LAND USE DIVISION

Divisional Scientific Officer: Mr. C. L. Cangy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Role and Function

The Land Use Division was entrusted with general aspects of land use i.e. the preservation of good agricultural lands against non-agricultural use through continuous implementation of Government’s policy to protect good agricultural land. It provides rational advice on the sustainable use of land resources of Mauritius for agricultural purposes and to safeguard these resources against pressure and misuse of these lands for non-agricultural purposes. It advises on applications for Land Conversion, sub-division of plots, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Preliminary Environment Report (PER).

2.0 Activities

2.1 Brief on activities of the Division

The Division -

1. Processes requests from members of the public for Agricultural State Lands under the control of the Ministry.
2. Acts as the notarial arm of the Ministry in drawing up agricultural land leases and collection of the land rents accruing there from.
3. Participates in rezoning exercises under the aegis of the Ministry of Housing and Lands
4. Monitors the use of lands in the ex-tea belt, Land Settlement and other State Lands
5. Carries searches at the Registrar's General Office on land ownership in relation to applications for land conversion and tenancy before issue of lease agreement

2.2 Land Settlements & Other State Lands

One hundred and forty five (145) site visits were carried out in order to ensure that lessees complied with conditions contained in their lease agreement. For the year 2011, seventy (70) first warning letters, thirty five (35) second warning letters, and thirty (30) third/final warning letters were sent to non-compliant lessees.
2.3 Monitoring of Ex-tea belt regions

Routine field visits were carried out in the ex-tea lands and respective status reports were submitted with emphasis being laid upon abandoned fields. Site visits are also carried out to report on illegal occupation / squatting of agricultural state lands as well as illegal constructions (building, stores, temples etc.) and also as per request from the Ministry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st warning letters</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd warning letters</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd and final warning letters</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plots recommended for retrieval</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request for transfer of tenancy</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site visits effected</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several joint site visits were carried with officers from FSC, AREU and SPWF to attend to specific cases (e.g. Status of land at Plaine Sophie). The Report on findings together with recommendations was sent to the Ministry for appropriate action.

2.4 Agricultural Land Leases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2011</th>
<th>No. of beneficiaries convened to sign lease/pay rent.</th>
<th>Number of leases signed</th>
<th>Number of leases registered</th>
<th>Revenue collected as rent (R)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3170</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>9,343,507.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.5 Land Development

One hundred and thirty two (132) applications for land conversion permits were processed and respective reports are submitted to the Permanent Secretary and to the Land Conversion Committee whereby decisions to either reject or approve the application are taken.

The number of requests for State Land received and processed at the Division was one thousand and eighteen (1018).
2.6 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Preliminary Environmental Report (PER)

Twenty eight (28) EIA and twenty one (21) PER applications received in respect of projects proposed by the members of the public were forwarded to the Division for views and comments. Each development site was visited and a relevant report submitted to the Ministry on each application.

2.7 Survey works

The Survey office undertook survey of state lands which include the following:

- State lands under ex-TDA,
- Land Settlements,
- Ex-Agricultural Stations under control of this Ministry,
- Preparation of site plans and survey reports of agricultural state lands, context plan for EIA and Local Authority
- Preparation of plans and aerial photographs for the Land Bank Project
- Survey for Government Projects
- Government Notice as regards limits of Private Land and State Land,
- Fixing of Boundary limits in cases of encroachment,
- Verification of plan and calculation of Land Conversion tax at the Land Conversion Unit
- Attending site meetings in connection with survey works
- Attending court cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2011</th>
<th>No. of plans drawn/amended</th>
<th>No. of plans photocopied</th>
<th>No. of searches (land Use Division and Land Conversion Unit)</th>
<th>No. of Plots Surveyed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.8 Retrieval of plots exercise

During the year 2011, three hundred and sixty five (365) plots were recommended for retrieval and one hundred and five (105) were retrieved.

Plots are recommended for retrieval for the following reasons:

- Lessee has failed to pay rent despite of third and final warning letters to pay rent, was sent to him/her.
- Lessee has failed to occupy the land or to keep it neat and tidy despite of third and final warning letters to occupy the land, was sent to him/her.
• Lessee has failed to occupy the land within the first six month following signature of lease agreement.
• Lessee has failed to renew the lease agreement despite of third and final warning letters to renew same, was sent to him/her.

Ten (10) cases of illegal construction on agricultural state lands under lease with the Ministry, were reported for further action.

2.9 Land Bank

The following information pertaining to agricultural state lands, along with respective plans/maps of each section were submitted to the Deputy Chief Agricultural Officer.

• Plans of different regions in the ex-tea belt, Land Settlement and other State Lands
• Information on individual plots already under lease or uncommitted,

2.10 Food Security Projects under the MSPA 1000A Scheme

With regards to the MSPA 1000A Scheme project, a team of officers of the Land Use Division was called upon to draw lease agreement to beneficiaries, at the Head Office during the month of February 2011.

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<th>Mare D’Albert</th>
<th>St Hubert</th>
<th>Rouge Terre</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of lessees</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total extent (arpent) under lease</td>
<td>42.18</td>
<td>58.18</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>43.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of lease</td>
<td>Food crops</td>
<td>Livestock production</td>
<td>Food crops</td>
<td>Food crops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>