

Earth Candle Night Mauritius

'Une Heure Pour Notre Terre'

ACTIVITY REPORT



EARTH CANDLE-NIGHT MAURITIUS

Activity Report

Contents	Pg. No
1.0 GRC's Message	2
2.0 About the Event	3
3.0 ECNM 2008 Organizers & Partners	4
4.0 National Celebrations at Le Mirador Restaurant, Casela	5
5.0 ECNM Organizing Committee	8
6.0 Assorted Glimpses of ECNM Celebrations	9
• University of Technology Mauritius	
• MPCB	
• Royal College Curepipe EHC	
• UOM	
• Gandhian Basic School	
• Beach Candle Night	
• Bell Village Sai Centre	

1.0 GRC'S MESSAGE

Dear All

After three years of gestation, the 'ECNM' project has finally placed itself as a promising movement in Mauritius. A team of about 20 youth volunteers worked behind the project ever since February 2008 and with very meager means and the team toiled hard for the sensitization and implementation of ECN in Mauritius.

With all humility, we can say that ECNM 2008 was an accomplishment. Can we measure the impact this achievement? Indeed, the Central Electricity Board (CEB) did monitor the energy demand for the said hour and as compared to past statistics, the results are not so significant. So how come are we claiming that we are proud of ECNM 2008? Yes we are, because we did it almost all alone, except some well-wishers and some eco-supporting organizations and authorities.

Whom to blame if the event did not reach all households in Mauritius? Our team? Don't the media have a moral role to support youth movements who are striving for a cause? In spite of our numerous outcries for media support, we received practically nothing. And what about many companies who advocate so much about Corporate Social Responsibility? Why did almost all of them turn a deaf ear to us? However, the sustained cooperation of the Casela Nature and Leisure Park (CNLP) should be highlighted and valued.

On 02nd May 2008, we know that many people gathered around candles at home all across Mauritius. Some groups and organizations also celebrated the same and more than 150 persons attended the symbolic gathering at the mesmerizing Le Mirador (CNLP). We happy with the fact that all the guests unanimously acknowledged that there is a cause for concern and that we must all discard off some bad habits and become more eco-energy conscious.

None of our team members is an expert in the field, not even a single one majored in ecological or environmental sciences, but yet we supported a cause; we believed in it and we gave ourselves unflinchingly for it. FSNers believe in small steps and our small steps surely did not go waste; with belief and determination we will plod our way to instill a new culture in this landscape. ECNM is not a one-day event; we have a long journey to go and together we will make it for a better Mauritius and for our beloved Mother Earth.

May the ECNM motto guide your actions

Une heure pour nôtre terre
Une heure à réfléchir sur nôtre avenir
Une heure pour un monde meilleur
Une heure de bonheur avec mère nature
Une chance pour redécouvrir l'être intérieur

Gowtam Raj CHINTARAM
Patron ECNM

2.0 ABOUT THE EVENT

“Earth Candle-Night” is a unique attempt at merging and celebrating two worldwide events, namely ‘Earth Days’ and ‘Candle-Night’, which aim at increasing consciousness for the conservation of energy and protection of the environment.

The first ‘Earth Day’ was organized in 1970 so as to promote environmental citizenship and year round progressive action worldwide. The organizers of earth day later on founded the Earth Day Network (EDN). Earth Day is the only event celebrated simultaneously around the globe by people of all backgrounds, faiths and nationalities. More than a half billion people participate in our campaigns every year.

The "Candle Night" was originally initiated by several of Japanese environmental non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including the **Association to Preserve the Earth** (Daichi-O-Mamoru-Kai), the **Sloth Club** and the **Japan for Sustainability** (JFS). Promoted under the slogan of "Turn off the lights, and take it slow," the activity officially started in 2003 in Japan. Nowadays, the Japan's Ministry of the Environment (MOE) has added its official support to this event. Candle-Night (CN) is a voluntary participatory event initiated by Japan's environmental NGOs, spearheaded by the ‘Japanese Candle-Night Committee’ (JCNC). The “Candle” is a symbol for lighting “slow night”. CN does not aim to make a protest, or to claim anything, it is an activity for raising concerns about energy and environmental problems. It also aims at fostering a sense of unity. CN is just an opportunity to enjoy the night slowly and to realize something special when you turn off the light for just two hours. It offers an open opportunity for people to enjoy themselves in their own ways: spending the time with the family or a loved one, enjoying quiet time, looking at the beauty of the stars, reviewing their lifestyles, or thinking about peace, the global environment, energy saving. In 2005, CN was organized (outside Japan) namely in Vancouver (Canada) and Shanghai (China). In June 2006, Mauritius became the 1st country of the Southern Hemisphere to join the movement and organize CN locally. Candle-Night was introduced in Mauritius by Mr. Gowtam Raj Chintaram after an exchange programme (Ship for World Youth Programme) in Japan. On 02nd June 2006, Association Civique Midlands (ACM) organized the 1st edition of NCNM in Mauritius at le Café du Vieux Conseil.

