



BULLETIN

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MESSAGE:

Dear partners and colleagues,

As the WHO Representative a.i. to Mauritius, and drawing on my years directing regional health emergencies across Africa, I have seen that the strength of a health system depends on the choices made at the policy table.

In Mauritius, I am leading dialogues that anchor health across sectors to:

- ensuring the national budget translates into resilience and protection against out-of-pocket spending;
- advancing life sciences and biotech sovereignty under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as part of Mauritius Vision 2050;
- strengthening medicines regulation toward Maturity Level 3;
- embedding early childhood health rights in national policy to combat obesity and noncommunicable diseases from the start;
- safeguarding borders and trade with real-time risk intelligence during the ongoing Bundibugyo virus epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighboring countries.

Most people see the World Health Organization on the frontlines of outbreaks and health crises. Yet, far from the cameras, one of our most decisive roles is shaping strategic policy dialogue behind closed doors. Health resilience is not only about emergency response; it is won or lost in governance, finance and law.

These engagements reflect the organization's unique role: turning evidence into action through direct dialogue with national leaders.

By weaving health into the fabric of finance, trade, environment and law, we secure systems that are resilient, equitable and sustainable, thereby ensuring Mauritius is prepared not only for today's challenges, but for the health demands of tomorrow.

Dr Abdou Salam Gueye
WHO Representative a.i. to Mauritius



HEALTH NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN

MAURITIUS ADVANCES CLIMATE-RESILIENT HEALTH SYSTEMS

Mauritius has made significant strides in strengthening its health system's resilience to climate change, supported by WHO as the Delivery Partner through the Green Climate Fund Readiness and Preparatory Support Programme. The project focuses on institutional capacity building, evidence generation, and adaptation planning, and has delivered substantial progress.

The World Health Organization (WHO) played a central role in the development of Mauritius' first Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP), ensuring that climate change resilience is embedded within the country's health system.

WHO provided technical expertise and training, supported vulnerability and adaptation assessments, and guided the establishment of thematic panels that addressed priority areas such as vector-borne diseases, respiratory illness, heat stress, mental health and climate-resilient infrastructure.



Dr Abdou Salam Gueye, the WHO Representative a.i, addressing partners at the consultative meeting on the draft Health National Adaptation Plan (HNAP) in March 2026. © WHO

Through workshops, surveys and evidence generation, WHO helped identify vulnerable populations and systemic gaps, while shaping flagship adaptation strategies validated in March 2026.

WHO's contributions included capacity-building for health professionals and support for the development of new climate-and-health investment proposals.

The current State Assessment and Gap Analysis Reports revealed areas for improvement to address systemic weaknesses in coordination, financing, monitoring and stakeholder engagement.

The establishment of a Climate and Health Technical Unit (CHTU) to coordinate across ministries, academia, NGOs and partners, to manage a knowledge hub, to integrate data into early warning systems, and to build workforce capacity, was recommended.

A complementary institutional framework recommends a Ministerial Steering Committee and strengthened partnerships with meteorological, disaster management and finance authorities.

The project's flagship milestone, the HNAP, has been developed through 13 thematic panels addressing vector-borne and water-borne disease, respiratory illness, heat stress, mental health, and climate-resilient infrastructure. The draft HNAP is currently circulating among national stakeholders for final review ahead of formal validation.

The plan shifts Mauritius from reactive response to anticipatory action, anchored in the CHTU, integrated early warning systems, climate-proofed infrastructure, and workforce training. Priority strategies are being costed to support resource mobilization efforts.

WHO supported capacity-building through training workshops, a Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Survey, and a Health Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment, which identified vulnerable populations including children under five, older people, pregnant women and coastal communities.

The evidence generated informed adaptation solutions through two concept notes, the Early-Warning, Alert and Response System (EWARS) Shield Mauritius, a climate-sensitive disease early warning alert response system, and a Health Care Facility Assessment Programme based on WHO's Climate-Resilient and Environmentally Sustainable Health Care Facilities framework.

These concept notes will leverage funding proposals through upcoming climate finance calls for which Mauritius is eligible.

"This initiative is not just about climate adaptation, it is about safeguarding the health of Mauritians for generations to come," said Dr Gilbert Buckle, Health Policy Advisor, WHO Country Office. "By combining technical expertise, evidence-based planning, and strong partnerships, Mauritius is building a resilient health system ready to face the challenges of climate change."

