

Editorial

The issue of the December 2008 newsletter is a convenient opportunity to look back at our achievements over the past year and remind ourselves of the challenges ahead. These are best considered within the framework of the 5 strategic objectives of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics:

(i) Organisational and institutional development: the Steering Committee on the autonomy of the National Statistical Office submitted its recommendations in August and the corresponding bill was drafted in December. Coordination arrangements are in progress with the Bank of Mauritius, the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, the Ministry of Social Security, the Judiciary and the Police and Prison departments. Programme Based Budgeting has raised the profile of statistics by putting it in the fore-front of evidence-based planning and budgeting. Furthermore a document on advocacy for statistics, based on a PARIS21 template, has been prepared and posted on CSO's website, and also emailed to all stakeholders.

(ii) Human resource development: PMS is embedding itself in our work culture. The scheme of service of Statistician is being revised in the light of the PRB recommendations for reforming the Civil Service. Five posts of Principal Statistician have been filled and procedures initiated to fill vacancies in the grades of Senior Statistician, Senior Statistical Officer and Statistical Officer. Action has also been initiated to create a new grade of Principal Statistical Officer as recommended by the PRB. The Capacity Building and Service to Mauritius Programmes of Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment are being tapped to recruit multi-disciplinary subject-matter specialists not currently available within the Statistical Cadre. Arrangements have been made with the University of Mauritius since May 2008 for training of staff. So far some 21 officers in the grades of Statistician and above, 24 Senior Statistical Officers and 5 Statistical Officers have been trained, each for a total number of 30 hours. The module taught was 'Economic Concept and Principles for Statisticians'. A 63- hour training in 'Sampling Concepts in Survey Work' is scheduled to start in the beginning of February 2009. A total of 18 officers have attended workshops and seminars overseas in 2008.

(iii) Infrastructure development: A project manager was recruited in October 2008 for implementation of the e-business plan. New tools such as Social Accounting Matrices, Environment Accounts and Tourism Satellite Accounts are also being developed.

(iv) Availability of better quality data: Improvements are being brought to Price Statistics and National Accounts as recommended by the IMF following an audit carried out in December 2008 within the July 2003 Data Quality Assessment Framework. A number of service user satisfaction surveys have been designed to satisfy PBB requirements. The following new areas are also being developed: poverty thresholds for Social Register, Crime, Justice and Security Statistics and Sectoral Productivity Indices.

(v) Improved data management, dissemination, access and use: Timeliness of release of Quarterly National Accounts (QNA), Employment and Unemployment data, Quarterly Wages and Earnings Statistics and Government Financial Statistics (GFS) have been improved to meet Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS) requirements. PBB and budget support initiatives by development partners have considerably increased data usage for policy and decision making.

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The main challenges for 2009 will be to:

- (i) strengthen the Institutional Development and Corporate Services Division, which has suffered the brunt of staff shortages over the years; and to rapidly complete streamlining of data collection and analysis for cost effective delivery of services;
- (ii) ensure consistency of the PMS across grades for equity and fairness in performance-based reward and promotion;
- (iii) foster a proactive, analytical and user-friendly mindset and culture that goes beyond mere aligning of data sets from various sources, to real analysis and integration that describe complex socio-economic situations, enlighten understanding of the factors that determine those situations and guide effective monitoring and evaluation of changes;
- (iv) manage a world-class multidisciplinary and multi-cultural team and their interface with the existing work force for mutual benefit; and
- (v) implement state of the art IT for data collection, capture, processing, organization and management.

Implementation of the e-Business Plan

The primary objective of the e-Business Plan of the Central Statistics Office (CSO) was to define an appropriate IT strategy to improve the work processes in data collection, data processing and data dissemination and laying emphasis on improving productivity, quality and service delivery. The e-Business plan is in 3 phases, each taking around one year for implementation.

Recruitment of Project Manager

A project Manager, Mr. Vikash Madhow, was recruited in October 2008 to drive forward the first phase of the implementation. The Project Manager has since been working on the “Modernise IT environment” phase whose main objective is to put in place an enhanced ICT infrastructure with a network-connected PC for every CSO staff and to provide the necessary infrastructure to leverage on current and future information systems. He is also working on the following projects of the CSO’s e-Business action plan:

1. Clean /enrich data and rationalise data channels.
2. New Application Architecture - Centralised Relational Database Management System (RDBMS), application server & reporting system.
3. Data integration and validations with business rules engine.

On 15 October 2008, a kick-off presentation of the implementation of the e-Business plan was held to increase the awareness of the staff on the subject matter. The Management staff and Head of sections of the Central Statistics Office attended the presentation. A workplan, detailing the work schedule with sections of the CSO, was prepared by the Project Manager and it was sent to all the sections concerned.



Mr. V. Madhow, Project Manager, at his kick-off meeting

IT Working Groups

In view of optimising on available skills and competencies in the field of IT at the CSO, a working/skills group was set up, comprising CSO staff who are IT qualified/literate in addition to the staff of the IT Unit. The main functions of the members of the IT Working Group are as follows:

- (i) Assist in the computerisation of one or more units in their Division by:
 - Helping in capturing requirements
 - Documenting the process
 - Coordinating parallel runs
 - Helping in migration of data to new system
 - Acting as a first line of support
- (ii) Assist staff of their units in the use of the new system.
- (iii) Propose changes to the system based on their experience with the system and their knowledge.

Census 2010 and the Scanning Project

The CSO has been contemplating the possibility of using Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) and Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) for its forthcoming Census 2010. In this connection, our Project Manager has been called upon to evaluate the pros and cons of moving to this technology. A “proof of concept” has been carried out and it has proved to be successful. Mr. V. Madhow is now working on the tendering project for the scanning of the Census 2010.

The Social Register of Mauritius (SRM)

The Register and its objectives

For the purpose of better managing social programmes, the Government is setting up a social register which will be called the Social Register of Mauritius (SRM). The Register is being developed by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions and is planned to be a large database of actual and potential social programme beneficiaries.

Its purpose is to assist the Ministry of Social Security in identifying deserving beneficiaries of each programme and deciding the level of assistance for each beneficiary. It will also serve to put in place a system for poverty monitoring and for evaluation of social programmes to allow Government to improve their performance and service delivery, thus ensuring that social spending reaches the intended beneficiaries.

The SRM will be a dynamic database which will be updated regularly to provide for exit and entry of beneficiaries, and it will cover about 130,000 households comprising beneficiaries of social programmes of the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions as well as other ministries.

