



Republic of Mauritius

# National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy 2020-2030

02 March 2021

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– Mr. K. Jayepokash, Inspector of Police, NDRRMC, Team Leader for Institutional Arrangements Action Plan.

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**Prime Minister  
Republic of Mauritius**

## Message

The year 2020 focused increased attention on the importance of preparedness in the face of a range of hazards, from global concerns to local challenges. The significant pressure these hazards exert on existing structures and coping mechanisms highlight the need to reduce vulnerability within our communities.

It is with this concern in mind that we have developed this National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy. This National Policy, along with its associated National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Framework and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Action Plan, will guide and harmonise our approach to disaster risk reduction and management, while ensuring sufficient flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing and unpredictable environment.



The National Policy, National Strategic Framework, and National Action Plan are closely aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and provide a pathway for achieving the internationally agreed priorities for action and targets in the Sendai Framework.

Most importantly, this National Policy addresses our obligations and commitments to the People of the Republic of Mauritius and aims to achieve substantial reductions in disaster risk, while protecting lives, livelihoods, and environmental, economic, social, and cultural assets.

We look forward to working with colleagues in national and local government, communities, the civil society, development partners, and the private sector, to ensure a more resilient Republic of Mauritius by 2030.

On behalf of the Government and the People of the Republic of Mauritius, I would like to thank the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre for leading the development of this National Policy, as well as all key stakeholders who devoted time to its development.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pravin Kumar Jugnauth'.

The Hon Pravin Kumar Jugnauth  
Prime Minister

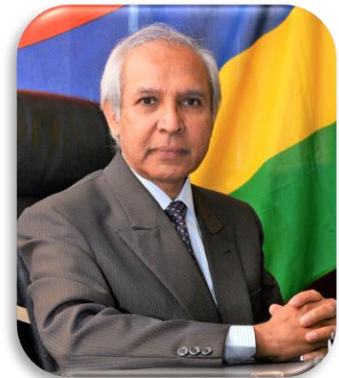
20 November 2020



**Vice-Prime Minister, Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management  
Republic of Mauritius**

## Message

This National Policy is a critical document that outlines and will guide the Republic of Mauritius' approach to disaster risk reduction and management for the next decade, until 2030. It recognises the potential of disasters to inflict significant harm on people and communities, and to set back significant development gains, in the absence of focused resilience-building efforts at all levels. This National Policy is unique in that it has adopted a bottom-up approach, importantly noting that disasters affect everyone, and are therefore everyone's responsibility. It has adopted this approach from the start, engaging key stakeholders across government in its development.

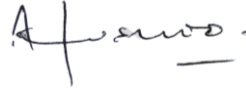


This National Policy, and its associated National Strategic Framework and National Action Plan, will guide all Ministries and Departments, at national and subnational levels, to ensure a comprehensive whole-of-government approach that mainstreams disaster risk reduction and management initiatives horizontally across Ministries and vertically at all levels of government. However, it does not engage government alone – it ensures that communities, civil society, development partners, and the private sector are fully engaged. The active participation of these key stakeholders is essential for the successful achievement of this National Policy's objectives.

The objectives set out in this National Policy and the National Strategic Framework, and the steps outlined to address them in the National Action Plan, take into account the specific challenges faced by communities in the Republic of Mauritius based on their location, vulnerabilities, and exposure to hazards. It therefore takes a tailored approach to our specific context, and empowers communities to act and take ownership of their own resilience building, supported by strong leadership on these issues from all levels of government. It also recognises the substantial efforts that have been made in this area already, and seeks to build on them.

This National Policy recognises that efforts made to reduce hazard exposure and decrease vulnerability in advance of disaster can prevent loss of lives and significantly reduce economic and other costs, as compared to purely response focused efforts. It therefore emphasises risk reduction, preparedness, and warning and alert. Of course, this is not to say that response and recovery are not considered – the role of an early and comprehensive response, and an approach to recovery that reduces future risk, are both cornerstones of the resilience building approach adopted by this National Policy.

