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June 2017

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MAURITIUS COUNTRY OFFICE

## WHO REPRESENTATIVE IN MAURITIUS MET THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS

10th May 2017

The WHO Representative in Mauritius, Dr Laurent Musango, met the President of the Republic of Mauritius, Her Excellency Dr (Mrs) Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, during a 'cocktail dinatoire' held on 10th May 2017 at the State House, Le Réduit. Her Excellency Dr Gurib-Fakim welcomed the WHO Representative in Mauritius and expressed her appreciation in the way the WHO local office is supporting the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases in Mauritius, strengthening health systems,

promoting integrated approach and collaboration of stakeholders in health among others. Dr Musango expressed his gratitude in the availability and commitment of the Government of Mauritius in working in close collaboration with the WHO local office so as to ensure the well-being of a healthy population. He also expressed the availability of the three levels of the organization (Country office, Regional office and headquarter of WHO) to continue to provide the required support to the Government of Mauritius.



*Dr Laurent Musango and Her Excellency, Dr (Mrs) Ameenah Gurib-Fakim.*

Le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice, le Dr Laurent Musango, a rencontré la présidente de la République, Son Excellence Dr (Mme) Ameenah Gurib-Fakim lors d'un cocktail dinatoire organisé le 10 mai 2017 à la State House, Le Réduit. Son Excellence Mme Gurib-Fakim a souhaité la bienvenue au représentant de l'OMS à Maurice et a exprimé son appréciation sur le soutien que le bureau local de l'OMS apporte au ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie dans la prévention et le contrôle des maladies non-transmissibles à Maurice,

le renforcement du système de santé, ainsi que la promotion d'une approche intégrée et la collaboration de tous les partenaires de santé. Le Dr Musango a exprimé sa gratitude quant à la disponibilité et l'engagement du gouvernement mauricien à travailler en étroite collaboration avec le bureau local de l'OMS en vue d'atteindre l'objectif d'avoir une population en meilleure santé. Il a aussi indiqué que l'OMS est déterminée à continuer à apporter son soutien au gouvernement mauricien à trois niveaux: local, régional et international.

23th-27th January 2017

## **The WHO Representative in Mauritius stressed on the fact that influenza remains a major threat in many countries, especially those where there is a high prevalence of non-communicable disease due to higher risk of comorbidity.**

The former Minister of Health and Quality of Life, Honourable Anil Gayan, the Senior Chief Executive of the Ministry, Mr Girish Gunesh and Dr (Mrs) Mariam Timol, Director Health Services attended the opening ceremony of the training on Influenza Surveillance.

The objective of the training was to contribute to the efforts of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in the evaluation and strengthening of influenza surveillance systems in the country in order to improve health security. Dr Musango assured the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life of the continuous support of WHO in that perspective.

According to the WHO Representative in Mauritius, this shows the *"excellent relationship and collaboration"* between the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and WHO.

Dr Laurent Musango recalled that WHO is committed to strengthen and sustain the capacity of all the member states to prepare, prevent, detect and respond to outbreaks and other health emergencies using an all-hazards approach. WHO, he added, considers it as a priority to provide technical assistance to member states in order to strengthen preparedness and response capacities for epidemic and pandemic threats.

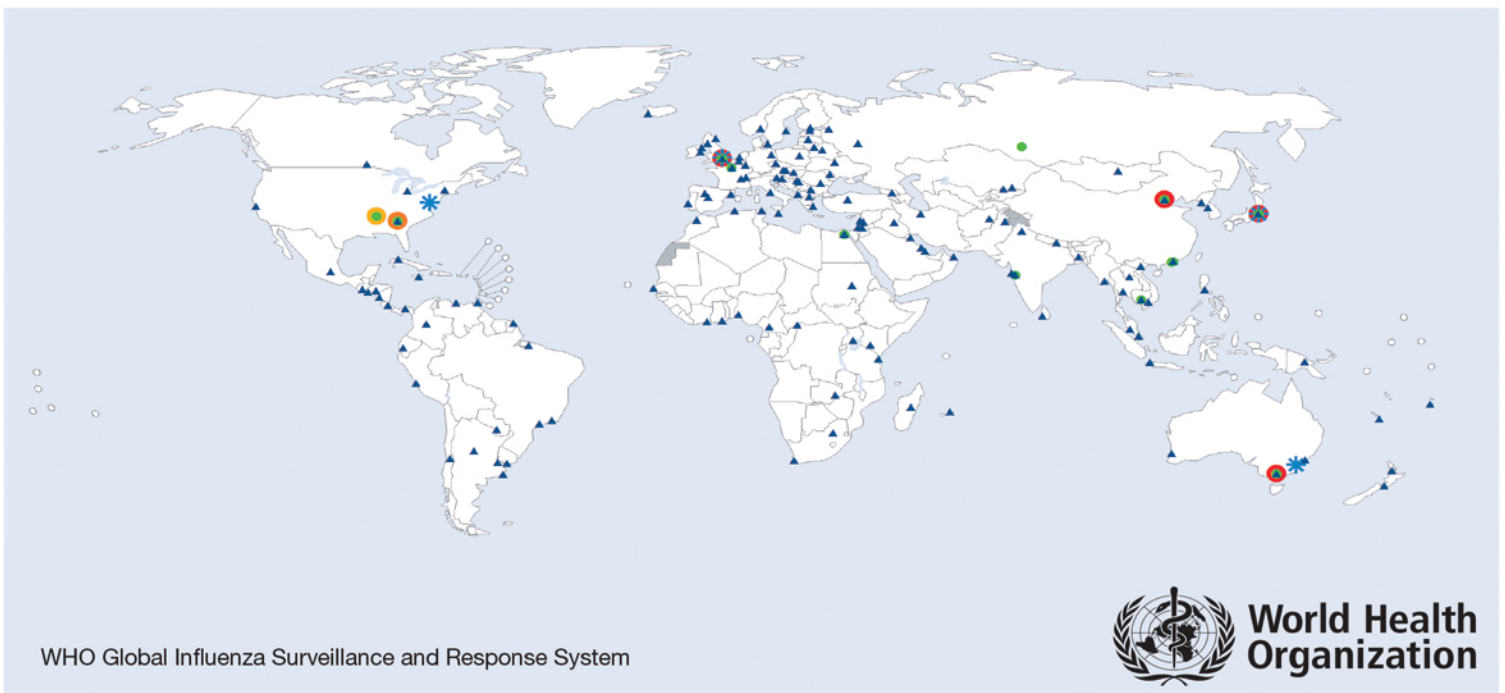
Influenza is a major public health problem at national, regional and global levels. Worldwide, this infection affects 3 to 5 million persons per year and is responsible for 250 000 to 500 000 deaths and severe illnesses. The more vulnerable categories are: children below 5 years, adults over 65 years, pregnant women and people with comorbidities. When one person suffers from at least

two illnesses or disorders, he is said to be victim of comorbidity. Research shows, said Dr Laurent Musango, that 50% of people with non-communicable diseases had comorbidity. In Mauritius, he recalled, there is a high prevalence of NCDs.

Dr Musango insisted that all the categories at risk constitute a significant proportion of the total population in Mauritius and the African Region as well. It is to be noted that the WHO's Global Influenza Programme (GIP) provides global standards for influenza surveillance but also collects and analyses virological and epidemiological influenza surveillance data from around the world. The development of key guidance documents on influenza surveillance and outbreak investigation has also helped countries to move forward.

23-27 janvier 2017

- Du 23 au 27 janvier 2017, l'OMS a organisé un atelier de travail sur la surveillance de la grippe à Maurice.
- Le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice a mis l'accent, dans son discours, sur la menace que la grippe représente pour beaucoup de pays, surtout ceux où la prévalence des maladies non-transmissibles est élevée, notamment à cause du problème de comorbidité.
- Le Dr Laurent Musango s'est réjoui de l'excellente relation et la collaboration entre le bureau de l'OMS et le ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie.
- L'objectif de cet atelier de travail est d'aider le ministère dans l'évaluation et le renforcement des systèmes de grippe en vigueur dans le pays afin d'améliorer la sécurité sanitaire.
- Pour le Dr Musango, la grippe est un problème de santé majeur aux niveaux national, régional et international. La grippe, a-t-il rappelé, touche 3 à 5 millions de personnes par an et elle est la cause de 250 000 à 500 000 décès et maladies sévères.
- Les catégories les plus vulnérables sont : les enfants de moins de 5 ans, les plus de 65 ans, les femmes enceintes et les personnes victimes de comorbidité, c'est-à-dire celles souffrant d'au moins deux maladies en même temps.
- Les recherches indiquent que la moitié des personnes souffrant d'une maladie non-transmissible sont aussi victimes du phénomène de comorbidité.
- À Maurice, a-t-il rappelé, la prévalence des maladies non-transmissibles est élevée. Et d'ajouter que les catégories à risque constituent une proportion significative de la population totale dans la région d'Afrique et à Maurice.



# NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON THE PROTOCOL FOR ELIMINATION OF ILLICIT TRADE IN TOBACCO PRODUCTS

13th-15th February 2017

**Mauritius was among the first countries to ratify the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. It could set the example by ratifying the Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products. This was the appeal made by the WHO Representative in Mauritius.**

A National Workshop on the Protocol for elimination of illicit trade in tobacco products was held from 13th to 15th February 2017. A delegation from WHO, comprising Dr William Maina, from World Health Organization Regional Office for Africa, Dr. Patrick Musavuli and Ms Yvonne Olando, WHO Consultants, was in Mauritius for the workshop.

On this occasion, Dr Laurent Musango, WHO Representative in Mauritius, recalled that this year, the world is celebrating the 12th anniversary of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which kept tobacco control high on the global agenda, while saving lives and improving global health. He then added that the protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products is the first protocol of the convention.

This protocol, which was adopted on 12 November 2012, *"is a new international treaty open to all parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control"*. It aims at tackling smuggling and other kinds of illicit trade which are a terrible threat to public health. Dr Musango quoted Dr Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO, for whom the protocol *"offers the world a unique legal instrument to counter and eventually eliminate a sophisticated criminal activity"*.

The Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products aims at securing the supply chain through measures on the licensing of imports, exports and manufacturing of tobacco products. It also seeks to establish tracking and tracing systems and levying penalties and other sanctions on those convicted of illicit trade.

It is to be noted that the major concern is that youths are among the collateral damages of tobacco traffickers. As illicit tobacco trade offers products at lower prices, primarily through possibilities of tax avoidance, cheaper tobacco encourages younger tobacco users. According to Dr Musango, the evidence demonstrates that the youth is more likely to smoke smuggled cigarettes.

He added that WHO Regional Office for Africa is encouraging member states to ratify and implement the protocol. Up to now, only 25 countries have ratified the protocol, of which 8 are from the African region. *"We need to act urgently and ratify the protocol. Mauritius was among the first countries to ratify the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. It can again set the example by ratifying the Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products"*, he emphasised.

A roadmap was elaborated by the participants to highlight the actions needed to accede to the protocol. The members of the WHO delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Minister of Health and Quality of Life to discuss on the way forward.



13-15 février 2017

- Un atelier de travail au niveau national sur le protocole visant à éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac s'est tenu du 13 au 15 février 2017.
- Une délégation de l'OMS a fait le déplacement à Maurice spécialement pour l'occasion. Elle comprenait le Dr William Maina, du bureau Afrique, le Dr Patrick Musavali, consultant et Mlle Yvonne Olando, consultante.
- Le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice a rappelé que cette année, le monde célèbre le douzième anniversaire de la Convention-cadre de l'OMS pour la lutte antitabac, qui a maintenu le contrôle du tabac comme une priorité à l'agenda international, tout en sauvant des vies et améliorant la santé des gens.
- Il a indiqué que le protocole visant à éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac, adopté le 12 novembre 2012, est un nouveau traité international dont tous les signataires de la Convention-cadre sont invités à ratifier.
- Le Dr Musango a souligné que Maurice figure parmi les premiers pays à avoir ratifié la Convention-cadre pour la lutte antitabac de l'OMS. Il a demandé à ce que le pays montre l'exemple une nouvelle fois en adoptant le Protocole dans le but d'éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac.
- Le Dr Musango a cité le Dr Margaret Chan, directrice générale de l'OMS, pour qui ce protocole constitue « un instrument légal unique pour combattre et éventuellement éliminer une activité criminelle complexe ».
- Le protocole vise à éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac en sécurisant la chaîne d'approvisionnement grâce à des mesures visant à établir des certificats d'importation, d'exportation et de fabrication de produits du tabac.
- Le protocole vise aussi à établir des systèmes de recherche et de suivi fiables, et prévoit également que des sanctions et des amendes envers ceux trouvés coupables de trafic illicite.
- « Il ne faut pas oublier que les jeunes figurent parmi les dégâts collatéraux des trafiquants du tabac. Ce commerce illicite permet d'avoir des produits à meilleur marché, qui attirent les jeunes. Les études montrent que les jeunes sont plus susceptibles de consommer des cigarettes provenant de trafic illicite », a précisé le Dr Laurent Musango.
- Actuellement 25 pays seulement ont ratifié le protocole, dont 8 de la région d'Afrique. Le protocole aura force de loi après sa ratification par 40 pays.
- Les membres de la délégation ont aussi rendu une visite de courtoisie au ministre de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie.

31st May 2017



## The theme chosen by WHO for World No Tobacco Day 2017 aimed at highlighting the threat that tobacco industry enacts for the sustainable development of all countries.

World No Tobacco Day is celebrated on 31st May. This year, the theme was *"Tobacco: a threat to development"*. It aimed at bringing to light the threat that tobacco industry poses for the sustainable development of each and every country because of its effects on health and finance of the people.

According to the Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) Survey 2015, the smoking rate in Mauritius is 19.3%: 3.9% of the female population aged 20-74 years old and 38% of the male population of the same age group. This rate is slightly less than six years back. In 2009, the smoking rate was 21.7%. The number of cigarettes imported also dropped, from 1, 306, 406, 000 in 2009 to 857, 960, 000 in 2016.

The NCD Survey 2015 also reveals that 50% of smokers are aged 19-24 years. However, the survey indicates that the smoking rate decreases with age in both female and male population.

The last Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) 2016 revealed that the smoking rate among the youngsters remains constant. According to the report, 13.7% of the population aged 13-15 years old are regular smokers and 30.3% of those who tried cigarettes did it before they were 12 years old.

Dr Satish Rughoo, from the NCD Secretariat of Jeetoo Hospital, explained that all the anti-tobacco measures introduced in Mauritius are in accordance with the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco control. Amongst them: banning of smoking in public places, prohibition of advertising, promotion or sponsorship of tobacco products, banning of retail sale of cigarettes and banning the sale of cigarettes to minors and by minors. A National Action Plan on Tobacco Control was implemented from 2008 to 2012 and a new tobacco legislation was promulgated in 2008.

There are seven Tobacco Cessation Clinics in Mauritius and one in Rodrigues. *"Up to now, 3000 persons, aged 20-50 years old, benefited from the services offered in these centres. Success rate is 20%, which means that 600 persons did not relapse during six months"*, Dr Rughoo indicated.

Dr Laurent Musango, WHO Representative in Mauritius, recalls that Mauritius was among the first countries to ratify the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco control. *"On 12th November 2012, member states of WHO, including Mauritius, voted for the WHO Protocol to eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products. We hope Mauritius will soon accede to the protocol"*, he added.

This protocol aims at eliminating the illicit trade in tobacco products, thanks to a series of actions throughout the supply chain. These measures aim at regulating the import, export and production of tobacco products. They also include the establishment of a tracking and tracing systems. Finally, they make provision for higher penalties for those contravening the legislation.

For Dr Musango, the fight against smoking requires a close collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, stakeholders in the health sector and civil society.

Dr Satish Rughoo revealed that a new Action Plan on tobacco control is being prepared. *"It contains measures aiming at strengthening anti-tobacco law, restricting access to existing tobacco products and regulating new ones, like the roll-your-own tobacco, the flavoured tobacco and the e-liquids"*, he said. This new Action Plan also makes provision for the implementation of a new set of health warnings on cigarette packages.

31 mai 2017



- « *Une menace pour le développement* ». Tel est le thème retenu cette année par l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) pour marquer la journée mondiale sans tabac, célébrée le mercredi 31 mai.
- Ce thème aspire à mettre en évidence la menace que représente l'industrie du tabac pour le développement durable de tous les pays, notamment en raison de ses implications sur la santé et les finances de leurs citoyens.
- Selon la Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) Survey de 2015, le taux de tabagisme à Maurice était de 19,3% (3,9% parmi les femmes âgées de 20 à 74 ans et 38% de la population masculine du même groupe d'âge).
- Ce chiffre a légèrement baissé en 6 ans. Il était de 21,7% en 2009. Pour la même période, le nombre de cigarettes importées a aussi connu une baisse de 21% (1 306 406 000 en 2009 à 857 960 000 en 2016).
- Parmi les fumeurs, souligne la NCD Survey de 2015, 50% sont dans la tranche des 19-24 ans. Le rapport note que le taux de tabagisme baisse avec l'âge.
- La Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2016 indique que 13,7% des jeunes, entre 13 et 15 ans, fument régulièrement et que parmi ceux qui ont déjà essayé la cigarette, 30,3% l'ont fait avant l'âge de 12 ans.
- Le Dr Satish Rughoo, du NCD Secretariat de l'hôpital Jeetoo, explique que les mesures anti-tabac introduites à Maurice sont en ligne avec la Convention-cadre de l'OMS pour la lutte anti-tabac.
- Il souligne qu'il existe huit 'Tobacco Cessation Clinics' sur le territoire, dont une à Rodrigues. Elles ont accueilli jusqu'ici plus de 3 000 personnes âgées entre 20 et 50 ans. Le taux de succès est de 20%.
- Le Dr Laurent Musango, représentant de l'OMS à Maurice, rappelle que Maurice a été parmi les premiers pays à ratifier la Convention-cadre pour la lutte antitabac. Il dit souhaiter que Maurice ratifie le protocole de l'OMS visant à éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac, adopté le 12 novembre 2012. Ce protocole recommande un large éventail de mesures portant sur la chaîne d'approvisionnement du tabac.
- Le Dr Musango souligne que le combat contre le tabagisme demande une coopération étroite entre le ministère de la Santé, les partenaires de la santé et la société civile.
- Le Dr Rughoo annonce qu'un nouveau plan d'action contre le tabagisme a été élaboré. Il contient des mesures visant à renforcer la loi anti-tabac, réduire davantage l'accès aux produits du tabac et réglementer les nouveaux produits du tabac, comme le 'roll-your-own-tobacco', le 'flavoured tobacco' et les 'e-liquids'.
- Le remplacement des avertissements de santé sur les boîtes de cigarettes est aussi prévu. Car avec le temps, leur effet de dissuasion s'est atténué, dit le Dr Rughoo.



5th June 2017

**World No Tobacco Day was celebrated at G.M.D. Atchia State College in Port Louis. In this context, a short video competition was organised among secondary school students in Mauritius to sensitise on the ill-effects of tobacco. On that occasion, the Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2017 (GYTS) report was launched.**

In his speech, the WHO Representative in Mauritius explained the theme for the World No-Tobacco Day 2017 - Tobacco: A threat to development. He said that tobacco impacts negatively on health, poverty, global hunger, environment, education, finance and governance. Thereupon, tobacco is a major barrier to sustainable development. Dr Laurent Musango stated that tobacco kills more than 7.2 million people per year worldwide, of which about 146 000 adults aged 30 years and above in the African region. *"Up to half of all tobacco users will die prematurely from tobacco-related causes, and on average, tobacco users lose 15 years of life"*, he stressed.

Dr Musango also recalled that for the African Region, the cost of healthcare from tobacco smoking is 3.5% of total health expenditure each year. *"The top five tobacco leaf-producing countries in the African Region suffer also of malnutrition which ranges from 20% to 43%"*, he said.

He also explained that tobacco impacts on the environment as well, through tobacco smoke, litter, fires and deforestation leading to climate change. The WHO Representative in Mauritius stressed on the importance of ratifying the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco which, according to him, *"is the world's most powerful tool to tackle tobacco's negative impact on development"*. He also added that increasing tobacco taxes and prices, which result in reducing its affordability, discourages consumption.

