The second SWITCH Africa Green National Networking Forum was held at the Cultural and Leisure Centre, Mont Plaisir, Rodrigues Island, from 08 – 09 May, 2017. The forum attracted about 100 participants from government, civil society and the private sector including SWITCH Africa green grantees and beneficiaries from Rodrigues. The main objectives of the forum was to discuss opportunities, challenges and barriers faced by the private sector in transitioning to an inclusive, low carbon green economy that promotes SCP practices and patterns in Rodrigues; discuss ways of scaling up and replicating green business in the context of Trade Associations; Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Government policies and programmes; and foster networking between different project entities with other stake-holders.

The second day of the forum began with a continuation of the presentations on success stories where SWITCH Africa Green supported entrepreneurs from various sectors shared their experiences on the implementation of Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practices in their businesses.

A SWITCH Africa Green beneficiary poses a question during one of the afternoon session where entrepreneurs shared experiences and best practises in implementing Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) practises in their enterprises.

Photo | UN Environment
In Rodrigues, about 320 participants attended various green business trainings since the inception of the project, with the 90% of them being women.

The second session focused on the SWITCH Africa Green projects in Rodrigues where the three grantees: Association Des Hôtels De Charme, Centre De Formation Agricole Frere Remi and The Commission of Fisheries, Rodrigues Regional Assembly presented on the progress of their respective projects. Attention was drawn to the impact on the ground where it was noted that about 50% of the trainees had already started enterprises, while others implemented SCP practices in their existing businesses. About 70% of the beneficiary MSMEs in Rodrigues are start-ups.

The last session was on financing, which was moderated by Dr. Henri Agathe (Advisor, Commission of Agriculture). It was reported that access to financing was still a major challenge for entrepreneurs trying to green their businesses or those starting green business enterprises. The entrepreneurs were encouraged to form cooperatives, clusters or associations to be able to access markets, financing and government support. Additionally, a myriad of policy interventions that would offer various incentives to enterprises will be launched by the Rodrigues Regional Assembly on 01 July 2017. Rhoda Wachira (UN Environment) presented on the opportunities available at both global and regional (Africa) levels, with emphasis on Africa Agriculture and Trade Investment Fund (AATIF).
The SWITCH Africa Green Team from UN Environment, conducted field visits to some of the MSMEs who participated in the exhibition and collected informational materials. The event was concluded with remarks made by J. Thomas Genave (Departmental Head, Commission for Environment & ORS). Both days of the event were covered by print and televised local media including Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC).

The National Networking Forum in Mauritius is scheduled to take place in Port Louis, from 10 – 12 May 2017, at the Business Parks of Mauritius Ltd (BPML) Cyber Tower 1 – Ebène Cybercity. The theme for the first day of the forum will be ‘Supporting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Transition towards an Inclusive Green Economy’. Participants from government, civil society and the private sector are expected to attend.
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).