I congratulate the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre for leading the development of this National Policy, and thank all key stakeholders who were involved in its development.



Dr the Hon Mohammad Anwar Husnoo, MBChB, DCh, MRCP  
Vice-Prime Minister,  
Minister of Local Government and Disaster Risk Management

## Message

The Republic of Mauritius is rich with natural resources: from its beautiful beaches enjoyed by locals and tourists alike, to its vast swathes of agricultural land that produce crops that support local food security and provide income. At the same time, these natural resources, as well as Mauritius' built infrastructure and, most importantly, its people, are exposed to a range of hazards. Many of these hazards, such as flooding, high winds, and landslides, are not new, but are exacerbated by climate change. In addition, while our increasingly global world brings benefits, it also brings challenges, as seen in this year's global Coronavirus pandemic.



It is in this context that I am pleased to present this National Policy which, along with its associated National Strategic Framework and National Action Plan, provide guidance and support for implementing disaster risk reduction and management activities throughout the Republic. It aims to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks through overarching guidance to ensure a harmonised approach, concrete steps to achieve our shared goals, and indicators to ensure that we can monitor progress on an ongoing basis.

This National Policy recognises the importance of government leadership in this important area. However, at the same time it ensures a bottom-up approach that includes civil society, development partners, and the private sector, and places communities at the centre of these efforts. This is particularly important as communities are the first to be impacted by disasters – before even first responders arrive, the community is already there. Strengthening and empowering our communities will build their resilience and help them fulfil this role, reducing the impact of disasters in terms of lives, livelihoods, and economic loss.

The establishment of this National Policy, along with its associated National Strategic Framework and National Action Plan, is a crucial milestone for increasing resilience throughout the Republic of Mauritius. However, it is only the first step in a long journey, as outlined in the Action Plan. We will need to remain vigilant and attentive to the goals we have set in these documents to ensure that their important aims are achieved. I look forward to working with key stakeholders at all levels, and particularly with communities themselves, to ensure the full implementation of these documents. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre will play a lead role in implementing and monitoring these actions.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to the development of these documents for their tireless efforts to increase the resilience of the people of the Republic of Mauritius.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a flourish.

**Mr Anil Kumar Dip, PMSM**  
Deputy Commissioner of Police  
Ag. Commanding Officer, SMF  
and Officer in Charge, NDRRMC

# 1. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy

## 1.1 Summary

[1] This National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy establishes the context for the vision, goals and objectives set out in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Strategic Framework and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Action Plan 2020-2030. It includes a Policy Statement, that disaster impacts should be proactively reduced to the lowest levels possible with available local and external resources. To ensure application of this policy statement, it focuses on and provides policy guidance regarding risk reduction, preparedness, warning and alert, response, and recovery. It encourages broad engagement in disaster risk reduction and management across society.

[2] In addition, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy recognises the importance of enhancing learning and development capacities, and outlines a process for this. It also notes the essential role that finance plays, including both support for those affected by disasters and continued financing for disaster risk reduction and management more broadly, both from government and other sources. Finally, it outlines the implementing mechanisms that will ensure its successful implementation.



## 1.2 Authority and Scope

[3] This National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy (hereinafter “National Policy”) is established under Section 6(a) of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2016, wherein the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council shall “formulate the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy”. The National Policy establishes the context for the vision, goals and objectives set out in the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management



Strategic Framework (hereinafter “National Strategic Framework”) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Action Plan 2020-2030 (hereinafter “National Action Plan”).

[4] The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2016 defines disaster risk reduction and management as an integrated, multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary process to address vulnerabilities, reduce disaster risks, mitigate disaster impacts, prepare for disasters, and effectively respond to, and recover from, disasters when they occur. The National Policy is based on this integrated holistic approach, ensuring that all elements of the disaster risk reduction and management process are used to reduce the adverse impact of disasters on the Republic of Mauritius.