Dr Musango pointed out that the control of illicit trade in tobacco products is a key policy to reduce tobacco use and its health and economic consequences. He recalled that only 8 countries in the African Region have ratified the Protocol to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products. *"We need to act urgently and ratify the protocol"*, he said.



*A copy of the Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2017 was remitted to Dr Musango by Hon Anwar Husnoo.*

5th June 2017

According to the National Non-Communicable Disease Survey 2015, the prevalence of smoking in Mauritius has decreased from 21 % in 2009 to 19 % in 2015. The Minister of Health & Quality of Life highlighted: *"The prevalence of smoking is highest in the younger age-groups, with over 44.7 % of men aged between 18 to 24 years reported smoking"*.

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2017 was launched on that day. The report revealed that in 2016, 19 % of youngsters aged 13-15 smoke, 29.5 % were exposed to smoke in their homes and 46.1 % in enclosed public places. 10.9 % of students surveyed smoke electronic cigarette.

For Honorable Minister Husnoo, one of the biggest challenges is to ensure that future generations no longer have to suffer from the harmful effects of smoking. *"The fight against tobacco is hard, but not a lost case. My Ministry is doing its utmost to reduce tobacco use and tobacco-related mortality in the population of Mauritius, but in this colossal task ahead, we need the collaboration and support of other stakeholders present here, including the youngsters, in view of paving the way for a more concerted, comprehensive and sustained approach towards the tobacco problem"*, he insisted.

The Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, Honourable Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, who participated in this event, made an appeal to smokers to respect the right of non-smokers to breathe smoke-free air.

The WHO Representative in Mauritius, Dr Laurent Musango, also attended the "Prize presentation – Inter College Literacy Activities", organised by the Municipality of Quatre Bornes. Dr Laurent Musango stressed on the consequences of tobacco on health, poverty, global hunger, environment, education, finance and governance. He insisted for the implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and the Protocol to eliminate illicit trade of tobacco products.



*Honourable Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, Minister of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, addressing the audience at the Prize giving ceremony at G.M.D. Atchia State College.*



*Dr Musango handing over a prize to a student during Inter College Literacy Activities at the Municipality of Quatre Bornes.*

5 juin 2017

- Le lundi 5 juin 2017, le collègue d'État G.M.D. Atchia a organisé une cérémonie de remise de prix pour récompenser les cinq meilleurs collègues à un concours pour encourager les jeunes à ne pas fumer.
- Durant cette cérémonie, le dernier rapport de la Global Youth Tobacco Survey a été rendu public.
- Dans son intervention, le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice a expliqué pourquoi le tabac est considéré comme un obstacle au développement durable. « *Il impacte négativement sur la santé, la pauvreté, la famine, l'environnement, l'éducation, les finances publiques et la gouvernance* », a-t-il souligné.
- Il a rappelé que le tabac tue plus de 7,2 millions de personnes par an, dont 140 000 adultes de plus de 30 ans dans la région Afrique. « *Jusqu'à la moitié des fumeurs vont mourir prématurément, victimes des maladies liées au tabac. Et, en moyenne, les fumeurs vivent 15 ans de moins* », a-t-il affirmé.
- Le Dr Musango a rappelé que les soins accordés aux patients souffrant de maladies liées au tabagisme représentent 3,5% du budget annuel de la santé dans la région Afrique. Ironiquement, a-t-il précisé, les cinq premiers pays producteurs de feuilles de tabac sont ceux où la malnutrition est présente.
- Le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice a mis l'accent sur l'importance de ratifier la Convention-cadre de l'OMS sur la lutte antitabac. « *C'est l'arme la plus efficace pour contrer l'impact négatif du tabac sur le développement* », a-t-il déclaré. Il a aussi lancé un appel pour la ratification du Protocole visant à éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac.
- Le Dr Musango a aussi expliqué que la hausse des taxes sur le tabac conduit à une augmentation des prix, qui décourage la consommation.
- Le ministre de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie, l'honorable Anwar Husnoo, a révélé qu'il y a eu une baisse dans le nombre de fumeurs en 6 ans. Toutefois, a-t-il souligné, la prévalence est la plus élevée chez les jeunes, avec 44,7 % des hommes âgés entre 18 et 24 ans seraient des consommateurs de cigarettes.
- Citant les chiffres de la Global Youth Tobacco Survey 2016, il a indiqué que 19% des 13-15 ans fument. « *L'étude montre que 29,5% des étudiants interrogés disent être exposés à la fumée de cigarette à la maison, 46,1 % le sont dans les lieux publics et 10,9% fument la cigarette électronique* », a-t-il indiqué.
- Un des plus gros défis, selon le ministre Anwar Husnoo, est de s'assurer que les générations futures ne subissent pas les effets néfastes du tabac. « *La bataille contre la cigarette est dure, mais elle n'est pas perdue* », a-t-il insisté, tout en demandant le soutien de tous les partenaires concernés par ce combat.
- La ministre de l'Éducation, de l'Enseignement supérieur et des Ressources humaines, l'honorable Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun, présente pour l'occasion, a demandé aux fumeurs de respecter les droits des non-fumeurs et de ne pas les exposer à la fumée de cigarette.
- Le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice, le Dr Musango, a aussi participé à une cérémonie de remise de prix dans le cadre des activités littéraires inter collèges à la mairie de Quatre Bornes.
- Dans son discours, le Dr Laurent Musango a mis l'accent sur les conséquences du tabac sur la santé, la pauvreté, l'environnement, l'éducation et les finances publiques.
- Il a insisté pour l'application de la Convention-cadre de l'OMS pour la lutte antitabac et la ratification du protocole visant à éliminer le commerce illicite des produits du tabac.

24th-30th April 2017

**In the public sector, the vaccination coverage is around 85%. This figure does not include the private sector's data. The overall rate is estimated to be over 90%. Only an integrated vaccination reporting system will help getting the real figure. The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is working to remedy this situation.**

From 24th to 30th April 2017, the world celebrated the vaccination week. Mauritius has got a well established vaccination system. There are 174 vaccination centres, including 15 in Rodrigues, which are disseminated in six regions. The extended vaccination programme has been introduced in 1980, following WHO recommendations to track children who are not immunised.

Dr Prabodh Munbodh, Head of the Communicable Diseases Control Unit of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, revealed that the coverage rate for the public sector is around 85%. This figure, however, does not include data from the private sector. *"We have an excellent vaccination system in Mauritius. According to our estimations, the overall coverage rate would be 95%, even higher. If it is the case, we are in the Top 5 African countries in this field"*, he added.

The Ministry of Health and Quality of Life wants to have access to all data relating to vaccination, including those of the private sector. Dr Munbodh outlined that the Ministry would be able to work on statistics related to immunisation much closer to reality.

Dr Dawood Oaris, president of the Association of Private Clinics, welcomes this initiative. *"The private health institutions will gladly communicate these data to the Ministry. It would be a good thing that, in a spirit of good governance, everyone in Mauritius gets precise data relating to immunisation. We welcome a new method for compiling these data"*, he said.

*"If private providers transmit their data to the Ministry of Health, we would therefore have more precise figures for the whole country which are very close to reality"*, stated Dr Laurent Musango, WHO representative in Mauritius.

According to official figures of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the rate of vaccination coverage for the public sector, in 2015, was 89.1% for MMR (Measles-Mumps-Rubella) and 86.3% for DPT (Diphtheria-Peritussis-Tetanus), polio and hepatitis B.

Almost all private health centres offer immunisation service to those traveling abroad. Many paediatricians also offer this service through their private practice. In March 2015, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life introduced Rotarix vaccine, efficient against gastroenteritis, for babies aged six to ten weeks. Since March 2016, pneumococcal vaccines are available to babies aged six weeks, fourteen weeks and nine months. Grade 5 school girls can also benefit from a vaccine against the Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) to protect them from cervical cancer. These three vaccines are recommended by WHO.

Dr Munbodh added that the State proposes flu shots to high risk categories: diabetics, pregnant women and patients with asthma, cardiovascular diseases, HIV/Aids and cancer. As for the International Vaccination Centre, it proposes various paid vaccines (except to those going on Hajj pilgrimage) to Mauritians travelling to countries at risk.

24 - 30 avril 2017

**Dans le secteur public, la couverture vaccinale tourne autour de 85 %. Mais le ministère de la Santé souhaite avoir les données du privé pour connaître le taux de l'ensemble du pays.**

- La semaine de la vaccination a été célébrée du 24 au 30 avril. Maurice compte 174 centres de vaccination, dont 15 à Rodrigues, disséminés sur six régions.
- Le programme élargi de vaccination, supervisé par le Vaccination Centre, retrace les enfants non-vaccinés.
- Le Dr Prabodh Munbodh, responsable de l'unité des maladies infectieuses du ministère de la Santé, révèle que le taux officiel de couverture vaccinale dans le secteur public tourne autour de 85%. Ce chiffre n'inclut pas les vaccinations qui se font dans le privé. « *Selon nos estimations, la couverture totale de vaccination à Maurice doit être de l'ordre de 95 %, même plus* », souligne-t-il.
- Les cadres du ministère de la Santé travaillent sur un plan qui permettra de recueillir toutes les données sur la vaccination, y compris celles du privé.
- Le Dr Dawood Oaris, président de l'Association des cliniques privées, est favorable à cette démarche. « *Les établissements privés n'ont aucun problème à communiquer les données en question au ministère de la Santé. Ce serait d'ailleurs une très bonne chose* », affirme-t-il.
- Une collaboration qui réjouit l'OMS. « *Si les prestataires privés transmettent leurs statistiques au ministère de la Santé, qui va pouvoir compiler les données des deux secteurs, on pourra ainsi se réjouir d'avoir des chiffres qui sont beaucoup plus proches de la réalité* », affirme le Dr Laurent Musango, représentant de l'OMS à Maurice.



# WORLD HEALTH DAY

## DEPRESSION : LET'S TALK

7th April 2017

« *Depression : Let's Talk* » was the theme chosen by WHO to celebrate World Health Day on 7th April. On that occasion, a national screening campaign for NCDs was launched by the Prime Minister, Hon Pravind Jugnauth, in Dagotièrè.

