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Assessing the impact of climate change in the livelihood of young people in Mauritius and how social protection could help in forging a resilient and perseverant youth.

Social Protection and Climate change in the SADC 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
‘Paradise’ getting rocky

- Shrinking beaches (10 m over past 8 years – Mauritius Govt Report 2016)
- Increasing sea level - average rate of 5.6 mm a year
- Greater frequency and/or intensity of droughts and floods
- Fall in nutrition foods and clean water
- Destruction of ecosystem, loss in bio-diversity and secure living environment
- Ill health and migration

13th highest disaster risk and 7th most exposed to natural hazards (latest World Risk Report)

Paradoxical: Island like Mauritius which emits the least CO₂ are those who suffer the most!!!!!!
Climate Change and climate variability:
- Threaten resources as well as goods and services they produce and the jobs and livelihoods of those who depend on them
- Worsen existing poverty
- Create new poor
- Exacerbate inequalities
- Trigger new vulnerabilities
- Jeopardize sustainable development
A major threat multiplier. Climate change compound other drivers of youth livelihood challenges

Impact on natural, physical, financial, human, social and cultural assets among other things.

Climate Change problems, taken altogether leads to the problem of insecurity among the youth:
- unemployment
- under-employment
- prey to social ills
- financial difficulties
- emotional problems
- migration
- Violence
- Protests
- ........

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Social protection (SP) for a positive and impactful transformation

SP (both formal and informal) refers to the entire system of protective measures that assist individuals, households and communities to better manage risks and economic shocks.

SP – Protective
- Preventive
- Promotive
- Transformative

(Devereux and Sebates-Wheeler 2004)

SP renews optimism for Sustainable development
Mauritius has an extensive set of social policies and programme, all universal, consisting of:

- free education,
- free health care,
- basic retirement pension,
- assistance to families with special needs,
- low cost housing,
- Subsidies for rice and flour,
- Social aid transfers,
- Micro-credit schemes
- and Comprehensive Youth Services

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Evidence base showing how the measures can help those affected, especially the youth, prevent and cope with climate change challenges is still limited in Mauritius.

This paper aims to provide a condensed review of the current knowledge and evidence about the role of SP in reducing the impact of climate change and forging a resilient and perseverant youth.

In recent years, there is in Mauritius, a growing awareness of the need to greater integration of social protection measures, climate change and disaster risk reduction efforts. Much progress has been made by deepening integration between the three areas.
All social protection measures in Mauritius benefit the whole population (universal). In addition to that, the youth benefit from a myriad of youth services freely:

- Sensitisation on substance abuse, domestic violence, bullying at school, teenage pregnancy, environment protection, inter-generation meet.
- Sports, Recreational and Leisure activities in Youth Centres and Sports Infrastructures around the island
- Funding of Youth Led Business Plans, Provision of land and other facilities for cultivation and farming.
A qualitative study, more particularly Focus Group Discussion, was carried out with 250 young people (in batches) mostly residing in coastal regions on the impact of climate change on their livelihoods and how Social Protection is helping them out.

Findings:
1. SP helping a lot to maintain a decent livelihood. However, it need to focus more on under-privileged youth.
2. Existing system plagued by overlapping programmes
3. Training in new areas and more employment based
4. Training courses organised not approved by Mauritius Qualification Authority
5. Need for Unemployment benefit schemes
6. More flexible loans to start a business without collateral security
7. More targeted approach instead of universal
8. Inefficient programme monitoring
9. Lack of uniformity in criteria
10. Wastage due to duplication of processing
11. Poor co-ordination
12. Over coverage
13. Double registration
14. Social register not updated regularly
15. Too long processing time
16. Corrupted system – people with political linkages privileged at the cost of genuine needy cases
17. Political interferences at all levels
Recommendations

• Concerted and coordinated government actions as well as conscious and informed effort by individuals
• More synergistic relations between organisations
• The establishments of new foundations for advancing sustainable development
• Partnership development between government, inter-govermental, non governmental and youth for joint initiatives
• Sustainable production and consumption patterns
• Youth supported as environment champions in their local communities
• Strengthening adaptive capability and resilience of youth through tailor made programmes
• More meritocracy and no political interventions
• Projects driven on objective and priority agenda instead of political motivations.
However, the questions to ask are the following:

1. SP at the rescue of youth but how long??? Welfare state becoming unbearable. The budget of SP measures and other youth services are increasing at an exponential rate.

2. More and more public funds allocated to SP means other key areas of development sacrificed.

3. Where to strike the balance between government social interventions and youth taking their destiny in their hands?

4. Expanding SP measures for youth creating are developing some sort of dependency. What will happen if the government cannot maintain them in future?

5. How far and how long politically driven SP measures will outpace priority developmental agenda?

6. How long Mauritius can sustain ever increasing welfare state?
THANK YOU!

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