[5] The National Policy incorporates the four Priorities for Action of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 and the five objectives of the African Union Programme of Action for the Implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. The links between disaster risk reduction and management and the Sustainable Development Goals, as well as links to disaster risk reduction in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, are clearly recognised in establishing the National Policy.

[6] The National Policy recognises the complementarity between efforts to address climate-related hazards and adaptation to climate change. The National Strategic Framework and National Action Plan will incorporate linkages in risk reduction and management with the Republic of Mauritius’ Nationally Defined Contribution and climate change policy, strategy and plans for action.

### 1.3 National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy Statement

[7] The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius is that *disaster impacts should be proactively reduced to the lowest levels possible with available local and external resources*. This policy is broad-based and considers the multiple risks, hazards and vulnerabilities faced by the Republic of Mauritius.

[8] The National Policy anticipates continued improvement in the resilience of the Republic of Mauritius to disasters. The policy envisions the reduction of risk as an integral part of the development process. Disaster preparedness, multi-hazard early warning and alerting are critical to reducing or avoiding impacts when disasters threaten. Effective and timely response and recovery reduce immediate damage, facilitate a rapid return to normal and incorporate measures to reduce future risks. The National Policy anticipates broad and shared engagement from individuals in the Republic of Mauritius to organisations based outside the country to reduce disaster risk and improve the management of disasters.

[9] The National Policy draws from the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius with respect to the protection of the right to life in the face of the threat of disaster. Further, the National Policy aligns with the Constitution in recognising gender, age, health status, and personal means and (dis)abilities as being essential to disaster risk reduction and management.

## 2. Policy Engagement

[10] The National Policy anticipates that everyone at risk from natural and anthropogenic (including technological) hazards (hereafter, “hazards”) in the Republic of Mauritius will engage, as permitted by their capacities and means, in disaster risk reduction and management activities based on the National Policy and National Framework. These efforts will focus on reducing vulnerability of people and goods, and ensuring safer and resilient living in the future, with recovery used as an opportunity to build disaster resilient lives, structures and environment.

[11] This engagement has to take place at four levels. First, individuals and families will take actions within their means to reduce disaster risk and avoid or minimise impacts when disaster threatens.

[12] Second, through their normal activities, the private sector will seek to reduce the threats posed by hazards. Further, the private sector will support, within their means, disaster response and recovery.

[13] Third, civil society, ranging from internationally recognised organisations to informal associations of common purpose, will engage in supporting individuals and families. Where appropriate, civil society will support the Government in disaster risk reduction and management within their means available.

[14] Fourth, the Government of the Republic of Mauritius will strengthen and expand support to individuals and families (noting the different impacts of disasters on men, women, boys, and girls as well as those experiencing disabilities), civil society and the private sector to reduce risk and provide necessary warning, alert, response and recovery assistance in the case of disasters. In doing so, the Government will use a decentralised disaster risk governance approach, where (1) local government authorities lead in risk reduction, preparedness, warning, response and recovery and (2) the Central Government enacts laws, regulations, and standards and provides guidance and technical and material support to enable local authorities to fully engage in their disaster risk reduction and management responsibilities. In this context, local government refers to locally appointed or elected officials as well as personnel engaged by local authorities.

[15] This four-level engagement applies to Rodrigues through the Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the outer islands through the Outer Island Development Corporation (or eventual replacement). The engagement also anticipates that the Republic of Mauritius will work with international organisations and neighbouring countries to support and advance the National Policy overall and through specific projects, programs and agreements.



## 3. Policy Application

### 3.1 Risk Reduction

[16] Under the National Policy, disaster risk reduction will be based on an extensive understanding of the natural and anthropogenic hazards, as well as the vulnerabilities and risks faced by the Republic of Mauritius. Understanding disaster risks requires ongoing research into the physical, social, and economic causes of risk.