Technical assistance and funding

Professor Christophe Muller, international consultant, is providing technical assistance in the SRM project; he has been on three missions since the start of the project. The UNDP is financing the services of the international consultant and those of a national consultant to assist the Ministry in the setting up of the SRM and to coordinate the various activities. Other components of the project are financed by the European Union through the Decentralised Cooperation Programme and the Government of Mauritius.

Surveys undertaken under the SRM project

In building up the SRM, three surveys are being undertaken to support the design and management of the SRM: (i) Survey of Social Assistance Schemes, (ii) Complementary Survey and (iii) Living Conditions Survey.

(i) Survey of Social Assistance Schemes

The objective of this survey is to take stock of all social programmes run by various ministries/organisations. It is on the basis of this survey that it will be possible to decide on the social programmes admissible in the SRM. This survey has already been conducted by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Senior Citizens Welfare and Reform Institutions and has involved the collection of data and other relevant information on social programmes being run by different Ministries/institutions.

(ii) Complementary Survey

The purpose of this survey is to obtain information that will help to set up the database of households deserving social assistance; all households with at least one beneficiary of social programmes need to be surveyed. Data will be collected for each household member regardless of whether he/she is benefiting from social assistance.

The survey will allow the Ministry of Social Security to obtain information, among others, on the individual income of all members of the beneficiary households. The individual incomes can then be aggregated at household level to determine eligibility to social assistance.

The first phase of the Complementary Survey focuses on beneficiaries of Social Aid, Housing Scheme at the National Housing Development Company and the Trust Fund.

(iii) Living Conditions Survey (LCS)

The main purpose of the LCS or ‘basic needs’ survey is to obtain information necessary to calculate national poverty lines and other income thresholds anchored on basic needs. Households below poverty lines will be eligible for social assistance.

The survey has been conducted by the Central Statistics Office in November-December 2008, and covers a sample of 2,240 households; the LCS sample is a subsample of the 6,720 households interviewed at the 2006/07 Household Budget Survey.

Performance Management System (PMS)

Feedback on the work of the Moderating Committee

The Moderating Committee on the Performance Management System had its first meeting on 15 October, 2008, and subsequently met on four occasions every fortnight.

Work started with the compilation of data concerning the individual workplan (Key Result Areas, Key Tasks and Key Performance Indicators) for Statisticians. This task was entrusted to the CSO Reforms Unit. This Unit was also assigned the task of compiling a list of technical competencies for Statisticians.

The data collected is being used to assist the Moderating Committee to determine whether:

- (i) the individual workplans of Statisticians are geared towards the achievement of the strategic objectives set out for the CSO; and
- (ii) Statisticians are operating at the required level and are having an equitable share of the workload.

The analysis of the data is on-going. Meanwhile, appropriate instructions have been given to address issues raised by the Moderating Committee as follows:

- (i) Key Result Areas, Key Tasks and Key Performance Indicators have to be harmonized in the light of clarifications to be given by the Deputy Directors,
- (ii) in a number of cases the Key Performance

Indicators have not been correctly developed since they have been spelt out as activities,

- (iii) individual performance indicators are not always geared towards organizational performance indicators,
- (iv) in some cases Key Tasks are too detailed and therefore not enough focused on the main activities and objectives of the CSO,
- (v) in other cases the same Key Performance Indicators have been developed for different Key Tasks although this is not justified, and
- (vi) there is need to ensure that Key Performance Indicators enable the effective measurement of work performance.

On the basis of the data compiled by the Reforms Unit, and particularly considering the vision and mission of the office as well as the objectives set out in the Programme-Based-Budget, the draft workplans of 14 Statisticians from the 3 Divisions have been developed. After improvement, these workplans would be used as template for the PMS exercise in 2009.

A proposed Competency Framework for Statistician has also been worked out and circulated among officers concerned for their views. This document is being finalized and will be used as from 2009.

Measuring the performance of CSO

The CSO has the mission of providing coherent, timely, relevant and reliable statistics, consistent with international principles and standards, for effective policy and decision-making, and for monitoring national development processes. To fulfill its mandate, the office is currently working on the following five strategic objectives:

1. Achieve organisational and institutional development.
2. Develop human resources.
3. Develop more effective infrastructure.
4. Make better data available.
5. Improve dissemination, documentation and customer support.

To achieve the five strategic objectives, there are 22 areas in which results have to be shown. The performance indicators to measure the extent to which the CSO has reached the targets set are given in the table below.

<i>Strategic objective 1: Achieve organisational and institutional development</i>			
Key Result Areas		Performance Indicators	
1.1	Development of a world class National Statistical System	1.1.1	Draft Bill for autonomous statistical agency finalised
1.2	Improved coordination	1.2.1	MOU's and institutional arrangement in place
		1.2.2	Common concepts, definitions and classifications used by all data producers
1.3	Performance monitoring and reporting	1.3.1	Performance indicators of staff, units and organisation developed and monitored quarterly
		1.3.2	Quarterly report on PBB implementation
1.4	Quality monitoring	1.4.1	Monitoring instrument to monitor quality of field work in place
		1.4.2	Processes to address quality issues in place
<i>Strategic objective 2: Develop human resources</i>			
2.1	Capacity development	2.1.1	Training programme established
2.2	Improved staff recruitment and promotion	2.2.1	Organisational competency framework developed
2.3	Human resource management	2.3.1	Performance reviews carried out
		2.3.2	No. of officers recommended for mention, promotion, remedial action or disciplinary action
		2.3.3	Institutional frame-work to serve as a basis for reward and promotion set up

<i>Strategic objective 3: Develop more effective infrastructure</i>			
3.1	IT focused statistical system	3.1.1	E - business plan implemented
3.2	Develop more effective statistical infrastructure	3.2.1	Best methodologies in place and harmonised across sections
		3.2.2	Compendium of concepts, standards and classifications published
		3.2.3	Code of practice published
		3.2.4	Updated national versions of latest international classifications in use
		3.2.5	Environmental-Economic Accounting System in place
		3.2.6	Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) available
		3.2.7	Social Accounting Matrix (SAM) available
		3.2.8	SNA 93 fully implemented
		3.2.9	Labour market information system developed
3.3	Develop and maintain a Central Business Register	3.3.1	Live register in place
3.4	Develop Geographical Information System (GIS)	3.4.1	GIS functionality implemented
<i>Strategic objective 4: Make better data available</i>			
4.1	Regular statistics	4.1.1	All statistical reports released according to advance release calendar (~70 economic and social indicators and 20 statistical reports)
4.2	Better Census and Survey data	4.2.1	Survey operations harmonised to reduce cost and response burden
		4.2.2	Centralised system of price collection in place
		4.2.3	Small area estimation available
4.3	Develop new areas	4.3.1	Number of Methodologies and Indicators for new areas in place
4.4	Develop indicators for PBB monitoring of Ministries	4.4.1	Number of Indicators identified and developed

