

Mauritius: A Blend Of Natural Beauty, Heritage And Culture

HON RICHARD DUVAL, THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, EXPLAINS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ENHANCING THE SECTOR, WITH A FOCUS ON ECOTOURISM, AIR CONNECTIVITY, THE DIVERSIFICATION OF TOURISM OFFERINGS AND MORE.

Q. What are the main objectives for revitalizing the tourism sector?

A. The tourism industry is one of the pillars of the Mauritian economy. Currently, the sector, which represents 8.4% of our GDP, faces several challenges such as climate change, shortage of skills and labor and difficulties in tapping into new markets, not to mention the fierce competition both at regional and global level. As a result, it is imperative for Mauritius to consolidate the industry to make it more resilient and robust.

In the current economic and geo-political context, rethinking and reorienting the tourism sector has become a must. The traditional ‘sea-sun-sand’ model has served us well for many years and it is high time that we go beyond and lay emphasis on the numerous attributes that Mauritius offers, for example, our unique natural beauty, our historical heritage and cultural diversity.

Ecotourism also remains high on our agenda and we want to position Mauritius as a leading sustainable and green tourism destination, to ensure our long-term growth and competitiveness.

Q. What actions are planned to boost the tourism sector?

A. To unlock our full potential, we must overcome obstacles related to competitiveness, agility, market access, occupancy, and air connectivity, among others. In this respect, we have embarked on a comprehensive transformation of the industry, which includes:

- A complete restructure of the Mauritius Tourism Promotion Authority (MTPA), the marketing and promotional branch of the ministry.
- Review of the marketing strategies with industry partners for markets which have seen a decline during recent years.
- Development of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) tourism for the African market.
- Enhancement of air connectivity, a key pull factor for long-haul destinations like Mauritius.
- Enhancement of attractions while ensuring safety, security and an authentic experience for visitors.
- Diversification of the tourism product offer to make it attractive to different markets and all year round, thus, addressing the issue of seasonality.

Q. How does eco-tourism align with Mauritius’s sustainable development strategy?

A. The development of ecotourism has been embedded in the sustainable development strategy of Mauritius. Under the Sustainable Island Mauritius project, several training and capacity-building sessions have been held with around 3,500 participants in the tourism value chain.



Hon Richard Duval, Minister of Tourism

In addition, guidelines for the different tourism activities such as ARETA (Adventure-Related Ecotourism Activities), tourist residences, guesthouses, tour operators, night clubs, and restaurants, among others, licensed by the Tourism Authority, have been prepared to ensure that activities are being carried out in a responsible, safe, secure and sustainable manner with a view to ensuring a quality experience for visitors.

Moreover, nearly 50% of hotels in Mauritius have obtained internationally recognized sustainability certifications. We also launched the Destination Zero Waste Programme Mauritius in partnership with the TUI Care Foundation and are working to develop a framework to address plastic pollution in Mauritius.

Q. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities for Mauritius to remain competitive while adapting to global trends and traveler expectations?

A. Today’s tourists increasingly seek eco-conscious experiences, adventure activities, and remote work-friendly destinations. Meeting these expectations requires constant innovation and adaptation.

Other key challenges include environmental sustainability, climate change, labor shortages and a skills mismatch. Despite these challenges, Mauritius has significant opportunities to stand out. One of them is the diversification of tourism offerings, for example, expanding niche markets such as adventure tourism, wellness retreats, and cultural tourism.

We can also strengthen Mauritius’ reputation as a responsible tourism destination through eco-friendly initiatives and encourage community-based tourism to enhance the authenticity of visitor experiences.

With the right policies, industry support, and community involvement, Mauritius has the potential to increase its global competitiveness and remain a top-tier tourism destination.