The way forward includes final validation of the HNAP and formalizing collaboration between the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the Mauritius Meteorological Services to enable future EWARS implementation.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

STRENGTHENING THE CHIKUNGUNYA RESPONSE

Mauritius has recorded a sustained decline in reported chikungunya cases following the seasonal reduction in transmission with the onset of winter. While the outbreak has not yet been declared contained, the downward trend provides an opportunity to consolidate response measures and strengthen preparedness for future mosquito-borne disease outbreaks.

Since the first case was identified on 5 January 2026, Mauritius has faced a significant chikungunya outbreak. Monthly cases rose from 169 in February to 612 in March and 1,346 in April, reaching 4,796 cumulative cases by the end of May, including 2,647 in May alone. Transmission was concentrated in Rose-Hill, Quatre-Bornes, Beau-Bassin and surrounding localities, where daily notifications reached approximately 125 at the height of the outbreak.



Health workers trained by WHO in 2025 have strengthened the response to vector-borne diseases, including through the identification and elimination of mosquito breeding sites. © WHO

The response has been challenged by persistent rainfall, including during the winter period, which has complicated mosquito-control activities by creating favorable conditions for breeding. Continued efforts to eliminate mosquito breeding sites and sustain community participation therefore remain essential.

From the early stages of the outbreak, WHO worked with the Ministry of Health and Wellness to strengthen surveillance, outbreak coordination, epidemiological analysis, risk assessment and community engagement. WHO complemented national response efforts and contributed to strengthening the systems and capacities required to manage the outbreak effectively.

WHO is also supporting the Ministry to strengthen data analytics, quality and visualization, including through dashboards and analytical tools for outbreak surveillance. This is helping the Ministry transform surveillance data into timely, actionable intelligence to inform decision-making and guide public health interventions.

At the community level, Public Health Food and Safety Inspectors extended their outreach beyond regular working hours, including evenings and weekends, to engage communities in affected areas. In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resource, the Ministry of Health and Wellness implemented awareness activities targeting schools, communities and the wider population. These included education on mosquito breeding sites, neighbourhood clean-up campaigns and engagement with community leaders and religious organizations to promote preventive behaviours.

WHO technical teams joined national counterparts during the field visits to affected localities, to better understand local challenges and support the adaptation of response strategies. These visits highlighted the importance of sustained community engagement, particularly where preventive practices remain difficult to maintain despite repeated public health messaging.

“It is still raining even as winter sets in, making it difficult to fight mosquito-borne diseases such as chikungunya. Mosquitoes are everywhere,” said a Public Health Food and Safety Inspector, highlighting the operational challenges faced by frontline teams. The decline in reported cases should not lead to complacency. Continued elimination of mosquito breeding sites, early detection and reporting of suspected cases, and adherence to preventive measures remain critical to reducing the risk of renewed transmission.

“It is important to eliminate larval breeding sites by cleaning areas where water can stagnate. In case of symptoms such as fever, rash or joint pain, people should consult a doctor quickly. Those infected must remain at home to prevent further transmission,” said Dr Mohammad Fazil Khodabaccus, former Director of Health Services Public Health, emphasizing the importance of sustained vigilance.

WHO has also provided technical guidance through the National Coordination Committee, bringing together key ministries, municipal and district councils, non-governmental organizations and other partners under strong national leadership. The coordinated approach has helped align response activities and strengthen collaboration across sectors.

“This outbreak has demonstrated the importance of strong risk communication, robust surveillance systems, high-quality data and effective coordination between national authorities and technical partners,” said Dr Dhaneshwar Jowaheer, Emergency Preparedness and Response Officer, WHO Country Office. “Mauritius has demonstrated resilience throughout the response.”

As Mauritius moves into the next phase of the response, WHO will continue to support the Ministry of Health and Wellness in consolidating surveillance and data systems, strengthening risk communication and community engagement, and capturing lessons from the outbreak to inform preparedness for future vector-borne disease events.

NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES

SUPPORTING MAURITIUS' FIGHT AGAINST NONCOMMUNICABLE DISEASES

The Government of Mauritius has reinforced its commitment to protecting public health by intensifying efforts to combat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), which remain a leading cause of illness and premature death worldwide. Recognizing the urgent need to address the high prevalence of risk factors such as unhealthy diets, tobacco use, excessive alcohol consumption and physical inactivity, Mauritius has introduced a series of fiscal and policy measures in its 2026–2027 national budget aimed at reducing the burden of NCDs and promoting healthier living among its citizens.

To reduce excessive sugar consumption, the Government of Mauritius has strengthened fiscal measures on sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs). The tax has been increased from 12 to 15 cents per gram of sugar, while the range of taxable products has expanded beyond last year's inclusion of

chocolate and ice cream, to now cover fruit jellies, crystallized fruits, chewing gums, biscuits, wafers and other items.



