

AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY WORKSHOP 2023

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY AG. DIRECTOR OF STATISTICS,
MR MUKESH DAWOONAUTH
20 NOVEMBER 2023,
The Ravenala Attitude Hotel, Balaclava**

*Dr the Honourable Renganaden Padayachy, Minister of Finance,
Economic Planning and Development*

*Honourable Maneesh Gobin, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Regional Integration & International Trade*

Mr Charles Cartier, Chairperson of the Statistics Board

Members of Statistics Board

Representatives of International Organisations

Members of Press

Distinguished guests

All protocols observed

Ladies and gentlemen,

A very good morning to all of you. It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this workshop on the occasion of the 2023 African Statistics Day.

In order to intensify advocacy and the development of statistics in Africa, African Statistics Day was adopted in May 1990 at the UNECA Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic Planning and Development. It is an annual celebration commemorated on 18 November to raise awareness of the important role statistics play in all aspects of social and economic life.

Each year, the celebration revolves around raising awareness amongst decision-makers, development partners, data producers and users, academia, researchers, and the public on the importance of statistics on a specific theme.

The African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in close collaboration with Member States, coordinated the process leading to the selection of the theme for 2023.

This year's ASD theme is: ***“Modernizing data ecosystems to accelerate the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): the role of official statistics and big data in the economic transformation and sustainable development of Africa”***. The theme for ASD is in alignment with the African Union theme of 2023 *“acceleration of implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)”*

The agreement to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) was coordinated by the African Union (AU), signed by its

member States in Kigali, Rwanda, on 21st March 2018, ratified in 2019 and officially launched in 2021.

The AfCFTA agreement aims to create the largest free trade area in the world measured by the number of countries participating connecting 1.3 billion people across the 55 member countries of Africa with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) valued at US\$ 3.4 Trillion. It has the potential to lift 30 million people out of extreme poverty, but achieving its full potential will depend on putting in place significant policy reforms and trade facilitation measures.

The continued interest in international trade is due to its crucial role in economic development because such trade binds producers and consumers located in different countries into a global economic system.

In this context, by modernising our data eco system for the production of timely and high-quality statistics will help to monitor and accelerate the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

It is worth pointing out that in 2020, the Statistical Commission for Africa created an African group on the transformation and modernization of official statistics to provide strategic guidance and coordinate the work on the transformation and modernization of the national statistical systems in Africa.

This year's theme also calls for modernising data ecosystems in the

continent for production and utilisation of high-quality official statistics and seize the opportunities of big data.

In line with technological development SM 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 2022. Besides the Continuous Multipurpose Household Survey, the office is also undertaking the Household Budget Survey 2023 using CAPI.

Next year we are planning to conduct the Living conditions Survey and the Census of Agriculture using again CAPI.

In an era of declining responses to national household and business surveys statistical offices are encouraged to make use of big data. Big data have the potential to produce more relevant and timely statistics than traditional sources of official statistics, such as survey and administrative data sources.

However, most sources of big data reside in the private sector, and legislation designed to permit the use of big data for official statistical purposes has not yet been promulgated in most countries. Therefore, further broad-based dialogue is needed to consider not only legal, confidentiality and perception issues, but also the subject of the timely, trustworthy and credible use of big data.

It is worth pointing out that SM is considering the use of scanner data from retail outlets for the compilation of the Consumer Price Index. SM

expressed its interest to UNECA and Statistics Finland proposed technical support for a period of 10 months upon receipt of a sample of scanner data. The cooperation of the private sector will be sought on this matter.

Digitalisation and new technologies have permitted new business models for delivering services across borders and over larger distances. Mauritius is a net exporter of services with tourism accounting for the major part. Going further, Trade in services Statistics remains a crucial element to better inform policies and enable the business community to engage in those activities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last but not least

The goods and services we buy are composed of inputs from various countries around the world. However, the flows of goods and services within these global production chains are not always reflected in conventional measures of international trade. The development of measures of Trade in Value-Added (TiVA) addresses this issue by considering the value added by each country in the production of goods and services that are consumed worldwide.

The use of TiVA analysis is essential in the current globalized world to understand and analyze the complexities of international trade and its impact on economies. For Africa, by providing an assessment of the country's contribution to production and value chain participation,

TiVA will contribute to policy action that supports value creation, decent employment, and sustainable economic growth in pursuit of AfCFTA, SDGs, and national policy goals.

Statistics Mauritius is participating in the UNECAs initiative for the compilation of TiVA. Also, SM staff are participating in various trainings and workshops organised by international organisations to build capacity in TiVA compilation and analysis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

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.

In our endeavour to improve our services we welcome your feedback 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.