Art, Design and Media Practice
- Interior Design
- Fashion & Textiles
- Graphic Design with Animation

Higher National Diploma in Art Practice - September 2021
Students from the Higher National Diploma in Art Practice cohort collaborated on a project for Le Petrin Information Centre in September 2021 with respect to their Applied Practice module. The students designed three major works based on biodiversity. They created a mural painting showcasing the aesthetic beauty of endemic species, a photo booth using “Goyave de Chine” wood which is an invasive plant and an illustration book on local species. This project imparted the students with project management skills and they also acquired hands-on experience of working with clients.

Woodwork and mural projects at Le Petrin Information Centre
Agreement with Civil Service College Mauritius – September 2021
An Agreement was signed between the Fashion and Design Institute and Civil Service College Mauritius in September 2021 for the provision of short courses to professionals and students in the field of Design on the Civil Service College platform namely: Fundamentals of Design and History of Printmaking/Printing which started on the 24th September and 19th August 2021 respectively.

Collaboration with the National Co-operative College – August 2021
The Fashion and Design Institute collaborated with the National Co-operative College, in August 2021, for the launching of the Certificate Course in Garment Making and Tailoring for Women Co-operatives with 23 participants.

Winner of the 7th Edition of “Salon International du Textile Africain” (SITA) – 10 to 13 November 2021
The 7th Edition of ‘Salon International du Textile Africain’ (SITA), which is one of the major events gathering all the stakeholders in the textile sector in Africa, was held from 10 to 13 November in Djibouti. A delegation led by the Permanent Secretary of the Industrial Development Division and comprising the Director/staff/student designers of the Fashion and Design Institute participated in SITA to showcase the know-how of Mauritian Textile Industry regarding fabrics made locally and the talent of young designers.

The student designers of the Fashion and Design Institute presented in the fashion show their collection comprising four outfits under the categories of Evening Wear, Traditional wear, Casual Wear and Creativity.

Students of the Fashion and Design Institute presenting their collection in SITA fashion show

Mauritius: First prize winner for Best Stylist during the “Nuit du Coton”
Mauritius was selected out of thirty-two participating African countries and won the first prize as the Best Stylist during the “Nuit du Coton”, defined as the culminating event of every SITA Edition. More info on the event at the website: https://sita.bf/
NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL

Operation COSHARE – September 2021
The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) launched the initiative named Operation COSHARE (COVID-19 Occupational Safety & Health and Resource Efficiency), on 2 September 2021, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Authority (TA).

The project has been developed with the technical assistance and funding from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE) and is being implemented in two phases to focus on the COVID-19 Occupational Health and Safety and the resource efficiency projects respectively.

Smart (Lean) Process for the Public Service – 25 October 2021
The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) signed an Agreement, on 25 October 2021, with the Ministry of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms for the implementation of the Smart (Lean) Process for the Public Service in the presence of both Ministers, Honourable Soomilduth Bholah and Honourable Teeruthraj Hurdoyal.

The Smart (Lean) Process project is one of the projects under the Public Sector Business Transformation Strategy (PSBTS) adopted in 2017. It aims primarily at simplifying and automating business processes to be rapid, responsive and efficient.
THIS NEWSLETTER HAS BEEN PREPARED BY THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION IN COLLABORATION WITH:

ASSAY OFFICE

MAURITIUS ACCREDITATION SERVICE (MAURITAS)

MAURITIUS STANDARDS BUREAU

NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS COUNCIL

FASHION AND DESIGN INSTITUTE