Dr Musango read a message of Dr Matshidiso Rebecca Moeti (WHO Regional Director for Africa) and highlighted that more than 332 million people around the world suffer from depression. Almost 30 million of people are affected by this illness in the African region. He also mentioned that this mental illness can affect any individual, whatever his age, sex or social background. The cause of depression is far from being fatalistic or resulting from a weakness of character.

*"Stigmatisation and fear of social isolation discourage affected people from getting themselves treated. However, it is essential to treat these people urgently because depression is a serious and complex mental disease",* Dr Musango explained. He pointed out that the workforce taking charge of patients suffering from depression – psychologists, nurses, psychiatrists, social workers and occupational therapists – still remains insufficient in African countries. In order to address this short-coming, WHO has published some guidelines to support these countries on how to intensify and improve the health services offered to patients suffering from psychiatric illnesses, in the absence of specialised health care. Dr Musango proposed the dissemination of the document among health professionals for a better follow-up of patients. WHO also has an action plan on mental health covering the period 2013-2020.

Dr Musango explained that when someone is encouraged to talk about his depression, he or she is more likely to seek treatment and thus breaks the barriers of stigmatisation.

*"Recognising the signs of depression on the onset of the illness is an essential step towards preventing it from becoming chronic. We should also bear in mind that in worst cases, depression can lead to suicide, which is globally the second cause of mortality amongst youngsters aged 15-29 years",* he said. The WHO Representative in Mauritius pointed out that depression also affects many people aged between 55 and 74 years old. And when it is not treated, it can disrupt the whole life of the individual since it takes its toll on the mental aptitudes of the patient for carrying out his daily activities. This can lead to disastrous consequences on one's relationships with others.



*The Prime Minister, Honourable Pravind Jugnauth, addressing the audience on the launching of the NCD campaign.*

# WORLD HEALTH DAY

## DEPRESSION : LET'S TALK

7th April 2017

Dr Laurent Musango made an appeal to country members, on behalf of Dr Moeti, to support programs of action for mental health through sufficient human and financial resources to tackle the increasing burden due to depression. He advocated for complementary actions by government, partners of civil societies, including NGOs and other stakeholders for a better sensitization of the public on depression in the country. *"WHO will always give full support to country members for considering depression as one of their public health priorities"*, reiterated Dr Musango.

The Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Minister of Home Affairs and External Communications, Honorable Pravind Jugnauth, launched a national sensitisation campaign on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) on 7th April. The aim of this campaign was to sensitize the population about risk factors associated with NCDs in order to prevent them.

Honorable Pravind Jugnauth made an appeal to the population to eat healthier and to practice physical activity regularly. *"I am impressed by the work that is being done by social workers and NGOs to combat NCDs. People should take advantage of the services being offered to them freely"*, Honourable Pravind Jugnauth said to the audience.

Through this national campaign, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life is also offering free screening for diabetes, hypertension, obesity, breast cancer and cervical cancer. The Minister of Health & Quality of Life, Honorable Anwar Husnoo, stated his commitment to take on board other stakeholders, namely different ministries (Education, Sports, Local Government) and NGOs for a better synergy of complementary actions to combat NCDs. This initiative is in line with the recommendations of WHO to fight against NCDs.

### March for a "zero tolerance" attitude towards drugs



7 avril 2017

- Le thème choisi par l'OMS pour célébrer la Journée mondiale de la santé est « *Dépression : Parlons-en* ».
- Pour marquer cet évènement, le Premier ministre, ministre des Finances, ministre de l'Intérieur et des Communications extérieures, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, a procédé au lancement d'une campagne nationale sur les maladies non-transmissibles le 7 avril à Dagotièr.
- Le but de cette campagne : sensibiliser la population mauricienne sur les maladies non-transmissibles (MNT) et les facteurs de risque qui y sont associés.
- Le Premier ministre a salué le travail qui se fait sur le terrain par les travailleurs sociaux et les ONG dans le combat contre les MNT.
- À travers cette campagne nationale, le ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie propose une série de tests de dépistage pour le diabète, l'hypertension artérielle, l'obésité, le cancer du sein et le cancer du col de l'utérus.
- Le ministre de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie, l'honorable Anwar Husnoo, s'est engagé à collaborer avec les autres acteurs, notamment les ministères de l'Éducation, du Sport et des Administrations régionales, pour des actions concertées et complémentaires dans la lutte contre les maladies non-transmissibles.
- Lisant le message du Dr Matshidiso Rebecca Moeti, directrice régionale pour la région Afrique de l'OMS, le Dr Musango a précisé que la dépression touche environ 332 millions de personnes dans le monde.
- Le Dr Laurent Musango a souligné que le personnel affecté au département de la santé mentale – psychologues, infirmiers, psychiatres, ergothérapeutes et travailleurs sociaux – reste très insuffisant dans les pays de la région africaine. Pour combler cette lacune, l'OMS a publié des lignes directrices pour permettre aux pays d'intensifier et d'améliorer les services de soins de santé pour les personnes atteintes de troubles mentaux.
- L'OMS a aussi élaboré un Plan d'action mondial sur la santé mentale couvrant la période 2013-2020.
- Le Dr Musango a lancé un appel à tous les pays pour qu'ils soutiennent les programmes d'action pour la santé mentale en allouant des ressources humaines et financières suffisantes pour répondre à la charge croissante due à cette affection.
- Une semaine après le lancement de la campagne nationale contre les maladies non-transmissibles à Dagotièr, une marche pacifique pour intensifier la lutte contre la drogue a été organisée dans les rues de Port-Louis. Le ministre Anwar Husnoo a rappelé que le Premier ministre prône « *une attitude de zéro-tolérance envers les drogues* ».



*Le Dr Anwar Husnoo souhaite des actions concertées et complémentaires avec les autres acteurs de la santé.*



18th -20th April 2017

## **Dr Laurent Musango expressed his appreciation of the Mauritian Government efforts to adopt an integrated and coordinated approach to tackle NCDs.**

Dr Musango cited for example, the recent statement of the Prime Minister, Hon Pravind Jugnauth, who insisted on the importance of synergic actions to tackle Non-Communicable Diseases. It was during the launching of a national prevention campaign of NCDs on the 7th April on the occasion of World Health Day.

Dr Musango also referred to the workshop on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) to illustrate the synergic effort of the Government of Mauritius by pointing out that four ministries were present: Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, Ministry of Ocean Economy, Marine Resources, Fisheries and Shipping and Ministry of Security, National Solidarity, and Environment and Sustainable Development.

Two representatives of WHO acted as facilitators for this workshop : Professor Sabiha Yusuf Essack, WHO consultant and Dr Laetitia GAHIMBARE, Regional adviser on AMR. Dr Musango stressed on the initiative of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life to publish General guidelines for antibiotic prescription in December 2016. The aim of this initiative is to advise patients and prescribers on the management of symptoms including discomfort caused by fever. In January 2017, WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO/AFRO) organised an AMR-National Focal Point workshop in Harare in which Mauritius participated. This led to the draft document of the National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, prepared by the National team and finalised during the AMR workshop in April 2017.

Dr Musango, the WHO Representative in Mauritius, pointed out that in May 2015, the World Health Assembly approved a Global Action Plan to combat AMR.

This Global Action Plan sets out five strategic objectives:

- (i) to improve awareness and understanding of AMR;
- (ii) to strengthen knowledge through surveillance and research;
- (iii) to reduce the incidence of infection;
- (iv) to optimize the use of antimicrobial agents ; and
- (v) to ensure sustainable investment in countering AMR.

During the workshop, Dr Musango quoted Dr Margaret Chan, WHO Director General, for whom AMR is a serious health issue: "*Antimicrobial resistance poses a fundamental threat to human health, development, and security. The commitments made by Member States must be translated into swift, effective, lifesaving actions across the human, animal, and environmental health sectors. We are running out of time*". Dr Musango reiterated the strong commitment of WHO to support Mauritius to fulfil the noble objectives of combating and containing AMR.

The debriefing report highlighted that the Mauritian National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance would focus on the prevention of infections in human and animal health through vaccination, biosecurity, hygiene and sanitation, infection prevention and control, socio-behavioural interventions and the use of antimicrobial medicines.

The plan will focus on the following strategies: engagement and education, electronic surveillance systems, effective biosecurity and infection prevention, evidence-based antimicrobial use, enforceable legislation to advance AMR prevention and equitable investment.

- Un atelier de travail en vue de l'élaboration d'un plan d'action sur la résistance aux antibiotiques a été organisé par le ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie du 18 au 20 avril.
- Le Dr Laurent Musango a fait part de son appréciation des actions intégrées et multidisciplinaires du gouvernement en faveur de la population. Il s'est référé à une récente déclaration du Premier ministre, l'honorable Pravind Jugnauth, qui a plaidé en faveur d'actions synergiques pour combattre les maladies non-transmissibles. C'était lors du lancement d'une campagne nationale de prévention des maladies non-transmissibles le 7 avril à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale de la Santé.
- Le Dr Musango s'est aussi réjoui de la participation des représentants de quatre autres ministères à cet atelier de travail, démontrant d'après lui, la volonté du gouvernement de rassembler tous les acteurs concernés autour des actions concrètes.
- Le Dr Musango s'est appesanti sur l'initiative du ministère de la Santé de publier des recommandations pour la prescription des antibiotiques en décembre 2016. Le but est de livrer des conseils aux patients par rapport aux antibiotiques, mais aussi aux prescripteurs pour ce qui est de la gestion des cas de fièvre.
- En janvier 2017, Maurice avait participé au AMR-National Focal Point Workshop qui s'était tenu à Harare, organisé par WHO/AFRO. Cet atelier de travail avait débouché sur l'ébauche du Plan d'action contre la résistance aux antibiotiques qui a été finalisé en avril 2017.
- Le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice a rappelé les principaux objectifs du plan d'action global, approuvé par la World Health Assembly en mai 2015, pour combattre la résistance aux antibiotiques : sensibiliser davantage les populations sur ce phénomène, faire des recherches poussées pour mieux le comprendre et la surveiller et réduire l'incidence des infections, entre autres.
- Le Dr Musango a cité la directrice générale de l'OMS, le Dr Margaret Chan, pour insister que le phénomène de résistance aux antibiotiques est devenu une des préoccupations majeures de la santé : « *La résistance aux antibiotiques constitue une menace à la santé humaine, au développement et à la sécurité. Les États membres doivent s'engager à mener des actions rapides et concrètes pour contrer ce phénomène. Le temps presse !* »
- À l'issue de l'atelier de travail en vue de l'élaboration d'un Plan d'action national sur la résistance aux antibiotiques, le bureau de l'OMS à Maurice a adressé un compte-rendu au ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie.
- Le Plan d'action national devrait être axé sur la prévention des infections chez l'homme et l'animal à travers, entre autres, la vaccination, la biosécurité, l'hygiène et le système sanitaire, le contrôle des infections, des interventions socio-comportementales et l'utilisation de médicaments antimicrobiens.

