The SWITCH Africa Green National Networking forum in Mauritius was officially opened on 11 May 2017. Various dignitaries including the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Mauritius, the Head of the European Delegation in Mauritius and the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, Environment and Sustainable Development were in attendance. About 70 participants from government, civil society and the private sector attended the event.

The opening session was moderated by Mrs. Ng Yun Wing Sin Lan (Director of Environment, Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity, Environment and Sustainable Development) who lauded the various partners for the progress made during the lifetime of the project. In his remarks, Simon Springet (UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative) highlighted the contribution of SWITCH Africa Green to support in Green Economy transition in Mauritius and its role in achieving a myriad of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Lauding the forum as an opportunity for knowledge sharing, he highlighted various results achieved by the project especially the mainstreaming of policy to provide a platform for green economy development. He thanked the European Union (EU) for financing the project and the government of Mauritius for its proactive support during the implementation of the project. “May I request that you take the opportunity of this National Networking Forum to establish linkages for a more efficient uptake of sustainable production and consumption patterns,” he encouraged the participants.

H.E. Marjaana Sall (Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius) highlighted the EU’s role in contributing directly to the implementation of SDG12 in ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns are adopted. She noted the country’s potential to be a model in sustainable development in the context of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS). She also noted the wide participation of the various actors including research institutions, government entities, local authorities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the private sector all who were present at the forum. She thanked the various partners including the UN Environment, UNDP and UNOPS for collaborating to create positive impact for sustainable development through the SWITCH Africa green project.

H.E. Ambassador Marjaana Sall (Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Mauritius) delivering the opening remarks during the session.

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Officially opening the forum, Hon (Mrs) Fazila Jeewa-Daureeawoo (Minister of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare, Acting Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development) noted that current resource use was not sustainable hence the need to 'switch' to more sustainable consumption and production patterns with resource efficiency at its core. Stressing on the importance of advancing to a greener economy, she said “…the SWITCH Africa Green project has been an important lever since its inception to catalyze action towards a greener economy.” The minister also highlighted the cabinet endorsement of the country implementation plan, which was done with support from SWITCH Africa Green.

Rhoda Wachira (UN Environment) made a presentation on the results of the Technical Monitoring and Evaluation conducted in Mauritius in March 2017. She noted that the uptake of SCP practices by enterprises and MSMEs visited was encouraging. She however noted that there was need to communicate better the results on the ground. This was followed by a roundtable on financing green business where deliberations were made on various topics including green business development and social entrepreneurship, private source of funding for green business development and supporting MSMEs to access finance. There are funding opportunities in Mauritius including AfD, GEF small grants programme, private banks, etc. However some of the micro enterprises lack bankable proposals to tap into the existing resources.
The last session focused on promoting SCP practices and patterns, various grantees and project partners made presentations on the progress made, best practices, opportunities and best practices. This covered Agriculture, Manufacturing and Tourism, which are the three priority sectors in Mauritius.

The last day of the forum’s theme will be ‘Greening the waste, agricultural and tourism sector, where various practitioners shall share best practice covering the three priority sectors. This shall be followed by a site visit to Swami Vivekananda International Convention Centre, Pailles for a fair organized by one of the SWITCH Africa Green partners.
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).