4.5	Improve data quality	4.5.1	Number of Statistics benchmarked with international practices
		4.5.2	Number of methodological documents available
		4.5.3	IMF Reports on the Observance of Standards and Codes (ROSC's) recommendations fully implemented
4.6	International initiatives	4.6.1	Subscription to the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS)
		4.6.2	Participate in the IMF General Data Dissemination System Phase 2 (GDDS 2)
<i>Strategic objective 5: Improve dissemination, documentation and customer support</i>			
5.1	Improve statistical products	5.1.1	Guidelines and template for report writing available
		5.1.2	Training in statistical report writing done
5.2	Better disseminated data	5.2.1	Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) functional
		5.2.2	Improved web dissemination
		5.2.3	Number of countries with which the student corner has been benchmarked
		5.2.4	Number of publications benchmarked with those of other countries
		5.2.5	User friendly brochures published
5.3	Improved timeliness	5.3.1	Number of statistics published with reduced time lag
5.4	Establish CSO as depository of statistics	5.4.1	Number of acquisitions made
5.5	User survey	5.5.1	Number of user surveys carried out
		5.5.2	% of findings of user survey implemented

UNDP Second Mission on Environmental-Economic Accounting in Mauritius

Background

The importance of environmental issues is now globally known, especially the impact of climate change on national economies and their dependence on natural assets such as energy and water.

A project on Environmental-Economic Accounting, already set up during the first mission of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) consultant, Mr. Rocky Harris, is now at the development stage with main focus on information about energy and water use by different economic sectors.

Mr. Rocky Harris carried out a two-week mission in Mauritius between 13 and 24 October 2008. He assessed the available data, especially from the 2002 Census of Economic Activities, and investigated the gaps and constraints in developing the system of integrated Environmental-Economic Accounts.

The identified priorities for environmental

accounts for Mauritius are:

- i. Water use and returns to the environment
- ii. Energy use and atmospheric emissions
- iii. Economy-wide material flow accounts

Potential Applications of Accounts

In the context of sustainable development in Mauritius (Ile Durable) and the new energy policy and action plan, the environmental-economic accounts will help

1. Investigation and analysis of the interaction between the economy of Mauritius and the environment.
2. Integration of data on the economy and the environment in order to study the implications for sustainability.
3. Examining the environmental impact of different patterns of production and consumption or, conversely, the economic consequences of maintaining given environmental standards.



Working session with Mr. Rocky Harris, UNDP Consultant

Main Activities and Recommendations

Activities carried out during the mission comprised, among others, the following:

1. Calculation of high level summary accounts
2. Presentation of links between the accounts and policy priorities
3. Design of spreadsheets for managing the accounts
4. Documentation of methodology and sources

The first two of these activities are relevant to the dissemination and identification of potential applications of the accounts, and resulted in the inclusion of an additional task, namely to develop a brochure which can be used to promote the use of accounts more widely within Mauritius.

It is worth noting that a very high level of detail of the economic sectors is being used for compiling the accounts. This can provide much detailed level analysis for specific sectors that

are of national importance such as Tourism sector.

It was noted that another short mission would be helpful in consolidating the accounts by incorporating data from the 2007 Census of Economic Activities (which will most probably be available in 2009) to build a consistent time series. This will also enable estimates to be made for inter-censal years.

A final draft of an Environmental Accounts Report for Mauritius is expected to be submitted by the consultant by the 16 February 2009.

Subject to any further support from consultants, the CSO would thereafter be responsible for the maintenance and updating of the set of accounts. The Ministry of Environment and NDU and all the stakeholders involved in environmental issues will be involved with the development of the accounts and will be able to make use of the outputs of the accounts in their usual activities.

First meeting of the Committee on Statistical Matters for COMESA, Zambia

At their last meeting held in Lusaka, Zambia in 2007, the Directors of Statistics recommended that a Committee on Statistical Matters be set up to specifically cater for statistical matters, in line with the spirit of the COMESA Treaty's vision in which statistics shall continue playing an important role in the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the Common Market. The recommendation was approved by the Council of Ministers later during the year.

2. The first meeting of the Committee was held in Lusaka, Zambia from 3 to 5 November 2008 and was attended by delegates from 13 member states and representatives of African Development Bank (AfDB), East African Community (EAC), and European Statistical Office (EUROSTAT).

3. In his opening speech, the Assistant Secretary General of COMESA urged the committee to take cognizance of the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Summit's recommendations among which was the establishment of a Free Trade Area. This arrangement encompasses member states of the three regional organizations with the ultimate goal of establishing a single Customs Union. He further observed that this tripartite framework should pervade all areas of potential cooperation including statistics.

4. The COMESA Secretariat presented the draft rules of procedure of the Committee on Statistical Matters which was adopted with amendments. Members present considered and reviewed reports presented on the various activities of the 2008 work programme.

These were:

- (i) Report of the regional Consumer Price Index experts meeting on the development of a COMESA Harmonized Consumer Price Index (HCPI),
- (ii) Proposed Roadmap on the HCPI,
- (iii) Report on COMESA Initiatives in International Merchandise Trade Statistics,
- (iv) Report on Infrastructure and ICT Statistics,
- (v) Report on COMESA Regional Statistics Database *COMSTAT*,
- (vi) Report on the 2008 National Accounts activities,
- (vii) Report on Foreign Direct Investment Statistics programme,
- (viii) Report on Capacity Building on Trade Policy Impact Assessment, and
- (ix) AfDB Report on Multinational Statistical Building Initiative.