Health checks conducted at the WHO Country Office, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness, as part of a nationwide community and workplace NCD screening campaign. © WHO

This decisive measure supports the National Obesity Action Acceleration Roadmap 2025–2030, which seeks to reduce obesity prevalence by 5 per cent by 2030 through five priority actions developed in consultation with key stakeholders. WHO has played a pivotal role in strengthening Mauritius' fiscal health agenda, empowering the Ministry of Finance's technical leadership on health taxes and providing a platform for the country to share its experiences in taxing tobacco, alcohol and SSBs.

In addition, taxation on tobacco products and alcoholic products, excluding beer, has increased by 10 per cent. On tobacco control, Mauritius' taxation policy exemplifies WHO's vision: higher taxes, fewer smokers, more lives saved and stronger health systems. Complementing fiscal policies,

Mauritius continues to invest in nationwide campaigns promoting physical activity, healthy diets and wellness programmes. Early NCD screening initiatives are conducted in schools, workplaces and communities, alongside awareness campaigns on healthy lifestyles. The Food Regulations under the Public Health Act also regulate food sales in schools to address NCD risks at an early age, though enforcement of these regulations remains a priority for further strengthening.

These bold fiscal measures, closely aligned with WHO's recommendations for regular and significant tax increases, have set a powerful example for Africa and beyond. It positioned itself as a global leader in tobacco control, with its efforts being recognized at global level last year with two international awards.

Mauritius was ranked among the four leading countries in the world implementing the MPOWER strategies to the highest level globally.

Through WHO's facilitation, Mauritius has also engaged in valuable knowledge exchange with other nations in the African region, positioning itself as a frontrunner in evidence-based fiscal policies for NCD prevention.

In partnership with FAO and WHO, Mauritius is developing the national food systems-based dietary guidelines. These will inform awareness campaigns on healthy diets, with a strong focus on youth. Significant progress has already been made, including the validation of the Situation Analysis and Evidence Review in July 2026, which engaged multiple sectors and youth representatives.

Mauritius is also advancing the development of a national nutrient profile model to restrict the marketing of unhealthy foods to children. WHO has provided technical training on global policies related to front-of-pack labelling and marketing restrictions, sharing best practices with local experts. WHO is working closely with the Ministry of Health and Wellness to conduct a retail in-store survey in collaboration with the University of Mauritius, scheduled for September.

"The fight against noncommunicable diseases is a national priority. By combining fiscal measures with strong public health campaigns, Mauritius is taking bold steps to reduce risk factors and empower citizens to lead healthier lives," said the Honourable Mr Anil Kumar Bachoo, Minister of Health and Wellness.

Mauritius' integrated approach, leveraging taxation, regulation and education, demonstrates its leadership in tackling NCDs. The government remains committed to monitoring the impact of these

measures and adopting strategies to ensure long-term success in reducing the prevalence of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancers and chronic respiratory conditions, while promoting a comprehensive, coordinated and holistic response to NCDs.

HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING

FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HOSPITAL IN RODRIGUES



Rodriguans queuing at the health records office of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Creve Coeur, Rodrigues. © WHO

WHO is driving forward one of Rodrigues Island's most ambitious health projects: the development of a new hospital at Camp Pintade. Situated 600 kilometers from mainland Mauritius, Rodrigues faces unique challenges of isolation, limited resources, and rising health needs. WHO's strategic and technical support is helping transform this vision into a bankable investment case.

Building on the comprehensive Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment conducted in November 2024, WHO confirmed the maturity of the proposed Greenfield hospital option. In June 2026, a technical mission to Rodrigues advanced the project significantly. The mission included consultations with the Health Commissioner and hospital management, site

assessments, reviews of critical infrastructure such as water supply, energy, waste management, harbour capacity, and visit to the existing Queen Elizabeth Hospital at Creve Coeur.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Institutional engagement, site assessment and principal data collection completed.
- Clinical brief and preliminary service model, aligned with Rodrigues' current and future health needs.
- 75 per cent of pre-feasibility work and 40 per cent of feasibility-stage assessment completed.
- Integrated appraisal toolkit covering readiness, bankability, infrastructure and indicative costs.
- Technical advisory notes on workforce, utilities, logistics, medical equipment, waste management, financing and delivery arrangements.
- Emerging investment case presented to development partners, opening doors for collaboration and resource mobilization.

