



# Annual Report 2019/20

## STATISTICS MAURITIUS

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### 1. Vision and Mission

#### **Vision**

To be a key provider of world-class statistical information.

#### **Mission**

To provide coherent, timely, relevant and reliable statistics, consistent with international principles and standards, for effective policy and decision-making and for monitoring national development processes.

### 2. Statement from the Director of Statistics

2019/2020 has been the year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the year of all challenges. During the early months of 2020, the pandemic severely transformed the socio-economic environment worldwide within a short lapse of time, and brought unprecedented challenges with enduring effects on both the lives of people and the functioning of the economy. In an effort to contain the spread of the pandemic, government imposed restrictions on the mobility of the population, disrupting field data collection operations and causing delays in our dissemination programme.

Most of our administrative data were not available during the lockdown, while our surveys had to be halted, redesigned or postponed. The 2020 Survey of Visitors which targeted tourists, was stopped. The Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey (CMPHS) shifted from face-to-face to phone interviews, thanks to the World Bank. Alternative modes of price collection were used for the Consumer Price Index. Prices were collected online, by telephone, and through personal shopping experience of staff. Accordingly, we reviewed our computation methods, which warranted more imputations due to fewer data both in time and space, based on international guidelines. The 19th Housing and Population Census due for 2021 has to be postponed to 2022 due to delays in the preparatory work.

At the same time, the pandemic has triggered the urgent need to rethink our business operations. Going forward, our National Strategy for the Development of Official Statistics (NSOS) 2020-2025, which has identified four objectives and related strategic orientations, is being adjusted to reflect the need to invest heavily in digitalisation, explore innovative data solutions and analytics, and secure more inter-agency collaboration and partnership. The

objective is to modernise the national statistical system, supported by an agile, resilient and responsive statistical business model and data infrastructure.

We have already secured assistance under the UNDP Mauritius COVID – Prevention, Response and Early recovery Project (PREP) for the preparation of a contemporary e-business plan to digitalise and modernise our operations, promote business continuity, and provide remote and secure teleworking arrangements for the longer term. We will maintain the use of Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) technology for our continuous household surveys, which started during the lockdown with the help of the World Bank, and explore new data solutions such as the use of Scanner data for computing our consumer price indices. We are also in touch with the UNECA and the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (GPSDD) regarding the regional initiatives on data in Africa.

The past year has also been rich in capacity building and collaboration. The office benefited from the World Bank Trust Fund for Capacity Building to improve the quality and extend the scope of statistics it produced. Thus, staff received training on Poverty Mapping, Survey Solutions, Survey-To-Survey Imputation, Microdata Cataloguing, Data Analysis and Dissemination and Data Anonymization. SM also received technical assistance to improve the design of the CMPHS, our main data source for quarterly labour statistics.

SM entered a Memorandum of Understanding with the US Census Bureau to build capacity in developing Computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) applications, data processing, tabulation and dissemination for the 2022 Housing and Population Census. The partnership focuses on transferring skills through a series of technical assistance missions, as well coaching and mentoring professional staff working on the census project.

Under training agreements signed between SM and the University of Mauritius, some 40 Statistical Officers, including 1 from Rodrigues Regional Assembly, completed a 2-semester course in advanced statistics, and 40 additional staff received training in R language.

Attention was also given to collaboration between SM and the Statistics Unit of Rodrigues Regional Assembly with a view to empower staff and upgrade its statistical system. At the end of my visit to Rodrigues in 2019, our two institutions agreed to have a Memorandum of Understanding defining areas of collaboration and assistance, with focus on capacity building.

On a different note, the membership of the Statistics Board was reviewed in February 2020, with Mr. Gilbert Gnany as the new Chair in replacement of Mr Patrick Yip. Mr Gnany has a wide experience in the field of statistics, economics and financial matters. SM is thankful to Mr P. Yip for his commitment and advice throughout his tenure.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all staff of SM for their hard work, commitment, and invaluable support throughout the year.

### **3. Roles and Functions of Statistics Mauritius**

Statistics Mauritius operates under the Statistics Act of 2000. We produce official statistics relating to all aspects of the country's economic, demographic and social activities except health statistics which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry responsible for Health, and monetary and financial, banking and balance of payment statistics for which the Bank of Mauritius is responsible.

We collect, compile and analyse data which are collected through censuses and surveys, and from administrative sources. For more efficiency and to reduce response burden, we make maximum use of data collected for administrative purposes and collect data only where there is a need to do so.

Our statistics are compiled according to the latest international standards. We make use of international classifications to enable comparability at the international level.

