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Tourist companies share positive transformation enabled by Operation COSHARE project



GIS – 25 October 2022: A dissemination workshop, as part of the Operation COSHARE (COVID-19 Occupational Safety and Health & Resource Efficiency) project, organised by the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC), was held on 21 October 2022 at the Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Tower in Ebène.

Operation COSHARE, launched in September 2021, is an initiative of the NPCC in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Authority. The project was developed with the technical assistance and funding from the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE). The objective is to help position Mauritius as a safe and environmentally sustainable tourist destination, attracting foreign visitors to make Mauritius their destination of choice.

The Executive Director of the NPCC, Mr Ashit Gungah, and the ILO Country Office Director for Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles, Dr Coffi Agossou, were present on the occasion. Representatives of tourist companies that implemented Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production (RECP) projects, in the context of Operation COSHARE, shared their experience of the project during the workshop. The event also marked the unveiling of a case study of 28 RECP projects that were implemented by the 21 participating companies.

In his address, Mr Ashit Gungah recalled that the Operation COSHARE was developed as a national project with the technical assistance of the ILO. "The objective," he pointed out, "was to support a reopening of borders so as to give priority to the health and safety of workers, travellers, host communities and at the same time help the tourism sector to safely resume operations."

The NPCC Executive Director informed that in the build-up to the project, focussed meetings with stakeholders, including the Tourism Authority, Airports of Mauritius Limited, *l'Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice* and *l'Association des hôtels de charme*, amongst others, were held. "This allowed the NPCC to gain a deep insight of the situation, and thus enabled it to devise programmes adaptable to the needs of the sector," he stated.

Furthermore, Mr Gungah explained that the Operation COSHARE was implemented in two phases between September 2021 and June 2022. During the first phase, enterprises in the

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to put in place safety measures for the prevention of the spread of COVID-19. "Employees from 1,342 enterprises were formally trained to implement appropriate health protocols at the workplace with a view to protect everyone from any risk of infection," he indicated.

"The second phase," added Mr Gungah, "focused on Resource Efficiency and Cleaner Production aimed at improving resilience of enterprises in the sector." Emphasis was laid on improvements such as waste elimination, including food waste and avoidance of single-use plastics. "Twenty-one enterprises implemented resource efficiency and cleaner production projects," he said.

On that note, Mr Gungah expressed satisfaction that the Operation COSHARE had produced highly positive and impactful results and had also demonstrated how all stakeholders could concert their effort to bring a strong and positive impact and transformation whenever they were faced with challenges. He stressed that productivity was vital to the success of a country while adding that effort should come from each and every citizen. "This is why the strategic plan of the NPCC lays strong emphasis on the development of a productivity mind-set," he added.

Besides, Mr Ashit Gungah informed that in the wake of the various ongoing overlapping crises, the NPCC had been proactive in devising a number of national projects that aimed at, not only instilling a new wave of productivity in enterprises, but also in strengthening the resilience of industries. This includes the Enterprise Go Digital project launched in March this year with a view to improve productivity and strengthen the resilience of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

In his concluding remarks, the Executive Director of the NPCC reiterated the resolve of the NPCC to continue supporting different sectors of the economy to build resilience and remain competitive.

For his part, the ILO Country Office Director for Madagascar, Comoros, Mauritius and Seychelles stated that people, workers, and employees were the most important assets for any business, according to the ILO. "Promoting decent work for all is our business," he added.

Dr Coffi Agossou further stressed that the NPCC now had a team trained to engage, assess and help put continuous improvement projects on productivity with Tourism and Hospitality industry knowledge. "The insights gained will help

them to support independently similar initiatives in the future," he said.

Dissemination workshop

During the Dissemination workshop, owners and managers of the 21 companies that worked on projects related to food waste reduction, energy efficiency and avoidance of single-use plastics, shared how Operation COSHARE brought a positive transformation to their operations and improved their productivity. These companies comprised hotels, guest houses, restaurants and other tourist accommodations.

Moreover, NPCC consultants, who were trained to deliver training to participating enterprises, were awarded certificates, and were now recognised as certified SCORE trainers. Certificates were also awarded to trainers of the Ministry of Tourism and the Tourism Authority.

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