The WHO Representative a.i., Dr Abdou Salam Gueye, was in Rodrigues in June 2026 to ensure high-level advocacy and coordination between the Rodrigues Regional Assembly, national authorities, and potential financing partners. A comprehensive appraisal report is now being finalized to guide the next stage of development.

Despite challenges such as construction logistics, utility constraints and gaps in baseline data, the project underscores the importance of treating hospital development as part of a broader health system transformation.



Proposed design for the new hospital in Rodrigues. © WHO

Lessons learned highlight the need for early stakeholder engagement, robust health-needs assessments, and phased planning to ensure adaptability to future demographic and epidemiological realities.

“This project is not just about building a hospital, it is about strengthening the entire health system of Rodrigues,” said Dr Yaarthi Soopal-Luchmun, Integrated Service Delivery Officer, WHO Country Office. “By combining technical expertise, local ownership and international collaboration, we are laying the

groundwork for a resilient health infrastructure that will serve generations to come.”

WHO is supporting the Republic of Mauritius in building stronger, more resilient health systems capable of meeting the evolving needs of their populations.

WORLD BLOOD DONOR DAY 2026

ENHANCING BLOOD SAFETY FOR ALL

This year’s World Blood Donor Day was celebrated across the globe under the theme “One Drop of Humanity. Give Blood. Save Lives”. In Mauritius, commemorations were held at the Curepipe Municipal Council and the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, bringing together government leaders, civil society, health care professionals and communities to honour voluntary blood donors and celebrate Mauritius’ progress in blood safety.

Over the past year, WHO has played a pivotal role in strengthening Mauritius' blood systems and health resilience. Its contributions include advancing integrated strategies for national coordination, voluntary donation, pathogen screening and quality management; supporting the implementation of the Blood Service Act; maintaining ISO 9001 certification for the National Blood Transfusion Service; inspiring youth engagement through schools and universities; and providing technical expertise in demand forecasting, stock management, and workforce development.



From left to right: Mr Ajoy Nundoochan, WHO Programme Management Officer; the Honourable Ms Anishta Babooram, Junior Minister for Health and Wellness; Ms Tashyana Latchmana Pillay, Mayor of Curepipe; His Excellency Mr Dharamveer Gokhool, President of the Republic of Mauritius; the Honourable Mr Anil Kumar Bachoo, Minister of Health and Wellness; and Mr Dewanand Hossen, President of the Blood Donors Association. © WHO

These efforts are ensuring Mauritius can meet rising demand from noncommunicable diseases, trauma and surgical needs, while laying the foundation for a stronger health system.

At the Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, the Airports of Mauritius organized a special event to mark the day with heartfelt tributes to voluntary donors.

WHO, together with the Ministry of Health and Wellness and partners, marked the event, renewing its pledge to recruit new donors, retain regular ones,

and ensure that every patient in Mauritius has timely access to safe blood. The celebrations also highlighted Mauritius' reliance on 100 per cent voluntary unpaid donors, while also addressing challenges such as rising demand from noncommunicable diseases and trauma.

His Excellency Mr Dharamveer Gokhool, President of the Republic of Mauritius, in his address at the Municipal Council of Curepipe, encouraged more Mauritians, especially the youth, to embrace voluntary blood donation and help strengthen this culture of generosity for generations to come. Additionally, the Minister of Health and Wellness, Honourable Mr Anil Kumar Bachoo, highlighted the country's considerable progress in voluntary blood donation, achieved through the tireless efforts of the Blood Donors Association, an NGO promoting voluntary blood donations since 1988.

In Mauritius, voluntary donors account for 87.7 per cent of the country's blood supply.

“Blood donation is central to strengthening Mauritius’ health system,” said Mr Ajoy Nundoochan, Programme Management Officer, WHO Country Office, on behalf of the WHO Representative a.i. He also emphasized the challenges ahead, including an ageing donor population, rising demand from noncommunicable, chronic diseases and trauma, and the need for stronger stock management and demand forecasting to ensure timely access to safe blood.

This year, Mauritius collected 51,454 units of blood from 33,370 registered voluntary donors, a remarkable achievement made possible through the dedication of regular donors, the leadership of national authorities, and the support of the Blood Donors Association. This milestone reflects the strength of Mauritius’ culture of generosity and the collective commitment to ensuring a safe and adequate blood supply for all who need it.

PARTNERSHIPS

WHO REGIONAL DIRECTOR'S VISIT TO MAURITIUS: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL

The official visit of the WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr Mohamed Yakub Janabi, to Mauritius from 19–22 January 2026 stood out as one of the most significant milestones of WHO Mauritius' 2026 calendar. The mission reaffirmed WHO's long-standing partnership with the government and national stakeholders. It aimed to advance universal health coverage, strengthen health security, and build resilient health systems. This is particularly relevant for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Mauritius.