By virtue of the Statistics Act, SM is mandated to co-ordinate statistical activities of all producers of official statistics including public sector agencies to ensure standards and to minimize overlap and duplication in production of official statistics in the country. It collaborates with Ministries and Departments of Government in the collection, compilation, analysis, publication and dissemination of statistical information. As working arrangement, staff of the statistical cadre are posted in line ministries, while several Memoranda of Understanding have been signed with some data producing agencies to set out the framework for cooperation, with a view to facilitating data sharing and coordination.

We conduct regular consultations with main data users to assess their needs in order to produce statistics of relevance and provide Government with statistics relevant for policy formulation and development planning.

## 4. About Our People

The office is headed by the Director of Statistics who is assisted by the three Deputy Directors, each in charge of a division, namely:

- Social and Labour Statistics;
- National Accounts and Prices; and
- Statistical Support, Informatics and Dissemination

As at June 2020, staff of SM comprised 223 officers as follows:

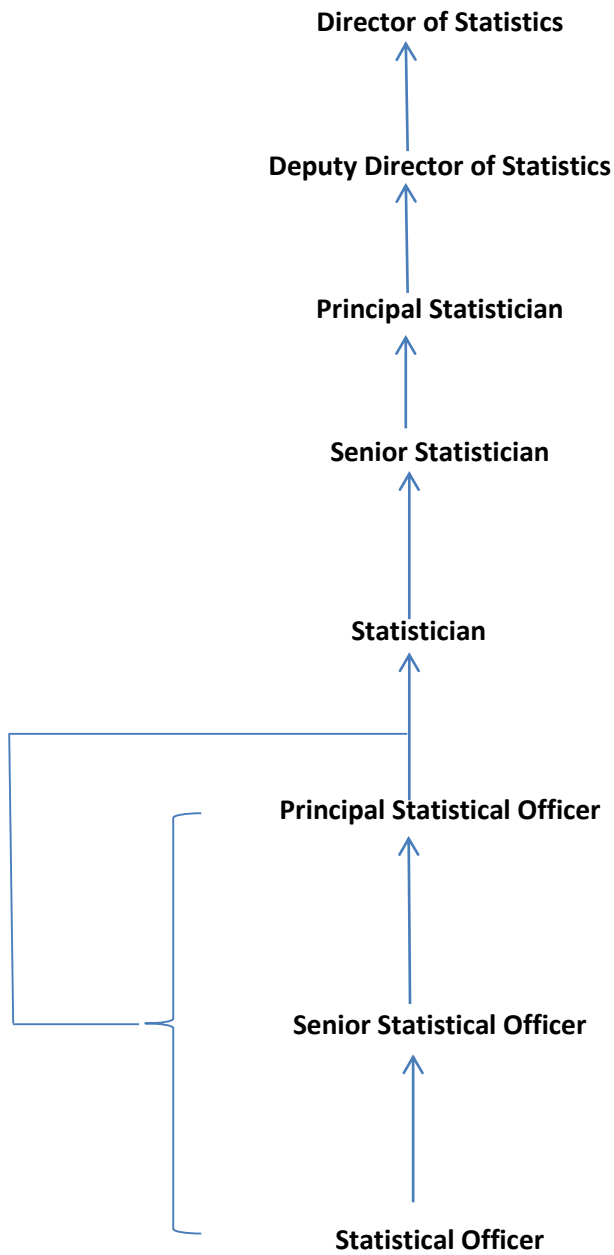
Technical staff	159
<i>of whom</i>	
<i>Statistician Cadre</i>	45
<i>Statistical Officer Cadre</i>	114
General Services staff	49
Census and Survey Assistant	14
Service to Mauritius Intern	1

SM staff comprises more women than men:

