

## **AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY WORKSHOP 2022**

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY AG. DIRECTOR OF STATISTICS,**

**MR MUKESH DAWOONAUTH**

**18 NOVEMBER 2022,**

**The Ravenala Attitude Hotel, BalACLava**

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Mr Charles Cartier, Chairperson of the Statistics Board

Mr Shri Swami Goolaub, Acting Chief Executive Officer of FAREI

Ms Priscilla Li Ying, UNFPA Head of Office for Mauritius and Seychelles

Members of Statistics Board

Representatives of International Organisations

Members of Press

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to all of you. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this workshop on the occasion of the 2022 African Statistics Day.

The 18<sup>th</sup> of November remains a significant date for the statistical community of Africa as each year, it serves as a reminder to not only reflect upon but also, to reassess the many avenues of how statistics can better assist in improving our lives as citizens, consumers, businesses, policymakers, amongst others.

This year, the African Statistics Day is marked under a theme which could not have been more relevant, particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, and climate change: *“Strengthening data systems by modernising the production and use of agricultural statistics: informing*

*policies with a view to improving resilience in agriculture, nutrition and food security in Africa”.*

Ladies and gentlemen,

The current global state of affairs is underscored by unpredictability. We therefore must face two harsh realities: firstly, that uncertain events have a pungent effect on the vulnerability of the agricultural sector and secondly, the domino effect of this vulnerability on food security.

Though Mauritius has moved from a mono-crop to a diversified economy supported by other key sectors, the agricultural sector is still regarded as strategic to the socio-economic growth as it contributes up to 3.7% of the GDP. GVA growth rate of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing for the second quarter of 2022 over the corresponding quarter of 2021 is estimated at 7.4%. These statistics are evidence that the agricultural sector is not to be underestimated. Rather, it should be nurtured to become more resilient in the face of unpredictability. Its planning, management, and monitoring should be based on sound evidence, hence the need to strengthen data and information systems for the agricultural sector.

At Statistics Mauritius, the need for better agricultural statistics has been understood. Our Agriculture and Fisheries Unit works closely with the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security and the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture, among other key stakeholders in a bid to continually evaluate their needs in terms of statistics and thereby, to deliver quality agricultural statistics. In this regard, the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security will conduct a presentation on the importance of agricultural statistics in the course of this workshop.

I hereby seize this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security, the Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture and the Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute for their valuable and constant collaboration.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This workshop is a momentous event for Statistics Mauritius since we are marking this day to also disseminate the preliminary results of the 19<sup>th</sup> decennial Housing and Population Census of Mauritius.

Though we have a long history of Census taking in the country, every Census has its load of challenges. This 19<sup>th</sup> round of the Housing and Population Census was no exception, particularly when set against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, Statistics Mauritius was able to rise up to the challenge by innovating and adapting to volatile circumstances.

For the first time, Statistics Mauritius has adopted digital technology, in the form of Computer Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) technology for the data collection exercise of the Housing and Population Census.

In this regard, we benefitted from Technical Assistance from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the design, development, testing and piloting of the CAPI application for the Census. Concurrently, the Government of the Republic of Kenya, through the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, loaned our Office some 8000 tablets and accessories for our fieldworkers to gather information without any technical hindrance.

Needless to say, the novel use of such technology for a crucial statistical exercise which is more so conducted on a national scale, involves thorough preparation in terms of logistics.

The 2022 Housing and Population Census thus comprised the recruitment, training, and supervision of a temporary workforce of some 7,500 people over a limited period of time.

It further included logistics associated with the design and printing of maps, the distribution and control of all Census documents on the field, as well as the development and testing of the digital systems that support Census data capture through a scanning and recognition technology.

All these efforts were put in to achieve the objectives of the Census which are to measure the number and key characteristics of people in the Republic of Mauritius and their housing conditions. I am happy to say that we have achieved the objectives of the Census which is, as you are all aware, the biggest statistical exercise that a country can do. I hereby seize this opportunity to thank my parent Ministry and, in particular, all my staff of the census team for making this happen. It was indeed a big challenge and with the help of everyone, we have been able to reach this milestone. Today we are going to share the main results of the 2022 Housing and Population Census with you all.

I will request your active participation, as this workshop provides an opportunity for you, as our users, to give your views as to whether our products – be it on Agriculture, Census or any other - are relevant to your

needs, and to what extent they should be shaped to suit your requirements.

Your feedback will only help us to improve our services, which in turn will help you in your field of work and in making the right decisions.

On this note, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.

**Statistics Mauritius**

**18 November 2022**