‘Candle Night’ is usually organized during June & December solstices (in Japan & countries of the Northern Hemisphere). For its part, ‘Earth Day’ is organized on 22nd April and the new Earth-Hour (Sydney movement) on 29th March. All these activities go in the same direction, which is the preservation of energy and Mother Earth. The founding principles of Earth-Days and Candle Night were at the genesis of the ‘Earth Candle Night’. Earth Candle Night is a hybrid of ‘Earth Day’ (USA) and ‘Candle-Night’ (Japan). As a sign of solidarity to all the above three movements, it was decided to annually celebrate the same all across Mauritius on the first Friday of the month of May.

Aims & Objectives

The concept of ECNM goes beyond energy conservation and other political messages. This project aims to let as many people as possible think of “how to enjoy night slowly”. Reasons to join this project can be anything. It can be thinking of warmth of family, energy problem, world peace, etc. Even if it is just for your fun, it will be the reason. The Organizing Committee would like to make this project popular as much as possible among people without any limitation of ages, sex, policies.

ECNM aims at raising awareness and has long-term objectives to:

- Lessen pollution and reduce natural resource destruction
- Create Benefits to Nature Through our Actions
- Change wasteful behaviour permanently

3.0 ECNM 2008 ORGANIZERS & PARTNERS

Main Organizers:

First Steps Network, Association Civique Midlands and the Casela Nature & Leisure Park

Partners & Sponsors:

Restaurant Le Mirador, Mauritius Post & Cooperative Bank, Ajmol Enterprise Ltd, Mooneeram Printing, National Housing Development Corporation Ltd.

Collaborators:

Ministry of Public Utilities, Central Electricity Board, Municipal Council of Port-Louis, UTM Human Capital, Royal College Curepipe EHC, Ship for World Youth Alumni Association

The Campaign 2008

Started in February 2008, a core team was constituted with some members of ACM and that of FSN. The sensitization campaign was very elaborate and a number of media was used to propagate the message. The first formal campaign was held at the Gandhian Basic School, which was later followed at UOM. The Environment Health Club of Royal College Curepipe took the lead to spearhead the event at the level secondary schools. The MPCB was the first firm to commit itself to the ECNM initiatives. *More details about the mentioned activities will be presented in the later half of this report.* The press presentation was held on the very symbolic date of 22nd April 2008 at the Municipal Council of Port-Louis and thereafter the ECNM team multiplied the sensitization campaign. The latter culminated with the Grand National celebrations on 02nd May 2008 at Casela.

4.0 ECNM: National Celebrations at Le Mirador Restaurant, Casela

Nested in the picturesque natural abode of Casela Nature & Leisure Park (CNLP), Le Mirador Restaurant hosted the 3rd edition of ECNM on Friday 02nd May 2008.



ECNM 2008: The Blossoming of New Hopes

The Black Fusion Rock Band (BFRB), enthusiastically led by Mr. Joy Ramcharitar, of Doorie fame, welcomed the guests on some melodious tunes. Ms. Romy Kanaksabee and Mr. Dhanvir Seewoosaha, respectively Vice-President and Secretary of FSN, acted as MCs for the function. The programme officially started with a heart touching poem on 'Candle –Night' by Ms. Hoshila Teelock. This was followed by delightful semi-classical instrumental music "Awakening Inner Senses" presented by the Sakrapanee Group.



Mr. Chitanand Sujwuon, President of ACM delivered a short speech on the achievements and future activities of ACM; he further welcomed all the guests for their presence. This was followed by the official address of Mr. Gowtam Raj Chintaram, the pioneer and patron of ECNM. The latter highlighted the conception and vision of ECNM, coupled with initial struggle to bring ECN in the country. He also called the audience to 'arouse their inner senses', to be more responsible of their actions and pledge on and all to promote an eco-energy saving culture within the population. Mr. Paramasiva Chegan, Coordinator of Chapter Mauritius of African Union's ECOSOC and former Chairperson of MACOSS, briefly talked about the role of civil society organizations and praised the vision of ACM; he called upon a more active engagement of other NGOs for community development.



The organizing committee presented a number of tokens/certificates to all those (partners, sponsors and authorities and the artists as well) who helped for ECNM 2008. Later on, the BFRB and Sakrapanee Group presented some more items to the delight of the audience. The Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Hon Jayarama Valayden was next to address

ECNM 2008: The Blossoming of New Hopes

the floor. Hon Valayden showered praises on the young team behind ECNM and promised this full support for all future activities on of both ACM and FSN. The Minister of Public Utilities, Dr The Hon Abu Twalib Kasenally succeeded Hon Valayden. The Minister of Public Utilities talked about the many policies that the Government is bringing forth for an energy efficient country. He further expressed his wish for the developing of the 'energy saving culture' and expressed his support to ECNM. The Events Manager of FSN, Mr. Shanil Jugdharree presented the 'Vote of Thanks' and the programme ended with musical entertainment of the BFRB followed by a cocktail. The next edition of ECNM was announced for Friday 08th May 2009.