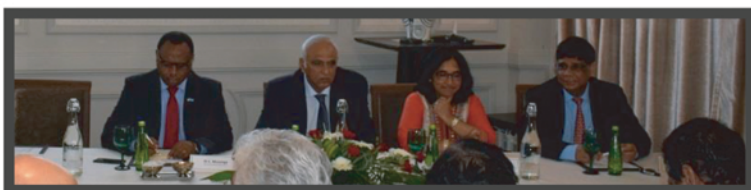
6th June 2017

**The National Health Accounts Report 2015, launched on 6th June 2017 in Le Labourdonnais Hotel, revealed that the public and private sectors disbursed a total of Rs 21 Billion for health care services.**

The private sector, according to the National Health Accounts Report 2015, spent a little more than the State (Rs 11 Billion against Rs 10 Billion). Dr Laurent Musango, the WHO Representative in Mauritius, underlined that Mauritians spent a lot to get private health care services even though these services are free in the public sector. According to Dr Musango, this “paradox” needs to “draw our attention on the quality of the free services of public health facilities, the access/availability of public’s health services and financial risk protection especially for the vulnerable groups of the population”.

Dr Musango also pointed out that funds spent on prevention is “very low” compared to the burden that non-communicable diseases represent for Mauritius. The facts and figures found in the National Health Accounts Report 2015 can be used to “adjust the distribution of available funds”. He called for each and everybody “involved in health financing and systems to use the evidence published in this document to advocate for change and take the urgently needed decisions regarding public policies, strategies and reforms”. They will thus ensure that “resources invested in health are used in the most relevant, effective and efficient manner so as to benefit the people who need them most”.

The report also indicated that in 2015, 72.8% of the Mauritian population seek health care in the public sector and 27.2% in the private institutions. Public hospitals and other health centres received 4.5 million visits, including 1.5 million in emergencies. The 19 private institutions received 227 954 patients.



- Le National Health Accounts Report 2015 a été rendu public le 6 juin 2017 à l’hôtel Le Labourdonnais. Ce lancement a été suivi d’un atelier de travail d’un jour.

- Le document indique que l’État et le secteur privé ont dépensé un total de Rs 21 milliards pour les services de santé. Le secteur privé a déboursé un milliard de roupies de plus que le secteur public.

- Le représentant de l’OMS à Maurice a évoqué le fait que les Mauriciens dépensent énormément pour des soins dans le privé alors que ces mêmes soins sont disponibles gratuitement dans le public.

- Pour le Dr Musango, ce « *paradoxe* » doit attirer notre attention « *sur la qualité et la disponibilité des services dans le public et la protection contre le risque financier, surtout pour les plus vulnérables* ».

- Le Dr Musango a aussi souligné que les sommes dépensées sur la prévention sont « *minimes* » en comparaison à la charge que représentent les maladies non transmissibles à Maurice.

- Ces données, a-t-il souligné, peuvent être utilisées pour un ajustement de la distribution des fonds disponibles.

- Le rapport indique aussi qu’en 2015, 72.8% de la population mauricienne a obtenu des soins dans le secteur public et 27.2% dans le privé. Les hôpitaux et centres de santé publics ont reçu 4.5 millions de visites, dont 1.5 million uniquement pour les urgences. Quant aux 19 institutions de santé privées, elles ont accueilli 227 954 patients.

# WORLD MALARIA DAY

## A FEW IMPORTED CASES IN MAURITIUS VIGILANCE REMAINS CRUCIAL

25th April 2017



**The World Malaria Day was commemorated on 25 April. Even though Mauritius records only a few imported cases every year, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life believes that vigilance is crucial as we can face an outbreak anytime. According to WHO, prevention is of the essence.**

It was during the 80s that Mauritius has been certified 'Malaria-free', which means that the country has been able to eliminate local cases of malaria on its territory. However, every year, a few imported cases are recorded, mainly people travelling in affected countries.

How has Mauritius been able to eliminate local cases of Malaria? Dr Prabodh Munbodh, Head of Communicable Diseases Control Unit of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, says that the support of WHO was crucial in the introduction of a surveillance system for Malaria during the 80s. This system has been reviewed over the years for better surveillance and includes:

- surveillance of passengers at the port and airport;
- surveillance of those who recently visited affected countries through a door-to-door screening done by Health Surveillance Officers around the island;
- screening and monitoring of cases;
- larviciding and disinfection of targeted areas; and
- surveillance of mosquitoes (Anopheles), vectors of the disease, by the Entomology Department of Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

Before the introduction of the surveillance system, Mauritius has experienced epidemics of Malaria on various occasions.

According to Dr Mundobh: "Our country had faced an outbreak in 1867. There had been thousands of cases and many deaths. In 1940, a national campaign had been launched to fill in the wetlands as a preventive measure since mosquitoes used to proliferate in these areas."

*In 1949, a big campaign was carried out to eliminate mosquitoes through spraying of Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT). Two years later, the number of Malaria cases and deaths related to this infectious disease were reduced to a great extent. Works were also carried out throughout the island, mainly on banks of rivers, to prevent water stagnation. Having recourse to Chloroquine to treat malaria cases has also been a great step further in the fight against this disease. Thanks to all these measures, Mauritius was declared Malaria Free in 1973," Dr Munbodh explained.*

However, in 1975, another outbreak declared after the arrival of foreign workers for the reconstruction of our country, which was completely devastated by cyclone Gervaise. That was the last Malaria outbreak in Mauritius. However, Dr Munbodh warned that even though we have an efficient surveillance system, our country is still at risk of facing eventual outbreak.

This is why he insisted that we should never lower our guard against this infectious disease, especially when every year, 20 to 50 imported cases are registered in the country. "Even though 100% of these people get infected in other countries, the risk of local transmission still exists. On this account, we always recommend people who travel to countries at risk to always revert back to officers of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in case of Malaria-like symptoms," said Dr Munbodh.

# WORLD MALARIA DAY

## A FEW IMPORTED CASES IN MAURITIUS VIGILANCE REMAINS CRUCIAL

25th April 2017



### Global Report on Malaria 2016: Decrease in death rate by 31%

Prevention is still a priority both at regional and global levels. "Malaria continues to kill more than 400 000 persons around the world every year," revealed Dr Musango. He added that the African region has made a lot of progress in the fight against Malaria. The Global Report on Malaria of 2016 indicated that in five years (2010-2015), the prevalence of Malaria cases has decreased by 23% in the region. Death rate related to Malaria has decreased by 31%. This report also revealed that 6.8 million deaths (of which 6.6 million children under 5 years old) have been prevented in the region over the period 2001-2015.

Such a leap in the fight against Malaria has been possible thanks to many measures taken by high risk countries. "Since 5 years, almost twice the population at risk in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa sleep under mosquito nets spread with insecticides. The percentage of children who undergo rapid diagnostic testing for Malaria has greatly increased (by 77%). The proportion of pregnant women who benefit from preventive intermittent treatment has increased by five times in 20 African countries," Dr Musango pointed out.

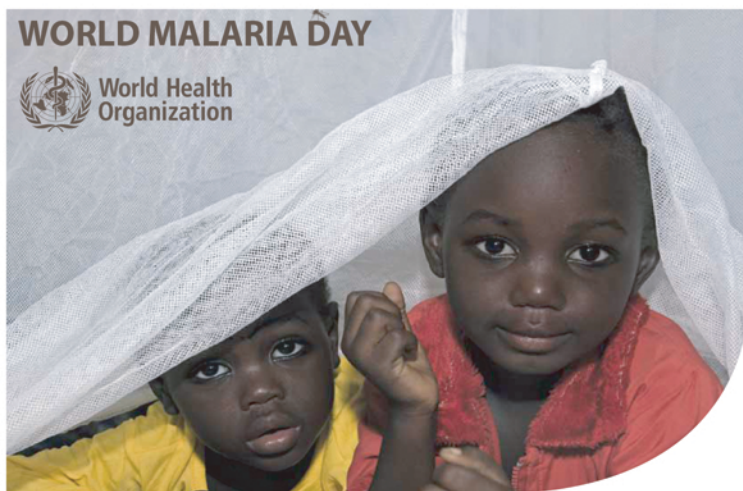
### New vaccine on experimental basis in Sub-Saharan region

The WHO Representative in Mauritius highlighted that this year marks a new era in the prevention of Malaria. "WHO has announced that the very first vaccine against this infection will be introduced on a pilot basis in the Sub-Saharan region. The vaccine, known as the RTSS, gives partial protection to children. It is being evaluated and could soon form part of the preventive measures against Malaria recommended by WHO. The experimental phase of this new vaccine constitutes a major milestone in the fight against Malaria," says Dr Musango.



Dr Musango having a blood test after staying in Congo-Brazzaville and Kigali (Rwanda), known to be malaria-risk countries.

### WORLD MALARIA DAY



# JOURNÉE MONDIALE DE LA LUTTE CONTRE LE PALUDISME

LA VIGILANCE RESTE DE MISE

25 avril 2017



• La malaria fait plus de 400 000 victimes chaque année à travers le monde.

• C'est dans les années 80 que Maurice a obtenu sa certification attestant que le pays a réussi à éliminer le paludisme sur son sol. Les 20 à 50 cas enregistrés chaque année à Maurice sont tous importés, c'est-à-dire que les personnes concernées ont été infectées à l'étranger.