Streamlining Social and Demographic Statistics

The work in the Social and Demographic Division is being streamlined so as to result in a harmonized, integrated and cost-effective system of social and demographic statistics. The division is being organized according to two sub-programmes, namely:

- a) The Demographic and Social Statistics sub-programme
 - b) The Analysis and Integration sub-programme
2. ***The Demographic and Social Statistics sub-programme*** comprises the following:
- a) *Establishment and price data collection* which will produce routine statistics on the Consumer Price Index and from surveys of employment. It will also include price data collection for the Construction Price Index, Producer Price Indices, Export and Import Price Indices.
 - b) *Housing and Population censuses and social surveys* which involve the planning, organization, design and conduct of the data collection exercise, processing of the data to produce main statistics.
 - c) *Social Statistics* which will focus on the collection, compilation and dissemination of social data obtained from ministries and government departments.
3. ***The Analysis and integration sub-programme*** covers:
- a) Analysis of data from social surveys and ministries and government departments;
 - b) Analysis and integration of labour statistics;
 - c) Projections of population, labour force, education and social security; and
 - d) Analysis of inflation.
4. The new system is being implemented and will be in place by February this year, once the Living Conditions Survey is completed and the staff will be assigned to the new sub-programmes.

2010 Housing and Population Census

Introduction

Government has agreed that a Housing and Population Census will be conducted by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) in year 2010.

The main objective of the census is to provide information essential for policy-making, planning and administration. Information on the size, the distribution and characteristics of the population is needed for assessing the country's demographic, social and economic performance and for developing sound policies aimed at fostering the welfare of the population. Census data are essential in the management and evaluation of programmes in fields such as housing, education and literacy, employment and manpower and welfare.

Census data are also used by the business community. Reliable estimates of consumer demand for goods and services depend on accurate information as regards the size of the population at regional level, its distribution by sex and age. Further, the census provides information on the availability of labour which is important to identify where new units could be built.

Methodology and Coverage

The 2010 Housing and Population Census, like the four previous ones, will be taken in two distinct rounds: the Housing Census in February 2010 and the Population Census in July 2010.

The Housing Census aims at enumerating all buildings, housing units, households, commercial and industrial establishments, institutions, hotels and boarding houses.

The basis for the population count will be, as at the 2000 census, the 'de jure' population, i.e. the usual residents. However, a count of the present population in the country on census night in all private households and communal establishments as well as the usual residents who are absent on census night will also be investigated.

Housing and population enumeration will be conducted in the Islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega. As regards St Brandon Islands, only a count of persons spending the census night on the islands will be made, these islands being fishing stations with no resident population.

Human Resources

The field force will consist of about 7500 officers operating in a structure involving five levels of hierarchy as follows:

1. Chief Supervisor/Assistant Chief Supervisor
2. Senior Supervisor
3. Supervisor
4. Chief Enumerator
5. Enumerator

The Census team comprises a core team which will be supported by staff from the Statistical Support & Technical Services. Presently, the census core team is as follows:

Ms. Y. Cassimally, Deputy Director

Mr. D. Juleemun, Principal Statistician

Mr. S. Mungralee, Statistician

Ms. N. Gujadhur, Statistician (IT)

In a view to better monitor the undertaking of the 2010 Housing & Population Census, five working groups have been set up at the office. Staffs with experience in census undertakings together with officers in the management cadre of the CSO have been called upon to contribute towards the success of the 2010 round of the census. These working groups will be monitored by a Steering Committee that will be chaired by the Deputy Director of the Social Division.

Challenges ahead

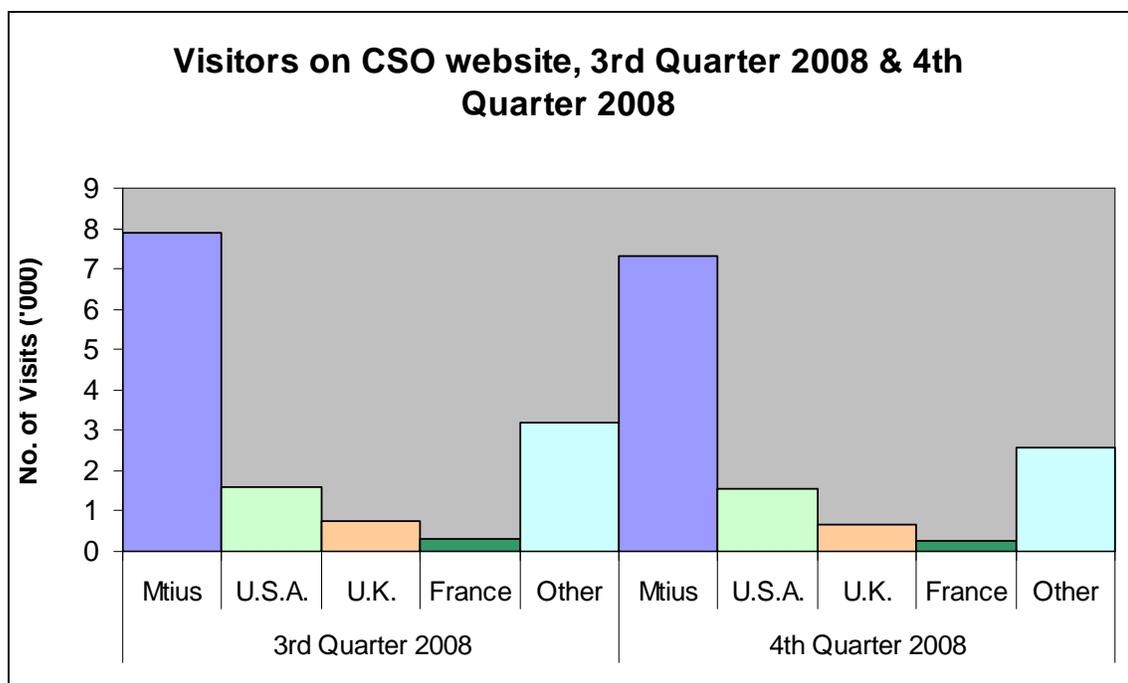
Among the major challenges facing the next round of the census are the use of scanning devices for data capture and the use of Geographical Information System (GIS) technology for certain analysis through thematic maps, etc. In this context, the IT Project Manager has been called upon to look at the IT requirements of these projects. Assistance from SADC member countries with experiences in these fields is also envisaged.

Visits on the CSO Website

The number of visits on the CSO website was 12,400 during the fourth quarter of 2008, representing a decline of 9.6 % from 13,724 in the third quarter of 2008.

Visitors	3 rd Quarter 2008		4 th Quarter 2008	
	No. of visits	%	No. of visits	%
Local	7,895	58	7,330	59
Foreign	5,829	42	5,070	41
Total	13,724	100	12,400	100

During the fourth quarter of 2008, visits from Mauritians accounted for around 59% of all visits. Foreign visitors who made up the remaining 41% came mostly from the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France.