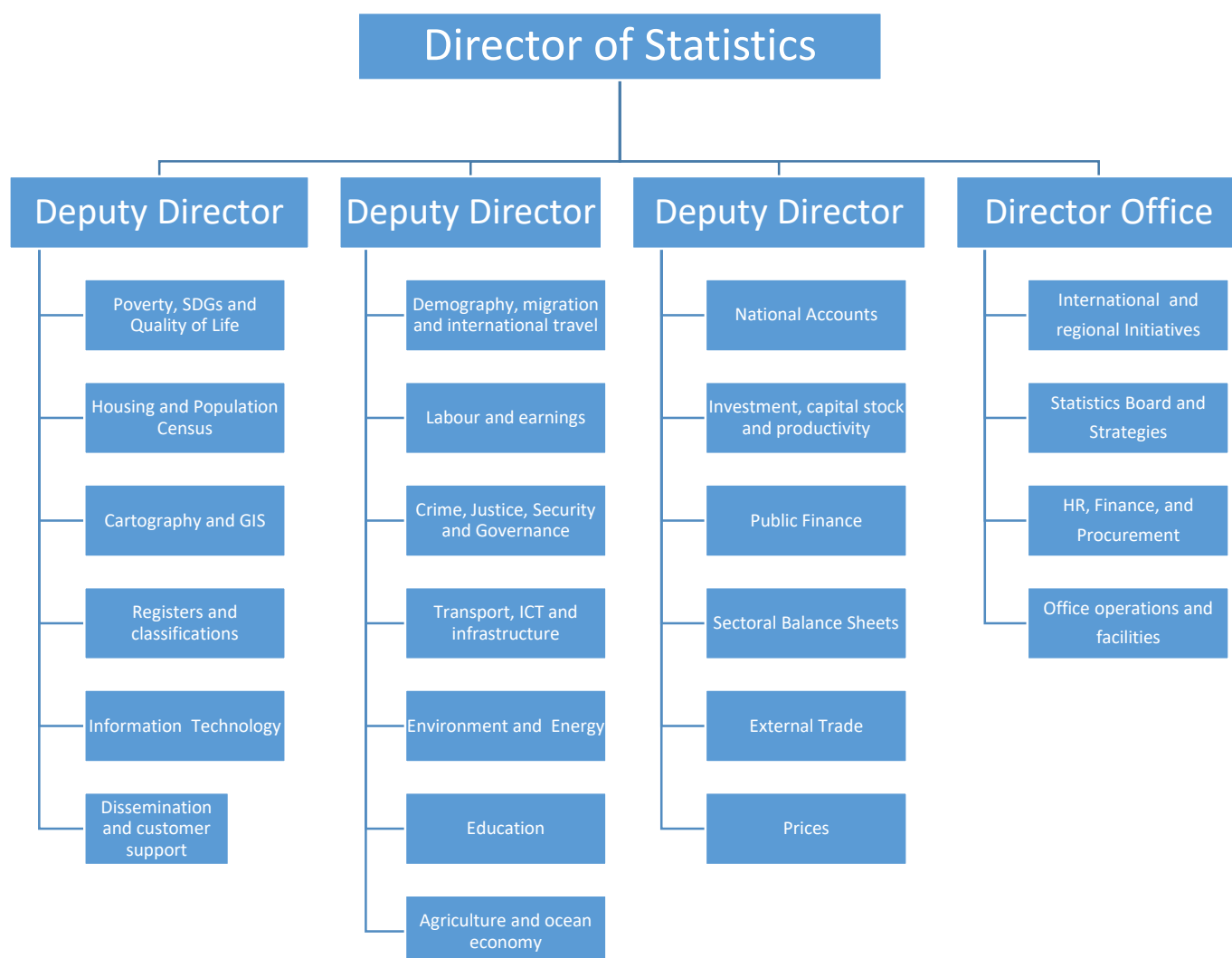
	Male	Female	Total
Number of staff	77	146	223
<i>Of whom</i>			
<i>Senior management</i>	3	5	8

The hierarchical structure of the technical grades and the organization chart are below.

### **Hierarchical Structure**



## Organisational Chart



SM also outposts its staff in various Ministries to assist on statistical matters.

Regular training attended by SM staff both locally or abroad, as follows:

University of Mauritius	83
Civil Service College and other local	90
Regional and International organisations: (including meetings and conferences)	72
World Bank Trust Fund for capacity building	32

SM has in place a staff rotation policy, that aims at providing staff with opportunities to work in different areas so as to expand their work knowledge and skills as well as to broaden their understanding of the organization. The policy also works towards overcoming potential job boredom, and creates back-up for long leaves and retirements.



The Occupational Health and Safety Committee is held every two months, in accordance with the regulations in force, to resolve issues related to health and safety of our officers.