• Le Dr Prabodh Munbodh, du département des maladies infectieuses du ministère de la Santé, rappelle que c'est grâce au soutien de l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) que Maurice a pu mettre en place un système de surveillance pour la malaria dans les années 80.

• Les campagnes de prévention et le recours à la chloroquine comme médicament ont aidé à éliminer les cas locaux de malaria.

• Toutefois, Maurice n'est pas à l'abri d'une éventuelle épidémie, malgré le système de surveillance en place. Le risque d'une transmission locale existe toujours. D'où le plaidoyer du ministère de la Santé auprès de ceux qui voyagent dans les pays à risque de toujours revenir vers ses officiers en cas de symptômes semblables à ceux du paludisme.

• « *Le paludisme demeure une priorité au niveau régional et mondial* », précise le Dr Musango.

• S'appuyant sur les estimations figurant dans le rapport sur le paludisme dans le monde publié en 2016, le Dr Musango révèle qu'en 5 ans (2010 à 2015), l'incidence des cas de paludisme a diminué de 23 % dans la région. Quant à la mortalité liée à ce fléau, elle a accusé une baisse de 31 %. Ce rapport souligne ainsi que la région a pu éviter 6,8 millions de décès liés au paludisme durant la période 2001-2015.

• Le Dr Musango a expliqué que cette année marque « *l'avènement d'une nouvelle ère* » dans la prévention de cette maladie mortelle qu'est le paludisme : l'OMS a annoncé le tout premier vaccin contre le paludisme qui sera introduit dans le cadre de projets pilotes exécutés en Afrique subsaharienne. Ce vaccin (appelé RTSS) confère aux jeunes enfants une protection partielle contre le paludisme.



14th June 2017



***“Mauritius can inspire other countries as far as transfusion safety is concerned”, said Dr Laurent Musango, WHO Representative in Mauritius.***

*“WHO would like other countries in the region to study the Mauritian model and adopt its best practices in the area of transfusion safety”, he said on World Blood Donor Day 2017, celebrated on Wednesday 14th June. The theme chosen this year is “Giving blood in a time of crisis”.*

Why Mauritius should serve as an example? Dr Musango explained that simply because *“we can affirm that the risk of contamination during a transfusion in Mauritius is very limited, almost nil”*. However, he added that *“there is no such thing as zero risk”*. Transfusion safety is the ensemble of measures allowing control over the stages of the process of the blood transfusion chain, from the donor to the recipient, in order to reduce/eliminate any risk.

Dr Janaki Sonoo, Head of the Blood Bank, affirmed that WHO lays great focus on transfusion safety. *“WHO recommends systematic testing of donated blood in order to avoid any risk of contamination. It urges countries to have appropriate facilities to stock blood received from voluntary non-remunerated donors. WHO also presses for a good haemovigilance system, that is all the monitoring and evaluating procedures of the blood transfusion chain”, she added.*

According to Dr Sonoo, Mauritius is doing its utmost to follow the WHO’s recommendations. Dr Musango pointed out: *“In Mauritius the level of transfusion safety is very high. In 2016, 86.2% of all the blood transfused comes from voluntary non-remunerated donors, therefore with low risk of transfusion-transmissible infections. Moreover, all blood units are screened for HIV, hepatitis B and C and Syphilis. The blood collected is separated in order that patients receive only the components required”*

Dr Musango highlighted the presence of an organizational and legal framework allowing a centralised coordination of transfusion activities all over the country. It should be noted that the National Blood Transfusion Service, commonly referred to as the Blood Bank, is solely responsible for blood transfusion in Mauritius. The Blood Bank is ISO certified since 2010 and has established its own quality assurance system.

WHO has another reason for satisfaction: the fact that this programme is wholly funded in the National Budget. *“This demonstrates a political engagement for improving quality of healthcare in particular and the welfare of the population in general. Blood transfusion contributes to that”, Dr Musango said.*

In Mauritius, an average of 45 000 units of blood are received annually, representing 92% of the country’s needs. *“To attain 100% of our needs, we need an additional 5 000 units annually. I think we can reach that goal with the help of all stakeholders. We have 500 000 vehicles on our roads. If only one-tenth of the drivers become donors, we will have enough blood to cover our needs”, explained Obeidullah Khan Wahedally, president of Blood Donors’ Association.*

14 juin 2017



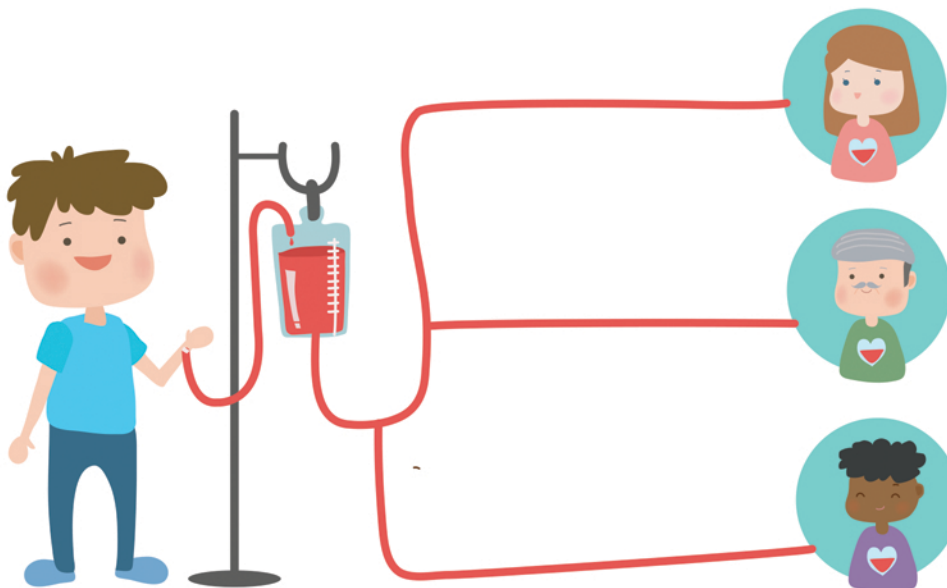
**«Maurice pourrait servir d'exemple en matière de sécurité transfusionnelle», a déclaré le Dr Laurent Musango à l'occasion de la Journée mondiale du don de sang, célébrée le 14 juin.**

- L'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS), selon son représentant à Maurice, a soutenu que l'organisme « *souhaite publier l'exemple de Maurice afin d'inspirer d'autres pays de la région à adopter les pratiques exemplaires dans le domaine de la sécurité transfusionnelle* ».
- « *On peut affirmer avec certitude que le risque de contamination lors d'une transfusion sanguine à Maurice est considérablement réduit, voire nul* », a souligné le Dr Musango.
- La sécurité transfusionnelle, rappelons-le, constitue l'ensemble des mesures permettant de contrôler toutes les étapes de la chaîne transfusionnelle, du donneur au receveur, afin de réduire, voire éliminer, tout risque lors de la transfusion sanguine.

• Le Dr Janaki Sonoo, responsable de la Banque de sang, a indiqué que Maurice fait de son mieux pour suivre les recommandations de l'OMS. Les pintes de sang recueillies sont systématiquement analysées afin de s'assurer qu'elles ne sont pas contaminées et il existe un bon système d'hémovigilance, c'est-à-dire l'ensemble des procédures de surveillance et d'évaluation de la totalité de la chaîne transfusionnelle, du donneur au receveur.

• À Maurice, environ 45 000 pintes de sang sont collectées en moyenne chaque année. Ce qui représente 92 % des besoins du pays.

• Obeidullah Khan Wahedally, président de la Blood Donors' Association, est persuadé qu'avec l'aide de tous les partenaires, on pourra couvrir 100% de nos besoins.





19th-21th June 2017

**The three-day workshop on Graphic Health Warnings was an opportunity to discuss the progress made so far in the implementation of Article 11 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.**

A multi-country workshop took place on 19th – 21th June 2017 at Le Méridien, Balaclava. Representatives of Health Ministries and civil societies from 15 African countries participated in the workshop. One of the objectives, said Dr Musango, was to identify challenges in the implementation of the Graphic Health Warnings. The WHO Representative in Mauritius explained that WHO wants to accelerate the implementation of the largest pictorial health warnings in all African countries and together push forward the implementation of plain packaging.

Mauritius was among the 6 African countries, out of 47, that have fully implemented the Graphic Health Warnings. *“We know also that Mauritius is planning to implement plain packaging in the future”*, highlighted Dr Musango. He recalled that Mauritius was among the first African countries to have implemented Graphic Health Warnings. He then added that the country went beyond the minimum requirement of the WHO FCTC by implementing 65% of the cigarette package area with pictorial health warnings in 2009.

It is to be noted that tobacco kills more than 7 million people per year and is costing the world economy

USD 1.4 trillion annually. The implementation of pictorial health warnings on tobacco product packages is a powerful tobacco control measure to eliminate the tobacco industry’s influence and has proved to be a very cost-effective means to increase public awareness on the health effects of tobacco use and in reducing tobacco consumption.

Dr Anwar Husnoo, Minister of Health and Quality of Life, highlighted the imperative for developing countries to accelerate the implementation of Article 11 of the WHO FCTC, which requires parties to use large, rotating health warnings on all tobacco product packaging and labelling to deter smoking. He laid emphasis on the vulnerability of young people and pointed out that more than 80% of the world smokers live in low-income and middle-income countries. Graphic pictures are more powerful deterrents than words, and the use of pictorial health warnings on tobacco product packages has proved to be a very cost effective method to raise public health awareness on the harmful effects of tobacco use.



