On the trail of the SWITCH Africa National Networking forum held in Rodrigues from 8 – 9 May 2017, SWITCH Africa Green is holding the Mauritius National Networking Forum at the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd (BPML) Cyber Tower 1 – Ebène Cybercity from 10 – 12 May, 2017. About 70 participants from government, civil society and the private sector attended the first day of the event. The objective of the forum is to discuss opportunities, challenges and barriers faced by the private sector in transitioning to an inclusive, low carbon green economy that promotes Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices and patterns in Mauritius and discuss ways of scaling up and replicating green business in the context of trade associations, MSMEs, government policies and programmes; and foster networking between different project entities with other stakeholders.

The theme for the first day of the forum was ‘Supporting SMEs in the transition towards and inclusive green economy’. In her opening remarks, Mrs. Ng Yun Wing Sin Lan (Director of Environment, Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Environment and Sustainable Development) recognized the progress
made since the inception of the project highlighting the various outputs achieved so far. Among the achievements, she noted that the Country Implementation Document had been published, the Technical Implementation Committee had been set up and three sub-committees have been constituted to focus on the three priority areas identified by the country. The three priority areas in Mauritius are Agriculture, Manufacturing and Tourism.

Rhoda Wachira (UN Environment) highlighted the expectations for the networking forum, as part of the networking facility component of the project, reiterating the importance of different stakeholders meeting to exchange knowledge and best practices, and the need to strike a balance in coming up with a networking method that works. Sarita Meeheelaul (Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Environment and Sustainable Development) later did a detailed presentation on the implementation of the three components of the SWITCH Africa Green project. She highlighted the challenges and opportunities in each of the priority sectors that were contained in the Country Implementation Document.

The morning session ended with a presentation by Statistics Mauritius on environmental statistics and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and gaps linking to Green Economy. They concluded by presenting available data for monitoring SDGs in Mauritius, noting that the SWITCH Africa Green programme was significantly contributing towards meeting different targets across a number of the SDGs. The project contributes directly to the attainment of SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production and indirectly to 10 other SDGs across the various sectors.
The panel session in the afternoon deliberated on issues regarding policy intervention. Green-Jokhoo Carol (State Law Office), Mokshada Pertaub (Director, Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies) and R. Makoond (Director, Business Mauritius) made various presentations and discussions on good practices on green business development law and policies. The discussion exposed gaps in existing laws and regulations in transitioning to Green Economy in Mauritius.

Dr. Krishna Heeramun took the participants through the Country Implementation Document highlighting areas of government intervention. Political will was evident as there had been participation and initiative from the government throughout the whole process. Munesh Iswaree (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development) talked about the Mauritius Vision 2030 and its role in the path towards sustainable development in Mauritius. Kamala Ernest (UN Environment) made a presentation on good policy practices for green business development where she discussed best practices from a global perspective, providing Mauritius with a menu of different policy options to adopt within the local context.

Day Two of the forum will focus on supporting MSMEs in the transition towards an inclusive green economy. Various dignitaries including the United Nations Resident Coordinator, the Head of the European Delegation in Mauritius are expected to be in attendance where the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, Environment and Sustainable Development shall give her keynote address and officially open the forum. This shall be followed by sessions on financing green business, promoting SCP patterns and presentations on case studies and best practices.

About SWITCH Africa Green
The overall objective of SWITCH Africa Green is to support 6 countries in Africa to achieve sustainable development by engaging in transition towards an inclusive green economy, based on sustainable consumption and production patterns, while generating growth, creating decent jobs and reducing poverty. SWITCH Africa Green is developed and funded by the European Commission and implemented by UN Environment in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

For more information, please visit www.switchafricagreen.org or email info@switchafricagreen.org