For the 4th Quarter 2008, the Economic and Social Indicator (ESI) on *National Accounts* (September 2008 issue) which went online on 30th September 2008, was the most accessed ESI with 1,157 visits. Next came the ESI on *Population and Vital Statistics* (Year 2007 issue) which was uploaded on 4th March 2008, with 1,021 visits.

Important Indicators released during the Fourth Quarter of 2008

GDP Growth Rate

On the basis of latest available information, GDP growth rate for 2008 is now revised to 5.2%, lower than the forecast of 5.6% made in September 2008. This downward revision is mostly explained by lower growths in “Textile” and “Hotels and restaurants”.

Taking into consideration measures announced in the additional stimulus package by Government to mitigate the adverse effects of the international financial and economic crisis on our economy, GDP is expected to grow by around 4.0% in 2009, lower than the 5.2% growth in 2008.

Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index (CPI), which stood at 116.7 in September 2008, registered a decrease of 1.0% during the period October to December 2008 to reach 115.5 in December 2008.

The inflation rate for the calendar year 2008 works out to 9.7% while that for the year 2007 was 8.8%.

External Trade

Total export proceeds for the first nine months of 2008 were valued at Rs 48,477 million and imports reached Rs 97,238 million, resulting in a trade deficit of Rs 48,761 million. Exports showed a decrease of 2.4 % and imports an increase of 15.1% in the first nine months of 2008 when compared to the corresponding period of 2007.

Based on past trends, total exports for the year 2008 are expected to be of the order of Rs 70,000 million, against imports of Rs 130,000 million. The trade deficit would therefore be around Rs 60,000 million.

Unemployment

The unemployment rate for the third quarter of 2008 is estimated at 7.2% lower than the rate of 7.4% at the previous quarter of 2008 and 8.2% at the third quarter 2007.

Unemployment rate for the year 2008 is estimated at 7.8 % against 8.5% in 2007.

Tourist arrivals

Tourist arrivals for the first nine months of 2008 reached 674,164 which represents an increase of 4.6% over the figure of 644,821 registered in the corresponding period of 2007. Gross tourism receipts for the first nine months of 2008 were estimated by the Bank of Mauritius at Rs 30,801 million.

The forecast of tourist arrivals for the year 2008 has been revised downwards to 940,000 from 960,000. The forecasted figure of 940,000 in 2008 over the figure of 906,971 for 2007 represents an increase of 3.6 %.

Tourism receipts for the year 2008 will be around Rs 43,100 million (+5.9%) compared to Rs 40,687 million in 2007.

Producer Price Index- Manufacturing

The Producer Price Index stood at 173.7 in the third quarter of 2008 and when compared to the figure of 165.6 in the previous quarter, it showed an increase of 4.9 %. Compared to the corresponding quarter of 2007, the overall index for the third quarter of 2008 went up by 15.8%. This was largely due to increases in the sub-indices of “Manufacture of food products, beverages and tobacco” (+21.3%), “Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products” (+6.3%), “Manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products” (+24.2%), “Publishing, printing and reproduction of recorded media” (+5.7%), “Manufacture of basic metals” (+20.1%) and “Manufacture of fabricated metal products” (+13.0%).

Documentation Centre of the CSO – Current Awareness Service

The following publications have been acquired during the fourth quarter of 2008:

Local Publications

Reports

1. Ministry of Justice and Human Rights

Revised Laws of Mauritius. Volume 1 – 7

2. Ministry of Health & Quality of Life

Annual Health Statistics 2006. Island of Mauritius

3. Ministry of Finance and Economic Empowerment

Additional Stimulus Package: Shoring up Economic Performance, Dec 2008

Foreign Publications

Periodicals

1. United Nations Economic Commission For Africa, Ethiopia

African Statistical Newsletter, June 2008

2. INSEE, Paris

Economie et Statistique, No. 411, 412, 2008

3. International Statistical Institute, Netherlands

The Survey Statistician, July 2008

4. The Guttmacher Institute, New York

International Family Planning perspective, Sept 2008

5. International Labour Office, Geneva

World of Work, Aug 2008

Reports

1. World Health Organisation

Assessing the National Health Information system. An Assessment tool. Version 4.00

2. INSEE, Réunion

Tableau Economique de la Réunion, édition 2008/2009

3. Nations Unies

Guides Statistiques du budget – temps: mesure du travail rémunéré et non rémunéré

4. IMF, Statistics Division

Recent Developments and Current Initiatives, 2007

5. Interstate Statistical Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Moscow

Commonwealth of Independent States in 2006 Statistical Yearbook

Training/meetings attended by Staff during the Fourth Quarter of 2008

(i) Overseas

Name	Programme	Country	Period
Mr. C. Arianaick	International Seminar in the Informal Sector in Africa	Bamako, Mali	22 to 24 Oct
Ms. L. F. Cheung Kai Suet	First meeting of COMESA on statistical matters	Lusaka, Zambia	3 to 5 Nov
Mr. D. Venkatasawmy	UN Workshop on International Economic and Social Classifications	Ethiopia	3 to 6 Nov
Mr. D. Juleemun & Mr. S. Mungralee	Expert Group Meeting on Census Planning	South Africa	10 to 13 Nov
Ms. S. Nunhuck	Workshop on the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in SADC Region	Malawi	1 to 5 Dec
Ms. N. Guillaume	Workshop on Crime and Criminal Justice	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	9 to 12 Nov

(ii) Local

1. Training programme organized by Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms:-

Ms. K. D. Narayen followed 8 half-day sessions on First Aid Certificate Course during the period 8 September to 8 October 2008.