[17] To improve efficiencies, and in view of the resources available, risk reduction will be an integral and proactive part of the planning and implementation of development efforts. Where past or ongoing development has not engaged proactively in risk reduction, current disaster risks will be assessed and prioritised, and resources allocated to progressively reduce these disaster risks. As risk cannot be reduced to zero, there will be a need to reassess disaster risks to update risk reduction efforts, and to ensure that adequate capacities exist to address residual levels of risk.

[18] Disaster risk reduction will consider, in equal measure, the physical, environmental, social (including gender, age, disability, and health status), and economic origins of risk. Efforts to reduce current or potential disaster risks will consider not only improving physical infrastructure (to reduce hazard frequency or magnitude) but also, on equal footing (1) reducing personal social and economic vulnerability, (2) ecosystem based approaches to risk management, and (3) the use of risk transfer mechanisms, with the economic and social burden minimised to the extent possible.

[19] In keeping with the policy engagement approach, individuals, families, communities, civil society and the private sector, and Government should all be actively engaged in disaster risk reduction. The process of risk reduction should shift from a siloed, top down approach to one which is laterally engaged and joins bottom-up responsibilities with top-down empowerment.

### 3.2 Preparedness

[20] The National Policy envisions that preparedness is a critical component in reducing impact when disasters threaten. To this end, preparedness encompasses disaster risk-based planning using a uniform, bottom-up approach to (1) understand disaster risks and impacts, (2) educate about these risks and impacts and their avoidance, and (3) establish sufficient planning, human capacities, delegated responsibilities, procedures, facilities and resources to avoid or reduce the impact of a disaster.

[21] All preparedness efforts will consider and address needs and requirements based on physical, social or economic vulnerability. This includes attention to visitors to the Republic of Mauritius who may be unaware of local risks and associated preparedness measures.

[22] The level of preparedness required will be defined based on local agreement on disaster threats and realistic and practical measures to reduce these threats. For reasons of efficiency and effectiveness, a multi-threat management approach will be used, with threats addressed through common preparedness efforts to the degree possible. This approach includes regular monitoring of risks and updates to preparedness plans as the nature of disaster risks changes.

[23] Preparedness planning should be integrated into response planning. As a general approach, planning should enable authorities and those at risk to move seamlessly from preparedness to response.

### 3.3 Warning and Alert

[24] The National Policy envisions broadening the overall warning and alert system for the Republic of Mauritius to (1) increase the scope of hazards covered, (2) use new and emerging technologies, and (3) significantly expand the engagement of individuals, including those with disabilities, in the warning and alert process.

[25] Warning and alert systems are typically based on the collection and dissemination of information (including, but not limited to, hazard, vulnerability, and risk-related information) from mandated authorities. These warning and alert capacities will be strengthened and expanded under the National Strategic Framework.

[26] At the same time, recognising the engagement aspect of the National Policy, a coordinated emphasis will be placed on enabling individuals, communities and local government officials to understand evolving hazard conditions, identify locally appropriate alerts where certain areas are impacted differently than others, and take action in time to reduce impacts. To this end, the World Meteorological Organization guidance on multi-hazard warning systems will be a reference point on moving towards an impact-based warning and alert system linking researchers, forecasters, and data collection and analysis with individuals and local authorities to reduce the threat from disasters.

### 3.4 Response

[27] Under this National Policy, the focus will be on increasing the ability of organisations and persons involved in response working at the local level, including first responders, to support people affected by disasters and their neighbours. Where a disaster exceeds the local capacity to respond, additional support and assistance will be provided from resources from within and outside the Republic, coordinated through the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the National Emergency Operations Command, and the Rodrigues Emergency Operations Command in the case of a disaster in Rodrigues. As per Sec 36(1) of the NDRRM Act, the General Manager shall, in consultation with the National Centre, lead all disaster response operations in Agaléga or Cargados Carajos.

