

Coastal resources

Introduction

Coastal resources are one of the main natural assets of the Republic of Mauritius. They contribute to more than 36% to its GDP. The

vast Economic Exclusive Zone of 1.9 Km² is expected to contribute further to the socio-economic development of the Republic.

Sandy beaches

The sandy beaches around Mauritius and Rodrigues are the main tourist and recreation attraction. A day at the sea side is the most favorite pastime of the majority of population.

The tourism industry, on the other hand, constitutes an important source of employment and contributes to more than 30% of the GDP of the country.

Coral reefs

The main source of beach and lagoon sand is the coral reefs and animal shells. Coral reefs surround the coast of Mauritius except at two regions in the south and west. They are present almost all round Rodrigues. They are formed by

millions of tiny animals called polyps. They are one of richest ecosystems with myriads of marine organisms. They form a natural barrier to high waves from the open sea protection, thus beaches.

Fisheries

Fish constitutes an important source of food and protein. The per capita consumption of fish stands at 20 kg. The fisheries sector accounts for 1 % of the GDP and employs some twelve thousand people. It includes the

artisanal fishery mostly in the lagoons of Mauritius and Rodrigues, bank fishery in the region of Nazareth and Saya de Malha banks and the deepsea demersal fishery, which is an attractive sport activity among tourists.

Mangroves

Mangrove is a coastal plant which grows in the intertidal region of the coastal zone. In Mauritius, the area under mangrove plantation is now over 145 ha. Mangrove cover in Rodrigues is around 24 ha. Some mangrove plantation also exists on Agalega.

Mangroves are home to juvenile fish. They are a source of food for living marine resources including crabs, prawns and shellfish. They also protect the beach from high waves.

Other marine resources

These include seagrass, energy sources, algae as sources of energy and food and freshwater from desalination.

Threats

Threats to coastal and marine resources include coastal erosion, sea level rise, land based and sea based pollution. These are expected to worsen with climate change.

Contributions of ADD

ADD has prepared a flyer on “Sustaining our coastal and Marine resources” which is being distributed widely to raise awareness on the importance marine resources and measures to protect them. It is also one of the main themes in the sensitization programme for schools and the general public.