

## Report on World Wetlands Day – 2007

The Environmental Protection & Conservation Organisation – EPCO, a national environmental NGO, with the support of the National Park and Conservation-Ministry of Agro-Industry and the National Ramsar Committee celebrated the WWD -07 on the:

**2<sup>nd</sup> February 2007** with an Exhibition on **Products and Services of wetlands** at the **Rivulet Terre Rouge Estuary Birds Sanctuary** the unique Ramsar site of Mauritius.



*At the opening ceremony were present: From left to right- Mrs K. Ram Adviser at the Prime Minister Office, Honorable Mrs Kalyanee Jugroo, government Chief Whip; Mrs K. Begun, Chief Executive Ministry of Agro-Industry; Mrs I.M. Oree- Chairperson National Ramsar Committee and Mr Kheswar Beeharry Panray, CEO-EPCO addressing the children.*

All the speakers at the opening ceremony highlighted the importance of wetlands and the products and services offered by wetlands.

Mr Kheswar Beeharry Panray ,CEO- EPCO, pointed out, Mangrove plantation in Mauritius that was estimated at about 20KM<sup>2</sup> in 80s has drastically decreased to half, this can be taken as an indication how fast our wetlands are decreasing. He also talked on the theme of the WWD07 – **Wetlands support fisheries keep them healthy**. And he pointed out that Mauritius includes 42 species of fish and some 3200 registered fishers are directly concerned. Some 20 kg of fish is consumed per head locally and Mauritius also exports some 140Million USD of fish products annually, caught from the 52000 Km<sup>2</sup> of fishery grounds around the island.



*Mr M. Puttoo, Director National Park & Conservation Service, at the inaugural ceremony.*

*Mrs K. Beegun Chief Executive, Ministry of Agro-Industry ( right above), in her speech pointed out: ‘ You are the leaders of tomorrow, you can be at my place as Chief Executive and will have to take decision, the right decision, this can be done only if you understand and are educated to measure the importance of your decision’ .*



*Among others present; Mrs Pamela Bapoo-Dundoo(center), National Coordinator UNDP/GEF/SGP.*



*Mrs KirteeRam from the PMO highlighted the Prime Minister's concern for the protection and conservation of the environment.*



*Children guided by EPCO members visited the exhibition and had the opportunity to see life specimen of some fresh water species. Importance of products and services offered by wetlands were highlighted.*



### *Fish for Tomorrow? - Exhibition Guides*

Some **800** primary school children, age 10-11 years, together with teachers and head of schools, visited the exhibition, free transport was provided  
The children have the opportunity to see the migratory birds and see some endemic plants on the site.



*Mrs Kamla Jundoosing, helping the children with fish and bird paintings.*



*A Wetland Kit and a home made Ice cream 'Sorbet- Baton' were offered to all the children who were present.*



***Smiles from Mauritius***

*The event was covered by the local press, Radios and the National Television.*