

## Environment, Science, Technology and Health (ESTH)

### Some figures for 2015-2017:

- **Visit of U.S. research vessel, the *Joides Resolution*, docked in Port Louis in 2016.** The ship's mission is to drill into the Earth's surface deeper than has ever been done before. The goal is 5-5.5km of drilling (not to mention the 700m of water). The results will tell us much about the seismic behavior of the Earth's crust, the microbe development possibly going on deep within, and the composition of the ocean floor.
- **The Mauritian Adventure of Max the Wildlife Conservation Mascot:** Max the Elephant, the Department of State's Alumni Affairs' wildlife conservation mascot, toured Mauritius during the months of March and April 2016. During his stay in the tropics, Max had the opportunity to meet dedicated environmental activists and alumni. His visit drew attention not only to the endangered plants and animals on the island, but also to deteriorating marine habitats and coastal erosion.
- **PAYLP Alumna Premieres Anti-pollution Music Video for Earth Day:** Pan-African Youth Leadership Program alumna Vaani Vyapoory wrote and composed the song, "Stop Pollution" and found sponsors to produce a professional music video. On April 21, 2016 the Embassy hosted the official premiere event for a diverse audience of students, NGO activists, and Mauritian government officials.
- **Young Mauritians Send out Strong Message on Marine Protection:** The Embassy sponsored the pre-distribution and distribution phases of "Vey nou Lagon" [Protect our Lagoon], a thought-provoking documentary that follows a traditional artisanal fisherman and his family as they describe the current state of the ocean surrounding Mauritius. The film's premiere at Bagatelle Cinema in May 2016 attracted government ministers, members of the diplomatic corps, civil society representatives, teachers, students and the media.
- **Earth Day:** In 2016, "Vey Nou Lagon" was screened at various public venues and at the Embassy's Information Resource Center to celebrate the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day. The screening was followed by a presentation by Reef Conservation scientists on the protection of the island's marine environment.

- **Let's Talk about Oceans Protection:** Sameer Kaudeer, educator at Reef Conservation Mauritius, led the monthly discussion program “Let's Talk” on June 22, 2016 in the Embassy’s Information Resource Centre (IRC). Mr. Kaudeer discussed the importance of safeguarding our oceans.
- **U.S. Science Envoy:** U.S. Science Envoy for Oceans Dr. Jane Lubchenco visited Mauritius for several days of activities to lead a roundtable on Advancing Ocean Sciences in Africa. Co-sponsored by the Global Young Academy and science academies around the world, the roundtable gathered 20 young African scientists – including the President of Mauritius – to discuss the future of sustainable economic growth from the oceans. In coordination with the U.S. Science Envoy’s visit, the Embassy joined Mauritian NGOs and businesses to host a two-week exhibit of prints by American artist Yolanda del Riego entitled “Climate Change: An Artist's Perspective” at Le Caudan Waterfront in July 2016.
- **Ocean Acidification Workshop:** Chargé d'Affaires Mark Asquino opened the workshop on ocean acidification at University of Mauritius on June 30, 2016. The workshop was preceded by a conference on capacity building for sustainable development for the ocean economy. This event laid the groundwork for strengthening partnerships in science between the United States and Mauritius but also Small Island Developing like the Seychelles. The workshop was funded by a grant of \$14,369.00 from the U.S. Department of States’ Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs.
- **Our Ocean Conference:** “Our Ocean Conference”, hosted by Secretary of State John Kerry in September 2016, was held in Washington DC, with the President of the Republic attending as well as various NGO leaders such as Reef Conservation. At the end of the conference participants announced over 136 new initiatives on marine conservation and protection valued at more than \$5.24 billion, as well as new commitments on the protection of almost four million square kilometers of the ocean.
- **Chargé d'Affaires Hosts Reception in Honor of #OurOcean:** Chargé d'Affaires Dr. Melanie Zimmerman hosted a reception on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in honor of the “Our Ocean Conference”. The Guest of Honor was President of the Republic and Dr. Ameenah Gurib-Fakim. The reception featured an exhibit of ocean-related artwork by artists and a trailer of “Mystic Mauritius”, a

documentary-in-the-making that features sweeping shots of the island's dramatic landscape and incredible close up images of its flora and fauna, plus a prize ceremony for one of the winners of the "East Africa Our Ocean Photo/Essay Contest", Emmanuel Calotte.

- **Graduation of Marine Guides with Lagon Bleu:** On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 over 20 marine guides graduated from the first-ever certification program, ensuring that guides will be respectful of the reef and the ocean environment. The certification is now recognized as a national program and has the Tourism Authority approval. At the graduation, the Minister for the Environment and the Chargé d'Affaires for the U.S. Embassy were key note speakers.
- **Presidential Chair in Science Conquers Science Enthusiasts in Mauritius:** Professor Geraldine Richmond, Presidential Chair in Science and Professor of Chemistry at the University of Oregon, was in Mauritius from Nov 30 to Dec 3, 2016. During her short trip, Professor Richmond reached over 400 Science enthusiasts, educators and academia.
- **Beyond the Dodo and the Solitaire:** In 2015, we funded Mauritius "Beyond the Dodo:" A Traveling Photography Exhibit and Lecture Series project by the Mauritian Wildlife Foundation (MWF). The traveling photographic exhibit is a partnership between the MWF and Gabby Salazar, a conservation photographer from Washington D.C., which highlights the threatened native plants and animals of Mauritius. The exhibit which featured multimedia photography lectures was officially launched in Rodrigues on November 25 with a new addition: the Solitaire, the cousin of the Dodo.