

Mauritius

Mauritius is an island nation southeast of the African continent with an area of 2,040km². Mauritius had a total population of 1.3 million people in 2014 and is projected to increase by a further 160 000 people by the year 2030., all living along the coast (Mahongo & Mwaipopo, 2015: 15). While Port Louis, Vacoas and Curepipe are visible as the most extensive and densely populated urban areas, with the densest settlement being located on the west coast and western interior of the island, very few parts of Mauritius's coast remain unsettled.

Also, significant developments are expected in the future in different areas (industry, infrastructure development, agriculture, tourism), and this will lead to further pressure on the existing natural resources and the environment. GDP per capita has grown by 9.8% between 1990 and 2009.

The coastal zone in Mauritius is degrading at an increasing rate due to sea-level rise, among other factors. The review by Brown et al. (2011, in Bosire, 2015: 186), mentions that "with 1m of rising, about 26km of the beach would disappear on the west coast, including flooding of local housing, tourism and infrastructure facilities. Inundation will also affect plantations and major coastal roads." Ninety-seven per cent of the Mauritian population lives on the main island of Mauritius, where the urban population amounts to 42 per cent of the total population. The urban population is concentrated in five towns and cities. These urban zones form a continuous strip, a conurbation going from the capital city of Port Louis and stretching inland toward the higher central part of the island.

Besides, a disaster risk assessment of Mauritius done by the World Bank in 2016, suggests that the country experienced annual losses from tropical cyclones, floods and earthquakes (World, 2016f: 2). In Mauritius, tropical cyclones are suggested to be the most significant risk of the three, causing about 80% of the annual loss (World Bank, 2016f:2). With climate change, the occurrence of extreme weather events such as tropical cyclones is expected to intensify, which in turn will have significant impacts for Mauritius.