[28] This response approach will be underpinned by an understanding of the hazards, vulnerabilities and risks faced by the Republic of Mauritius. This analysis will be used to develop local and national disaster response plans. These plans should (1) identify locations of possible disaster damage based on risk assessments, (2) define corresponding response requirements, evacuation plans, and other damage reduction measures, (3) incorporate communities, civil society, and private sector resources in the response process, and (4) incorporate accurate, timely, and transparent methods to assess and address disaster damage. For reasons of effectiveness and efficiency, response plans will assemble response actions into a single plan with sub-plans to cover actions specific to a certain type of disaster.

### 3.5 Recovery

[29] The National Policy envisions that recovery seamlessly commences immediately after lifesaving rescue operations cease. The recovery process should include a set of actions to, as quickly as conditions permit, bring the disaster-affected to a level of risk after the disaster which is less than the level before the disaster.

[30] Recovery will be based on recovery plans, developed before a disaster, operating concurrently with response plans, and updated as needed following the onset of the disaster. A seamless process for assessing disaster damage and planning recovery will exist within the immediate response to a

disaster. Recovery actions will address the physical, economic, social, health and environmental impacts of the disaster.

[31] In line with the engagement focus of the National Policy, efforts will be made to increase the ability of authorities working at the local level, as well as first responders, to coordinate recovery, with the involvement of the civil society and the private sector as appropriate. Recovery assistance should clearly and effectively engage with people affected by disasters in supporting their efforts to achieve their own recovery.

[32] The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and the Rodrigues Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre in the case of a disaster in Rodrigues, will coordinate recovery activities, including reconstruction, rehabilitation, re-establishing livelihoods, social and mental health support and other actions as may be required. Once recovered, those who have experienced a disaster will face reduced risks and better lives. This includes mobilising technical, material, and financial support. In the case of medium- and long-term recovery from major (e.g., island-wide) disasters, the Government may establish a special administrative mechanism to provide a comprehensive approach to a rapid return to normal.



## 4. Learning and Developing Capacities

[33] The National Policy anticipates that the Republic of Mauritius will learn from risk assessments and disasters, locally, regionally and internationally. This learning process will focus on developing improved disaster risk reduction and management approaches and programs appropriate for the Mauritian context as a small island state and one where climate factors are significant.

[34] To this end, the Republic of Mauritius will establish a process which (1) collects information on disasters in the country and globally, (2) analyses this information to identify what should be learned, and (3) develops human and other capacities and resources based on this learning. The Republic of Mauritius will consider the establishment of an Indian Ocean regional disaster research and applications centre to support these efforts.

## 5. Financial Support

[35] The Government recognises previous financial support to people affected by disasters as well as financing significant portions of risk reduction, preparedness, warning and alert, and recovery efforts. In support of the **National Policy** the Government will continue its significant involvement in financing disaster risk reduction and management. Avenues for Government financing through international financial institutions and the commercial finance sector will be explored.

[36] At the same time, and in line with the policy engagement approach and empowering the local level to manage disasters and reduce risk, options to financially support disaster risk reduction and management will be broadened to include those at risk as well as civil society and the private sector. These efforts will focus on expanding financial support and not disadvantage any segment of society.



## 6. Implementing Mechanism

[37] The National Policy will be implemented by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius through the National Strategic Framework and the National Action Plan. The concepts set out in the National Policy should be progressively integrated into overall development policy, programs and projects for the Republic of Mauritius and be reflected in undertakings by the civil society and the private sector. This integration process should prioritise policies and activities in the areas of environment, climate, land use and tourism and focus on improving the use of information on disaster risks across sectors.

[38] The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre will report annually to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council on implementation of the National Policy as part of the National Strategic Framework and the National Action Plan. This reporting will include references to related policies, programs and projects, particularly in the areas of environment, climate, land use, land use planning, drainage, agriculture, education and tourism.