## **PART II –ACHIEVEMENTS & CHALLENGES**

### **6. Major Achievements**

6.1 The main achievements are given below:

- 100% of Social and Economic data planned for FY19/20 published (with delays in some 10% due to the COVID-19 related lockdown)
- Poverty report based on 2017 Household Budget Survey published in April 2020
- Main results of the 2018 Census of Economic Activities - Phase I released in August 2019
- Results of 2018/19 Living Conditions Survey released in November 2019
- Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) introduced for CMPHS
- Capacity building strengthened, in particular through the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building, training agreements signed with University of Mauritius, and MOU with US Census Bureau for CAPI census in January 2020
- Increased collaboration between Statistics Mauritius and the Statistics Unit of the Rodrigues Regional Assembly to further develop the statistical system in Rodrigues

## 7. Status on Implementation of Key Actions

The status of implementation of key actions is given in the table below:

Key Action	Key Performance Indicator	Target	Achievement 2019/20
Social and economic data are available to support policy decision making	% of Social and Economic data and monthly are published as per release calendar	100%	Nearly 100% released, but with delays in some 10% due to national lockdown.
Conduct Household Budget Survey	Prevalence of undernourishment for 2017 available	Prevalence of undernourishment for 2017 available in December 2019	Poverty report based on HBS 2017 results published in April 2020
Conduct Census of Economic Activities			
Phase 1 - Small establishments	Data collection successfully completed and results released on a timely basis	Main results published in August 2019 and Detailed report published in December 2019	Main results published in August 2019.
Phase 2 - Large establishments	Online survey launched and completed in 2019	Report published in June 2020	Data collection completed in March 2020.
Conduct Living Condition and Time Use Survey	Survey completed in 2019 and results released on a timely basis	Main survey results published in December 2019	Main results disseminated at a workshop in November 2019
Conduct of Housing and Population Census in 2021	Housing and Population Census completed	Preparatory work started	Census postponed to 2022. Preparatory work ongoing.

## 8. Risk Management, Citizen Oriented Initiatives & Good Governance

We continually work towards improving the quality of our statistics to better satisfy users' needs.

Some of the main actions include:

- We interact with our main stakeholders to gather their views so as to produce statistics that are relevant.
- We have an advance release calendar posted on our website and release our statistics accordingly on our website so that all users have free access simultaneously. We send email alerts to our main stakeholders whenever there is a new release.
- To ensure transparency, our methodologies are published together with the statistical releases. Advance notice is given to our users whenever there are major changes in methodology, including data sources and statistical techniques.
- We produce our statistics according to professional standards and publish them in ways which explain and inform without advocating a particular position.
- We have an agreement with respondents; they are encouraged to provide accurate information while we ensure that the data provided are strictly protected. Our staff is required by law to give an undertaking of secrecy while we make sure that in publishing the statistics, identifiable information is not released. We also take necessary measures to ensure the security of the statistical information collected.

To improve accountability, we regularly receive the visits of the Internal Control Unit of the Ministry of Finance, Economic Planning and Development as well as the National Audit Office. Remedial actions are promptly taken whenever shortcomings are brought to the attention of management.

## PART III – FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

### 9. Financial Highlights

#### Statement of Revenue

Rs

Revenue (Rs million)	2018-2019 Actual	2019-2020 Estimates	2019-2020 Actual
Property Income			
Sales of Goods and Services	774,104		896,213
Fines, Penalties and Forfeits			
Miscellaneous Revenues			
<b>Total Revenue from Property Income, User Fees and other Sources</b>	<b>774,104</b>		<b>896,213</b>

#### Statement of Expenditure

Rs 000

Head/Sub-Head of Expenditure (Rs million)	2018-2019 Actual	2019-2020 Estimates	2019-2020 Actual
Compensation of Employees	102,337	116,973	103,424
Goods and Services	62,444	70,980	55,753
Subsidies	-	-	-
Grants	27	47	31
Social Benefits	-	-	-
Other Expenses	-	-	-
Acquisition of Non-Financial Assets	772	1,000	0
Acquisition of Financial Assets	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>165,580</b>	<b>189,000</b>	<b>159,208</b>

***Major changes from 2018-19 to 2019-20***

The actual budget for 'Goods and Services' decreased during the year 2019/20.

***Major variances from budget estimates for 2019-20***

The major variance for 'Compensation of Employees' is due to unfilled funded vacancies at the close of the financial year.

The major variance for 'Goods and Services' is due to less field work during the COVID-19 related lockdown.

## PART IV –STRATEGIC DIRECTION

- a. Finalise the new national strategy for official statistics aiming at an agile, resilient and responsive statistical business model based on innovative data solutions and analytics, and infrastructure.
- b. Develop an e-statistics strategy to digitalise and modernise our business operations, promote business continuity, and provide remote and secure teleworking arrangements for the longer term.
- c. Develop a national data quality assessment framework for official statistics
- d. Extend the scope of statistics to become more relevant to users
- e. Improve data dissemination, accessibility and use
- f. Undertake a CAPI Housing and Population Census in 2022
- g. Work towards meeting the requirements of the highest tier of the IMF data dissemination initiative capacity (Special Data Dissemination Standard - SDDS Plus)