2. Seminar/Workshop

Name	Programme	Organising Institution	Period
Ms. L. F. Cheung Kai Suet	Presentation on Corporate Governance	Prime Minister's Office (PMO)	2 Oct
Mr. A. Sookun	Metadata Assimilation Workshop on Clearinghouse Initiatives	Meteorological Services	23 Oct
Ms. C. Rughoobur	Strengthening the national capacity in Mauritius to prepare & cost the HIV and AIDS Monitoring & Evaluation Plan	National Aids Secretariat, PMO	30-31 Oct
Ms. S. Nunhuck	One day Working Session to validate Sexual & Reproductive Health Strategy and Plan of Action	Ministry of Health in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	5 Nov
Mr. A. Sookun	Towards a Common Vision of Sustainable Development	Ministry of Environment & National Development Unit	14 Nov
Ms. N. Gujadhur	Computer Security Day	National Computer Board	1-2 Dec
Ms. C. Rughoobur	Steering Committee of the Joint Project MRC & EWF on 'The Research of Wellbeing of Employees'	Employees Welfare Fund (EWF)	11 Dec
Ms. F. Koussa & Mr. P. Seenauth	Livestock Information Management System (LIMS) Adoption Mission	Ministry of Agro- Industry, Food Production & Security	14 Dec
Ms. R. Moraby	Global Capital Markets	Global Board of Trade (GBOT)	15-16 Dec

(iii) In-House Training

The following officers attended on 15 December 2008 a 3-hour training course on "PMS Presentation" conducted by Ms. Nasim Auchoybur, Senior Human Resource Officer, Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Land Transport and Shipping:

Mr. H. Bissessur	Ms. A. Pyeneandee-Pakeeroo	Ms. R. Moheeputh
Ms. R.D. Pemsing	Ms. S. Seebaruth- Ramjug	Mr. R. Lutchmadoo
Ms. B.S. Boolaky	Ms. D. Jogee	Ms. H. D. Maywah
Mr. D. Pillay Sanassy	Ms. B. F. Lowtun	Ms. V. Kissoon

(iv) Course under the “SADC Training Pack”

25 officers attended 10 half-day course on “Economic Concepts and Principles for Statistician” (Module H4) during the period 3 November to 5 December 2008 conducted by the University of Mauritius. They were:

Ms. L.F. Cheung Kai Suet

Mr. D. Juleemun

Ms. G. Appadu

Mr. L. K. Y. Wong

Mr. C. Arianaick

Ms. N. Gujadhur

Ms. D. Balgobin

Mr. A. Sookun

Mr. L. Y. C. Lan Pin Wing

Ms. S. Samy

Ms. S. Geemul

Mr. L. K. Dindoyal

Ms. S. F. Cheung Tung Shing

Ms. S. Maudarbocus

Ms. H. D. Ramlukon

Ms. F. Mohamud

Ms. P. Koonjul

Ms. J. Rambojun

Ms. N. Meenowa

Ms. A. Owadally

Ms. D. Ramphul

Ms. S. Bookal

Ms. R. Rujbally

Ms. H. Maywah

Mr. E. Romjon

Save energy!

...and reduce that electricity bill along the way!

(by Ali Hoolash)

It's all over the place these days! You can read it on billboards, newspapers and magazines: Save energy! Articles on saving energy are selling like hot cakes (at least you can brag that you didn't pay for this one!). Our planet earth is at stake and we are told that each one of us need to take measures at different levels of our daily activities to save energy. Now you must surely be asking yourself what this has to do with Information Technology! It has a lot to do and I will show you how to make your PC greener! Until a solar powered PC comes along, there are ways you can tweak your current PC so that it becomes one of your best energy saving friends.

According to tests conducted by independent reviewers, a PC with a 400 watt power supply consumes an average of 9.6 kilowatts-hours per day. So, if you are a heavy user of your computer at home, it surely accounts for a good chunk of your electricity bill. Why pay more when you can reduce that electricity bill?

Desktop computers comprise 2 main units, both of which are eager consumers of electrical power. These are the system unit which houses the power supply, the CPU and disk drives and the second is the monitor. Cathode Ray Tube (CRT) monitors consume more electricity than Liquid Crystal Displays (LCD). Many users leave their PCs on when they are not using them and this is quite understandable given the annoyance with respect to the time PCs take to start up! Most monitors tend to switch off after a long period of inactivity and this leads users to believe that they are saving power which is far

from the truth as your PC is continuing to run at full power although nothing is being displayed on your monitor.

Many users are unaware that their PCs include an effective power management system. The power management features help you to control the display, hard disk and shut down options. So, here are the ways to cut down your electricity bill and make the most of the energy saving schemes already built-in in your PC:

- (1) The *Standby Mode*: You can take your PC into a Sleep Mode, known in Windows XP as the Standby Mode. This cuts power and shuts down the hard disk and other peripheral devices although power is continued to be supplied to your PC's memory. This helps to bring the PC back to its running state in a matter of seconds when the user wants to start working again. A simple click on any keyboard keys or by just moving the mouse will do the trick.
- (2) The *Hibernate Mode*: This mode will save even more power than the Standby mode. Here, your PC saves all the information from the memory to the hard disk and then goes into hibernation. When you restart your PC, the memory is quickly reloaded and you get back to where you left off. In this mode, your PC takes a longer time to reload as data has to be written back to and read from the hard disk. But remember that this mode is one of the most efficient means of saving power. Windows XP is not configured by default to use the Standby Mode or the Hibernate Mode. So, you will need to dip your hands into the Control Panel to make it active.

Simply follow these steps:

Step 1: Click on the START button and then Click on Control Panel (Figure 1)

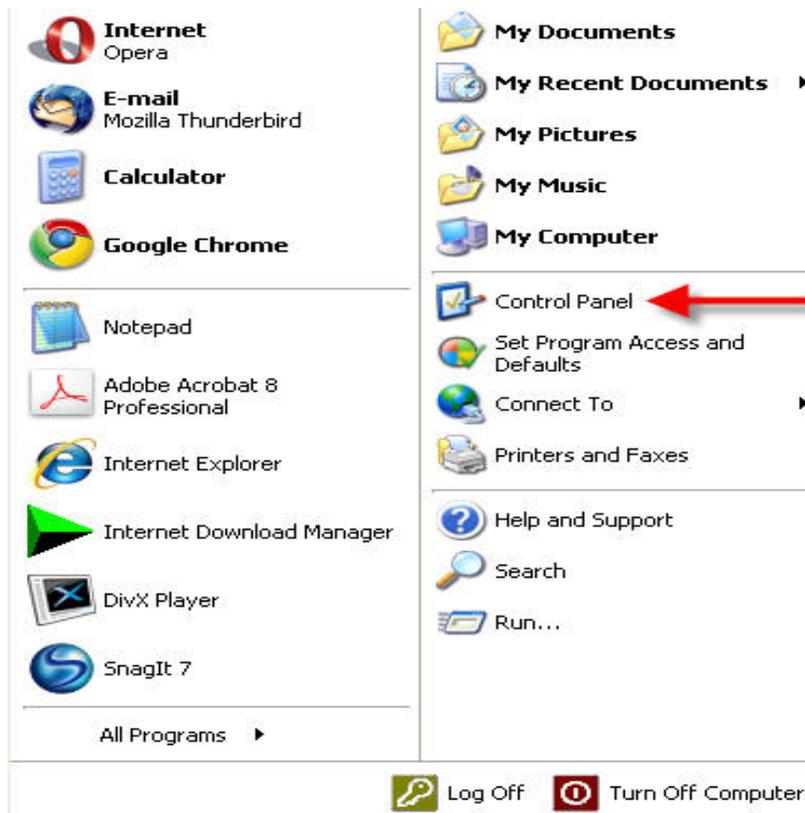


Figure 1

Step 2: In the Control Panel Window, Click on “Power Options” (Figure 2)