*Mr Guinness, Senior Chief Executive, Hon. A. Husnoo, Minister of Health & Quality of Life, Dr L. Musango, WHO Representative in Mauritius and Dr S. Aboubakar, Director Health Services (NCD/HP).*

19-21 juin 2017

- Un atelier de trois jours s'est tenu du 19 au 21 juin 2017 sur les mises en garde sanitaires sur les produits du tabac. Les participants provenaient des ministères de la Santé et des sociétés civiles de 15 pays africains.
- Le Dr Musango a expliqué que l'OMS veut accélérer l'introduction de plus grandes mises en garde sanitaires et encourager l'emballage neutre des produits du tabac dans les pays africains.
- Il a rappelé que Maurice figurait parmi les six premiers des 47 pays d'Afrique à avoir introduit les mises en garde sanitaires en 2009.
- Le tabac, a-t-il déclaré, tue 7 millions de personnes chaque année et coûte 1.4 trillion de dollars américains à l'économie mondiale.
- Les mises en garde illustrées, selon lui, permettent d'éliminer l'influence de l'industrie du tabac et de réduire la consommation en sensibilisant davantage sur les dangers du tabac.
- Le ministre de la Santé, l'honorable Anwar Husnoo, a insisté sur la nécessité pour les pays en voie de développement d'appliquer l'article 11 de la Convention-cadre pour la lutte antitabac de l'OMS.
- Il a souligné la vulnérabilité des jeunes face à l'influence de l'industrie du tabac et a rappelé qu'aujourd'hui, 80 % des fumeurs vivent dans des pays à revenus faibles ou moyens.



*Les intervenants ont tous insisté sur la nécessité d'éliminer l'influence de l'industrie du tabac. L'honorable ministre de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie au centre, M. Gunes, Senior Chief Executive à gauche et le Dr Musango à droite.*

20th June 2017

## Mauritius made great progress in eradicating local transmission and reducing the burden of vector and water-borne diseases. Yet, the threat of emerging and re-emerging diseases remains.

During the opening of the workshop on Integrated Disease and Event Based Surveillance, which took place on 20th June 2017 in Quatre Bornes, the WHO Representative in Mauritius stated: *"We are all aware that Mauritius has over the last decades made great strides in eradicating local transmission and reducing the burden of vector borne diseases, such as malaria, and water borne diseases"*.

The rapid growth of global travel, the threat of emerging and re-emerging diseases remains a challenge for human and veterinary health in the world, especially in the African region. The world is confronted with various health threats, such as avian influenza, anthrax, cholera, ebola, hepatitis, dengue, malaria, meningococcal meningitis, MERSCoV and Zika.

The position of Mauritius and the endless movement of goods and passengers made it an obligation *"to strengthen and maintain an effective surveillance system to ensure early detection and timely response to any acute public health threat should the need arise"*, emphasised Dr Musango in his speech.

- Un atelier de travail sur la surveillance épidémiologique intégrée des maladies a eu lieu le 20 juin 2017 à Quatre Bornes.

- Le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice a expliqué que Maurice a fait des progrès considérables en ce qui concerne l'éradication de la transmission locale et la réduction de la charge des maladies à transmission vectorielle ou hydriques.

- Compte tenu de l'augmentation du nombre de déplacements, la menace d'émergence ou de résurgence de maladies pour la santé publique humaine et vétérinaire existe sur le plan mondial, notamment la région d'Afrique.

- La position stratégique de Maurice et le mouvement incessant des passagers et des biens, selon le Dr Musango, font qu'il y a nécessité de *« maintenir et renforcer un système de surveillance épidémiologique efficace afin d'assurer la détection rapide de toute menace à la santé et une réaction prompte à ce danger »*.



*The participants of the workshop on Integrated Disease and Event Surveillance.*

April-May 2017

**Radio is a powerful tool for communication. On several occasions, Dr Laurent Musango seized the opportunity to sensitise the public on health issues.**

## **Radio programme on diabetes and depression**

On the occasion of the celebration of World Health Day 2017, the WHO Representative in Mauritius highlighted the link between depression and non-communicable diseases (NCDs), mainly high blood pressure and diabetes. *"Some studies carried out by WHO have shown that depression can lead to NCDs and vice-versa. Signs associated with depression are mainly loss of appetite and energy, sleep disorder, anxiety and difficulty to concentrate. All these contribute to put people with depression at risk of developing NCDs. On the other side, people suffering from NCDs are sometimes very worried about their health. They are therefore much at risk of getting depressed. In simpler terms, depression impacts on the physical health of people and the other way round",* he stated.

On 12th April 2017, Dr Laurent Musango participated in the radio programme "Pran ou Diabet en Main" on the theme : « Diabetes and hypertension : a dangerous relationship ». He explained that non-communicable diseases are predominant in developed and developing countries, compared to underdeveloped countries which are more exposed to communicable diseases (malaria, diarrhoea, respiratory infections, tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS).

Diabetes and hypertension have common risk factors and affect the same organs: heart, blood vessels, kidneys and eyes. *"Those already suffering from diabetes and hypertension should also eat healthily and do physical activities which prevent complications,"* stated Dr Musango.

According to Dr Sunil Gowrisungkur, Internal Medicine Consultant at the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, physical activity can prevent non-communicable diseases like diabetes, hypertension, cardiac diseases and obesity. He advised diabetic and hypertensive patients to seek advice from their treating doctor before they start doing any physical activity.



*Dr Musango participating in a radio programme on 'Radio One'.*

## **Dr Musango intervenes on HPV Vaccines**

In the context of the national vaccination programme on cervical cancer targeting 9000 school girls in Mauritius and 500 in Rodrigues, Dr Laurent Musango, WHO Representative in Mauritius, was interviewed by Le Défi Quotidien newspaper on 8th May 2017. He explained that the Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety of WHO reviews on a regular basis the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccines and, up to now, no major issue was identified regarding the use of the vaccine.

Dr Musango stated that three types of HPV vaccines are proposed: bivalent, tetravalent and monovalent. They protect, according to studies, against the two types of HPV (16 and 18) which cause cervical cancer in 70% of cases. They also protect against other types of non-uterine cancer. Mauritius opted for bivalent vaccine. The WHO Representative also reassured the parents of a girl who fell ill after being vaccinated on the safety of the vaccine.

Avril-Mai 2017

**Les médias constituent un outil efficace pour sensibiliser le public sur les problèmes de santé.**

## Le diabète et l'hypertension

• Le 12 avril, le Dr Musango participait à l'émission "Pran ou diabet en main" qui avait pour thème le lien entre le diabète et l'hypertension.

• Selon le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice, les maladies non-transmissibles sont prédominantes dans les pays développés et en voie de développement.

• Plus les conditions de vie s'améliorent, plus l'espérance de vie augmente. Et plus une personne vit longtemps, plus le risque de développer des maladies non-transmissibles s'accroît, a-t-il ajouté.

• En guise de prévention, l'OMS recommande une alimentation saine, la pratique d'une activité physique régulière, l'arrêt du tabagisme et une consommation modérée d'alcool.

• Chaque année, l'OMS présente un plan d'action pour encourager les gens à pratiquer une activité physique afin de se prémunir contre les maladies non-transmissibles. L'OMS recommande de l'activité physique au moins cinq fois par semaine, à raison de trente minutes au moins par séance.

• Le Dr Sunil Gowrisungkur, consultant en médecine interne du ministère de la Santé et de la Qualité de la vie, recommande vivement aux diabétiques et hypertendus de consulter leur médecin avant de pratiquer n'importe quelle activité physique.

## Le diabète et la dépression

• Dans le cadre de la Journée mondiale de la santé mentale, le Dr Laurent Musango était sur le plateau de "Pran ou diabet en main" le 27 avril, sur Radio One. Le thème était : « *Le lien entre diabète et la dépression* ».

• Le Dr Musango s'est appesanti sur le lien entre la dépression et les maladies non-transmissibles, dont l'hypertension artérielle et le diabète. « *Les études menées par l'OMS démontrent que la dépression peut mener aux MNT et vice-versa* », a-t-il précisé.



## Vaccin contre le HPV

• Dans le contexte du programme national de vaccination ciblant 9000 jeunes étudiantes du primaire à Maurice et 500 à Rodrigues, le Dr Laurent Musango a été interviewé par le journal Le Défi Quotidien le 8 mai 2017.

• Il a déclaré que le comité consultatif mondial de la sécurité vaccinale (GACVS) n'a pas identifié, jusqu'ici, de problème de sécurité lié au vaccin contre le HPV.

• Il a expliqué qu'il y a trois types de vaccin contre le HPV sur le marché : le bivalent, le tétravalent et le monovalent. Ils protègent tous contre les deux types de HPV (16 et 18) qui sont à l'origine de la majorité des cas de cancer (environ 70 %). Maurice a opté pour le vaccin bivalent.

• Dr Musango a aussi donné l'assurance aux parents d'une fille qui serait tombée malade après avoir été vaccinée que le vaccin administré est totalement sain.

29th-31st March 2017

### **Financial Analysis Protection is one important aspect of Universal Health Coverage. Its aims at ensuring protection against the negative effects that direct payments may have on the standard of living of the population**

WHO Regional Office for Africa, in collaboration with WHO Headquarters Geneva, organised a workshop to analyse financial protection in health spending in order to improve Country Capacities in monitoring progress in achieving Universal Health Coverage.

Mauritius, Botswana, Namibia and Uganda were the four countries of the Eastern and Southern African sub region to participate in the workshop. The Mauritian delegation comprised representatives from the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life, Mauritius Statistics Office and WHO Country Office.

• Le bureau d'Afrique de l'OMS, en collaboration avec le quartier général, a organisé un atelier de travail, du 29 au 31 mars 2017, sur l'analyse de la protection financière dans le domaine de la santé. L'objectif est d'augmenter la capacité des pays à mesurer le progrès accompli en vue d'assurer un système de couverture universelle.

• À noter que l'analyse de la protection financière est un aspect important de la couverture de santé universelle et a pour objectif de limiter les effets néfastes que les paiements directs pour des soins de santé ont sur le niveau de vie de la population.



*The Mauritian team.*

19th-20th July 2017

**“Planet Earth is our only home, save her”.** This was the theme of the Model United Nations Conference organised on 19th and 20th July 2017 for and by students. Dr Laurent Musango, WHO Country Representative in Mauritius, participated in the conference.

The goals of the United Nations for the Conference were:

- i) to maintain international peace and security;
- ii) to develop harmonious relations among nations based on respect for equal rights on human dignity;
- iii) to promote co-operation in cultural, economic, social and humanitarian fields among nations and supporting respect for human rights and fundamental freedom for all; and
- iv) to coordinate the activities of nations in attaining common ends.