Turn On The Light Within

5.0 ECNM 2008: ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Patron: Mr. Gowtam Raj CHINTARAM
Adviser on Energy Matters: Mr. Yash Hurdowar

Chairman : Mr. Dhanvir Seewoosaha
National Coordinator : Ms. Roomy Kanaksabee
Organizing Secretary : Ms Hoshila Teelock
Asst Org Secretary : Mr. Pascal Herry

Sponsorship Team-

Ms. Taruna Chintaram i/c, Ms. Macktoobah Dookhan, Ms. Amrine Mohoboob, Mr. Yashneel Gobin

Event Awareness & Promotion-

Mr. Ashok Cheetamun i/c, Mr. Nicles Begue, Mr. Heerish Cheeneebash, Ms Karishma Marcharchand

National Celebrations (Programme)-

Mr. Chitanand Sujuwon, Mr. Nand Kumar Seewooruttun, Mr. Shyam Sukkoo, Mr. Guru Bhoojhawon i/c, Mr. Shanil Jugdharree, Mr. Sojeet Kumar Sookharry.

Ceremonials-

Mr. Naveen Kumar Seewooruttun, Mr. Mahendra Seewoosaha, Mrs. Laxnowtee Ballchand, Mrs. Khamla Devi Iyaloo, Mr. Read Tagaully



6.0 GLIMPSES OF ECNM CELEBRATIONS

(A) ECNM at UTM



A one week intensive brochures/poster campaign was done on the campus premises. The response was very positive with many people taking keen interest in the activity.

(B) MPCB Team



- Distribution of brochures and posters
- Email campaign within the organization

(C) Royal College Curepipe

Founded in September 2003, RCC-EHC has established itself as one of leading student organizations in the country. FSNER Yashneel Gobin, who was also a former President of EHC, was the focal point to propagate the movement and the ECNM initiative in

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secondary schools around the island. RCC used all the sophisticated means of communications to reach a maximum of youth and students across the island.



(D) UOM: BSc Marketing Management Year 2



Students of BSc Marketing Management (Year 2) did a presentation on ECNM on 25th April 2008. The group of student had chosen a décor matching with the concept of ECNM, that of saving energy and minimizing wastage. In fact, the lecture theatre where the presentation was held was illuminated by small candles instead of having electricity. The volunteers distributed brochures and posters were affixed in key areas for the promotion of the event. FSners Raj Chintaram and Hoshila Teelock attended the event and the former also delivered a speech on ECNM on the occasion. The sensitization on the campus was continued by FSners who are students at UOM.

(E) Gandhian Basic School

On Friday 28th March 2008, Trainee Teachers from the Mauritius Institute of Education had carried out their Community Work Project entitled Earth Candle Night at the Gandhian Basic School at Moka. The Gandhian Basic School has a student population of 150 aged between 12 to 17 years old who studied mainly work oriented subjects such as arts and design, home economics, science among others. The project aims at raising awareness and has long term objectives to lessen pollution and reduce national resource destruction; create benefits to nature through our actions and change wasteful behaviour permanently. Students are the citizens of tomorrow that is why trainee

ECNM 2008: The Blossoming of New Hopes

teachers have find it suitable to sensitize the students at a tender age about energy conservation techniques. Talks and presentations were held, including class activity. The students were very conscious and were participating actively by suggesting ways about how to save energy. They firmly believe that each of our small actions towards energy saving will certainly contribute to a positive step towards the planet. Students were encouraged to carry out some drawings about how to save energy. Mr. Nowbuth, Acting Rector at the Gandhian Basic School had welcomed this project very positively and had wished that in the future more projects can be carried out for the benefit of the students.



(F) Beach Candle-Night



ACMians continuing Candle-Night at Flic-en-Flac Beach



(G) ECNM at Sai Baba Centre bell Village



SHREE SATHYA SAI BABA
CENTRE OF BELL VILLAGE

Sai Darshan, Naya Zamana St Cassis

06th May 2008

Observation of Earth Candle Light Night 2008 at the Shree Sathya Sai Baba Centre of Bell-Village

The event was observed at the seat of our centre, at above-mentioned venue on Friday 2nd May from 18h30 to 20h15. It was during the weekly program which started earlier last Friday with a religious Vedic liturgy (*Yajna*) followed by spiritual chanting (*Bhajan*). No electric bulbs, neon tubes or lamps were switched on inside the hall which was illuminated exclusively by candles. The celebration was attended by around 50 devotees, half of which were children and youths. The meaning and purpose of the activity was explained at the end of the program during the message slot, with emphasis on conservation of resources, protection of the environment and in line with the teaching on desires/save energy teachings of *the Bhagavan Sathya Sai Baba*, our spiritual master. All were invited to continue the efforts in our daily lives at home, at work and everywhere possible. An appeal was made to think and act on ways to curtail as far as possible use of electrical apparatus, equipment and lights and prevent unnecessary functioning and wastage. The matter was also lengthily dealt with during the previous gathering on Friday 25th April to sensitize devotees in anticipation

It is noteworthy to add that the issue was discussed as a follow-up during the last meeting of the Port-Louis Regional Committee of the *Shree Sathya Sai Organisation* on Sunday 4th May. It was decided to encourage members to explore further the idea. It is recommended that they devote one hour each month (preferably on the 23rd) to a family activity at home in candle-light.

Yours in service

Ashok BEEHARRY
SECRETARY