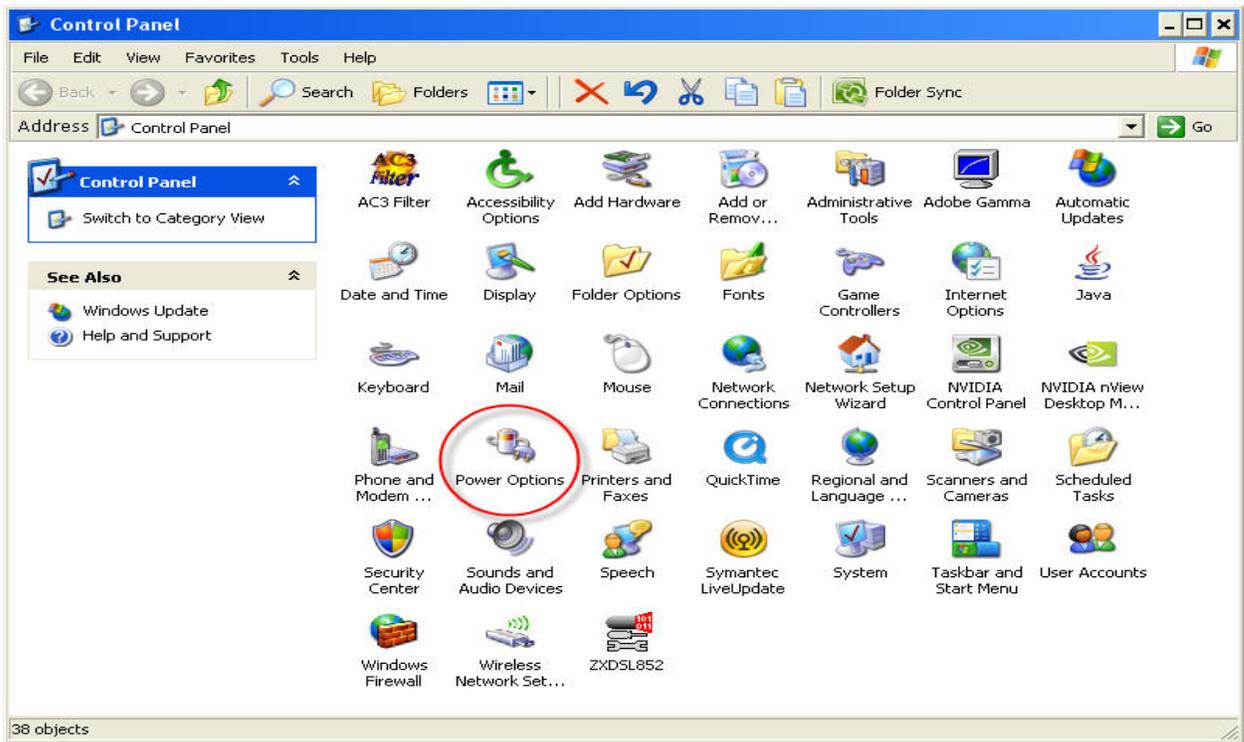


Figure 2

Step 3: The “Power Options” Window is now displayed (Figure 3). The fine tuning starts here!



Figure 3

Now, Click on the “System standby” drop down list to choose the number of minutes of inactivity before the PC goes into Standby Mode.

If you prefer to use the Hibernate Mode, Click on the Hibernate Tab (as shown in Figure 3 above) and check the “Enable Hibernate” checkbox (Figure 4).

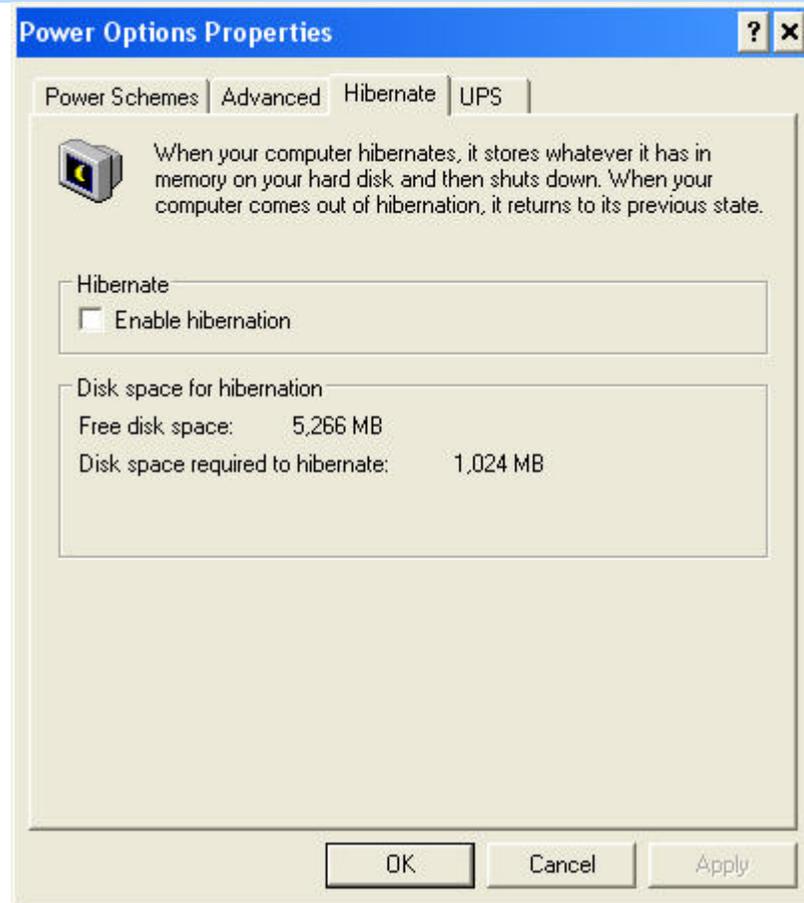


Figure 4

A closer look at the “Power Options” Window (see Figure 3) will also reveal that you can choose to turn off your monitor and/or your hard disk/s even if you opt not to use the Standby Mode or Hibernate Mode. These are less powerful power cutters when solely used but are useful nonetheless.