Dr Musango spoke about the effects of climate change on the social, economic and environmental determinants of health in Africa. He then added that poor communities are most affected by the negative effects of climate change. *“Individually, in our households/families in our village, in our country, in our continent and in the world, we can play a key role in both climate change adaptation and mitigation to protect Planet Earth which is our only home, and this is an investment for our future generation”*, he concluded.

• « *La planète Terre est notre seule patrie. Sauvons-la* ». Tel était le thème de la Conférence modèle des Nations Unies par et pour les étudiants, qui s’est tenue à Maurice les 19 et 20 juillet 2017.

• Le Dr Laurent Musango, représentant de l’OMS à Maurice, a participé à cet événement. Il a évoqué les effets du dérèglement climatique sur les déterminants sociaux, économiques et environnementaux de la santé en Afrique.

• Les plus démunis, a-t-il dit, sont les plus touchés par les effets négatifs du changement climatique. Mais les communautés ont un rôle important à jouer dans l’adaptation aux changements climatiques et de leur atténuation.

• « *Individuellement, nous pouvons jouer un rôle clé afin de protéger la planète Terre, qui est notre unique patrie. C’est un investissement pour les générations futures* », a-t-il conclu.



*Dr Musango was among the guests of the conference.*



*All the countries of the Globe were represented.*

January - June 2017

## Courtesy visit of the director of MFPWA

The Director of Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association, Ms Vidya Charan, paid a courtesy call to the WHO Representative, Dr Laurent Musango. This meeting was an opportunity for the two parties to discuss various subjects, one of which being an integrated and coordinated approach between the Ministry of Health, civil society, including NGOs and development partners. According to Dr Musango and Vidya Charan, this approach will help contribute more efficiently to the well-being of the population in the health sector. They shared the view that Mauritius has good health care indicators, but they also believed that there is still room for improvement.



*Dr Musango and Vidya Charan both believe in the necessity for an integrated and coordinated approach in health matters.*

## Meeting with representatives of Blood Donors Association



In view of the World Blood Donor Day, celebrated on 14th June 2017, the WHO Representative met a delegation from the Blood Donors Association at his office. Dr Musango underlines the fact that Mauritius is now serving as best practice in the African Region in terms of blood safety. According to him, other countries in the African region should learn from Mauritius. He recalled that since the formulation of a national blood policy, in 2004, the total number of blood donations has increased. Moreover, the percentage voluntary blood donations rose from 60% in 2002 to 82.5% in 2016.

## Visit of UN Special Envoy for Road Safety

Dr Musango Laurent met Mr Jean Todt, United Nations Special Envoy for Road Safety on Wednesday 7th July 2017, on behalf of Mr. Simon Springet, UN Resident Coordinator in Mauritius. Mr. Jean Todt was accompanied by Mr. Pierre Guyonnet-Duperat, Mission Press Officer and Mr. Christian Affoque and Mr. Daniel Raymond, from the Traffic Management & Road Safety Unit.

They discussed various issues related to Road Safety, including a multi-sectoral approach and the implementation of the integrated action plan in Mauritius. Statistics in Mauritius show that for the last ten years, 136 to 168 people died each year due to road accident, which represent a rate of 11.2 to 13.9 per 100 000 population.



Janvier - Juin 2017

## Visite de l'Envoyé spécial de l'ONU pour la sécurité routière

Le Dr Laurent Musango a reçu Jean Todt, l'envoyé spécial des Nations-unies sur la sécurité routière, le mercredi 7 juillet 2017, au nom de Simon Springet, le coordonnateur résident à Maurice. Jean Todt était accompagné de Pierre Guyonnet-Duperat, chargé de presse de la mission, et Christian Affoque et Danyel Raymond, de l'Unité chargée de la gestion du trafic et de la sécurité routière. La discussion a porté sur divers aspects de la sécurité routière, y compris une approche multisectorielle. Les statistiques indiquent qu'à Maurice, durant les 10 dernières années, la route fait entre 136 et 168 morts chaque année, soit une proportion de 11.2 à 13.9 pour 100 000 personnes.



## Rencontre avec les dirigeants de la Blood Donors Association

Dans le contexte de la Journée mondiale du don de sang, célébrée le 14 juin, le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice a reçu une délégation de la Blood Donors Association. Le Dr Laurent Musango a rappelé que Maurice est un exemple pour la région en matière de sécurité transfusionnelle.

Il a rappelé que, depuis 2004, la quantité de sang récolté n'a fait qu'augmenter. Il en est de même pour le taux de sang reçu des volontaires, qui a grimpé de 60 % en 2002 à 82.5 % en 2016.

## Visite de courtoisie de la directrice de la MFPWA

La directrice de la Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association a rendu une visite de courtoisie au représentant de l'OMS à Maurice. Ils ont discuté de plusieurs aspects de la santé, notamment une approche intégrée et coordonnée entre le ministère de la Santé, la

société civile, incluant les ONGs, et les partenaires au développement. Le Dr Musango et Vidya Charan ont rappelé que Maurice a de bons indicateurs de santé, mais qu'il y a toujours moyen de faire mieux.

15th June 2017

**A presentation of the recommendations of the 25th International Harm Reduction Conference was organised at the headquarters of the NGO PILS (Prevention, Information et Lutte contre le Sida) on 15th June 2017.**

Harm reduction can be defined as public health policies introduced to minimize negative, social and/or physical consequences resulting from certain human behaviours, both legal and illegal. Dr Musango indicated that the International Harm Reduction Conference has become the global focal point meeting for knowledge-sharing, networking and promoting best practice in the field of harm reduction. He added that the conference is really a good example of sharing best practices.

In his address, Dr Laurent Musango insisted that *“establishing and maintaining effective collaboration within health sector actors is crucial for improving health services”*. 1000 delegates, from more than 70 countries, attended the conference. Among them, medical and policy experts, harm reduction practitioners, campaigners, and people who use drugs. The Mauritian delegation comprised 5 representatives from civil society and 2 representatives from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life.

The five topics discussed at the conference were: (i) User's involvement, (ii) Harm Reduction in prison, (iii) Methadone Substitution Therapy (MST), (iv) Financing and (v) Drug policy.

Dr Musango acknowledged *“the catalytic role that civil society has played to make what the National Harm Reduction Programme is today”*. Strengthening health systems depends on a strong partnership and an effective collaboration within health sector actors, said the WHO Representative in Mauritius. These partners, according to WHO, are: Government, donors (including bilateral and emerging donors, the private sector, and foundations), multilateral organizations, Regional cooperation associations, UN agencies, civil society, non governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media.

• Une présentation des recommandations de la 25e Conférence internationale sur la réduction des risques, tenue à Montréal, a eu lieu au siège de l'association PILS le 15 juin 2017.

• Dans son discours, le représentant de l'OMS à Maurice, le Dr Laurent Musango, a indiqué qu'une « *collaboration effective parmi les acteurs du domaine de la santé* » est primordiale pour l'amélioration des services de santé.

• 1000 délégués, de plus de 70 pays, ont assisté à la conférence. Parmi, des experts médicaux, des experts en politiques publiques, des praticiens et militants de la réduction des risques, et des utilisateurs de drogue. La délégation mauricienne comprenait des représentants de la société civile et du ministère de la Santé.

• Les cinq sujets discutés à la conférence sont :  
(i) l'implication des utilisateurs ;  
(ii) la réduction des risques en prison ;  
(iii) la thérapie de substitution à la méthadone ;  
(iv) le financement ; et  
(v) la politique antidrogue.



*Dr Musango emphasised on the fact that civil society played an important role in the National Harm Reduction Programme.*

***"Working at a Country Office is indeed stimulating and motivating as it allows one to develop a mix of skills and expertise relevant to managerial, technical and partnership aspects, essential to fulfill its core six functions as set out in the 12th General Programme of Work," says the Operations Officer of WHO Mauritius.***

Ajoy is an economist by training with over 23 years' experience with WHO. He holds a Master's Degree in Economics and Business Administration as well a postgraduate certificate in public health. Following completion of his education at Cardiff University, he worked as an Economist in the Ministry of Economic Planning & Development in Mauritius. Ajoy joined the WHO Country Team in 1994 as a Health Economist and went on to assume the function of Operations Officer. Ajoy was entrusted the responsibility to head the WHO Country Office in an interim capacity from January 2013 to September 2016, pending the appointment of a WHO Representative in Mauritius.



*Ajoy Nundoochan, Operations Officer at WHO Mauritius*

Besides being responsible for the operations of WHO Technical Cooperation Programme in Mauritius, Ajoy has played an instrumental role in the elaboration of WHO Biennial Workplans with the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life since 1998 as well to the development of the WHO Country Cooperation Strategy (2003-2008 and 2008-2013). According to Ajoy, the Country Cooperation Strategy delineates the strategic directions and medium-term agenda of work at country level for all three levels of the WHO secretariat (Headquarters, Regional and Country office) in supporting the national health and development agenda.

Whilst acknowledging that financial resources are essential to advance the global health agenda, he is of the view that WHO's competitive edge is its technical expertise. *"We have witnessed over the last decades growing number of development partners intervening in the domain of public health and it is interesting to note that most of them rely on the expertise of WHO. Like what, WHO remains the reference in matters of public health and the direct and coordinating authority on international*

*health by providing by setting norms and standards and articulating evidence based policy options,"* he emphasised.

According to him, the technical advisory assistance between WHO and the Government of Mauritius has enabled the country to eliminate and control communicable diseases. Since then, WHO has forged and nurtured a solid partnership based on trust with the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life. The core focus is to support the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life in its efforts and actions to prevent and control NCDs and related risk factors as well as strengthening health systems delivery. *"Improving the health systems performance is vital as it allows achieving better NCD outcomes and Universal Health Coverage,"* he said.

In 2008, Ajoy Nundoochan was the recipient of the Regional Director Outstanding Staff Award for his *"outstanding contribution to the work of the Liaison Office in Mauritius"*.



# World Health Organization

## GOAL

*To improve equity in health, reduce risks, promote healthy lifestyles and settings, and respond to the underlying determinants of health.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

*The attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health. Health, as defined in the WHO Constitution, is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.*

## OBJECTIVES

*To develop and implement multisectoral public policies for health, integrated gender and age-sensitive approaches that facilitate community development, self-care and health protection throughout the life course in cooperation with the relevant national and international partners.*

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