The centrepiece of the visit was a high-level courtesy call on the Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius, the Honourable Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam. The meeting gave WHO a valuable opportunity to showcase the work of the organization at country-level. It allowed for discussion of future orientations directly with national leadership. Topics included Mauritius' ambition to become a regional pharmaceutical hub and the need to strengthen the health system's response to an ageing population, the rising burden of NCDs and climate change. Dr Janabi commended the Prime

Minister for the country's sustained efforts and outcomes across key health initiatives. Discussions concluded with agreement on strategic priorities to guide the partnership going forward.



Dr Mohamed Yakub Janabi, WHO Regional Director for Africa (left), meets with the Honourable Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius (right), and the Honourable Mr Anil Kumar Bachoo, Minister of Health and Wellness (middle). © WHO

Dr Janabi met with the Minister of Health and Wellness, Honourable Mr Anil Kumar Bachoo, and senior leadership of the health ministry to review progress on the elaboration of a new National Health Sector Strategic Plan.

The WHO Regional Director for Africa congratulated Mauritius for its remarkable public health achievements, including the certification of elimination of Measles and Rubella, international recognition for tobacco control through the

Bloomberg Philanthropies Award, and acknowledgement of Mauritius' pioneering role in SIDS pooled procurement for Africa, which was honoured with a United Nations award.

The Regional Director also visited the Coromandel Medclinic and the Trust Fund For Specialized Medical Care (Cardiac Centre) in Pamplemousses. Mauritius' advances in high-technology medicine and cardiac care were showcased.

During a courtesy call with the Honourable Mr Rajesh Bhagwan, Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Dr Janabi called for stronger cross-sectoral collaboration. He noted that although Mauritius contributes little to global emissions, it faces growing climate-related health risks as a SIDS country. This underscored the environment's central role as a key determinant of health.

As chief guest and keynote speaker at the Charles Telfair Institute Health Symposium in Moka, Dr Janabi's address focused on "Challenges and Trends in Global and Regional Health Care: The Power of Collaboration". He highlighted the importance of cross-sectoral partnerships in tackling NCDs, demographic change, climate vulnerability and health-system sustainability. These themes echoed the discussions held with government leadership throughout the mission.

He also met the Australian High Commissioner to Mauritius to explore collaboration on health education, workforce development, and research.

Additionally, the visit created space to connect with other stakeholders in the health agenda. Dr Janabi met with the Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) and private sector leaders to discuss a corporate social responsibility-driven approach to health.

"Health is not only a public good but also a driver of economic resilience," said Dr Mohamed Yakub Janabi, WHO Regional Director for Africa, on the importance of bringing non-state actors into the national health agenda.

Early dialogue with the private sector has fed into the Country Office's ongoing work to build more structured partnerships with the private sector. Engagement with the MCCI continues, alongside initial exchanges between the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the SWAN Group, a private insurance company, around obesity prevention.

PHOTOS

HIGHLIGHTS



FEBRUARY 2026

Launch of the National Cancer Registry on World Cancer Day by the Honourable Mr Anil Kumar Bachoo, Minister of Health and Wellness (third left), Dr Abdou Salam Gueye, the WHO Representative a.i. (fourth right), the Honourable Ms Anishta Babooram, Junior Minister for Health and

Wellness, the Honourable Mr Dhaneshwar Damry, Junior Minister for Finance, and other representatives from the University of Mauritius.



MARCH 2026

On International Women's Day 2026, WHO, in collaboration with the Mauritius Prisons Centre and the Ministry of Health and Wellness, conducted NCD screening for female inmates at the Beau Bassin Prison.



APRIL 2026

NCD screening conducted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness to mark World Health Day in the community and in workplaces for early detection of diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and breast and cervical cancer.



MAY 2026

Integrated Care for Older People (ICOPE): Inauguration of the Acute Elderly Care Ward in regional hospitals by the Honourable Mr Anil Kumar Bachoo, Minister of Health and Wellness, Ms Lisa Simrique Singh, UN Resident Coordinator for Mauritius and the Seychelles, Dr Abdou Salam Gueye, WHO Representative a.i. and other officials.



JULY 2026

Validation of the Situation Analysis and Evidence Review to inform the national Food Systems-Based Dietary Guidelines by multi-sectoral stakeholders, facilitated by WHO and FAO.



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