If you are using a notebook, the “Power Options” Window will give you a few more options for power management. You might see an option that will allow you to adjust the brightness of the screen. Modern notebooks also have an “eco” button in that "Power Options" Window that will slow down the processor if your notebook is running a less demanding application.

By following the above tips, you will be saving power and money. And you will be doing the planet a favour too! Is that not enough reason to go into power saving modes? You bet!

Occupational Safety and Health

The relevant provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Act 2005 in relation to prevention of fire and precautionary measures to be taken in case of fire are:

1. *Prevention of Fire*

- (i) In every building there shall be provided and maintained so as to be readily accessible, means of extinguishing fire, which shall be adequate and suitable having regard to the circumstances of the premises and the process, as required by the Fire Services.
- (ii) In every place of work, a sufficient number of employees shall be trained in the proper use of the means of extinguishing fire specified in subsection (i).

2. *Safety provisions in case of Fire*

- (i) Every building shall be provided with such means of escape in case of fire for the employees as may reasonably be required by the Fire Services in the circumstances of each case.
- (ii) All means of escape as aforesaid shall be properly maintained and kept free from obstruction.
- (iii) In every building the employer shall take effective steps to ensure that all employees are familiar with the means of escape and with the procedures to be followed in case of fire.
- (iv) The contents of any room shall be so arranged or disposed that there is a free passageway for all persons in that room to a means of escape in case of fire.
- (v) Every window, door or other exit affording means of escape in case of fire or giving access thereto, other than the means of exit in ordinary use, shall be distinctively and conspicuously marked by a white pictogram of minimum size 100 mm high on a board with green background.
- (vi) In every building in which more than 60 persons are expected to be present at any time or in which highly flammable materials are stored, handled or used, there shall be provided and maintained, as may be deemed reasonable by the Fire Services, effective devices for giving warning in case of fire, which shall be clearly audible or visible throughout the building and capable of being operated without exposing any person to undue risk.
- (vii) Any device specified in paragraph (vi) shall be tested by a competent person at least once a month to ensure their continued operation, and a record of such test shall be kept by the owner of the building.
- (viii) An emergency lighting system shall be provided in every escape route where the Fire Services so require.

The Fire Services has been approached for inspection of the CSO for the issue of a fire certificate, training of a few officers in the use of fire extinguishers and to carry out a fire drill at the office.

Reports on Errors and Omissions, PRB Report 2008

Following the recommendations of the 2008 report of the Pay Research Bureau (PRB), the association has submitted its proposals relating to errors and omissions. Main extracts of the report are reproduced below:

1. Grade of Statistician

We are glad to note that the PRB has at last recognized that the grade of Statistician should be considered as a professional grade. Unfortunately the recommendation of a grant of only one increment upon appointment in the grade to holders of the Graduate Diploma in Statistics of the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) only, is just a step in the right direction.

The union has always insisted on the fact that the grade of Statistician is normally a promotional grade unlike other grades like Economist, Education Officer, Scientific Officer, etc., which are all entry grades. The PRB itself emphasizes on the need to compensate for experience acquired which is relevant to the job. This element should be reflected in the salary scale.

We are thus requesting that the grade of Statistician be fully reinstated and that the salary scale be as follows: Rs 22000-40000. Also this scale should apply both to holders of a degree with statistics as the main subject and for holders of the Graduate Diploma in Statistics of the RSS. This will avoid the creation of two categories of Statistician performing similar jobs.

2. Grade of Statistical Officer (SO)

PRB has recommended that Statistical Officers would be confirmed in their appointment only if they possess the Ordinary Certificate of the RSS and not just the exemption therefrom. This is a vivid example of anomaly as the RSS has changed its regulations regarding exemptions which are granted normally to enable prospective candidates to enter examination at the next higher level. As from 2008 candidates possessing the appropriate Higher School Certificate qualifications can now enter directly for the Higher Certificate in Statistics examination of the RSS.

We suggest that an appropriate training programme be implemented which would enable Statistical Officers to be more efficient. It is proposed that the salary scale of the grade be extended to the point of Rs 25,600.

3. Grade of Principal Statistical Officer (PSO)

The association has welcomed the creation of the grade of PSO. The qualification requirement for the post is by selection from officers in the grade of Senior Statistical Officer (SSO) having served at least two years in the grade.

The union is proposing that appointment in the grade of PSO be made by promotion of SSO and the salary scale for SSO and PSO be extended to the point of Rs 31,250 and Rs 35,000 respectively.

4. Other issues

(i) Grade of Analyst, M/Finance and Economic Empowerment

The union proposes that the competition for appointment in the grade of Analyst, (M/Finance) be open to holders of a Degree in Statistics or the Graduate Diploma in Statistics also.

(ii) Increments on promotion

At para. 18.8, the PRB considers that the grant of three increments on promotion is not only fair but is in line with international practice. It also mentions that in certain instances where appointment is made from the same source grade to a promotional grade but via two different routes—one directly and the other indirectly, supersession salary-wise may occur. However, its recommendation at para. 18.8.9 (iii) to the effect that a junior officer should be granted a maximum of three increments such that his/her salary does not exceed the salary of the senior officer who has been promoted directly to the grade before him/her is most unfair. With this recommendation an officer may be promoted to a higher grade without earning any increment. As an example, a Senior Statistical Officer drawing a salary of say Rs 24, 000 before being promoted to the grade of Statistician may earn no salary increase if another officer who was senior to him in the source grade of Statistical Officer and was appointed directly in the grade of Statistician and is drawing less than Rs 24, 000. The Union thus proposes that the minimum of three increments be granted to an officer being promoted and to adjust, if need be, the salary of the senior officer who has been promoted in the same grade earlier.

CSO Staff Welfare Association

End of year party

The CSO Staff Welfare Association organized its end of year party on Monday 22 December 2008 at Le Coco Beach Hotel, Belle Mare. The programme included an open buffet lunch and disco.

In his end of year speech, the Director thanked all staff for their collaboration in meeting the objectives of the CSO. He extended his best wishes to the staff and their family for the year 2009.



The Director delivering his end of year speech