

**CELEBRATION OF THE 2023 AFRICAN STATISTICS DAY**  
**20 November 2023**

**Speech by J.E Charles Cartier, Chairperson of Statistics Board**

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

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

Mr Mukesh Dawoonauth, Ag Director of Statistics

Members of Statistics Board

Representatives of International Organisations

Members of Press

Distinguished Guests,

All protocols observed

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Chairman of the Statistics Board, I have the pleasure and privilege to address you today on the occasion of the 2023 African Statistics Day celebration.

As mentioned by the Ag. Director of Statistics Mauritius, this special day, which is celebrated every year by African countries, aims at increasing public awareness about the importance of statistics in all dimensions of life, including the society, economy and environment on the continent.

The objective of the celebration of Africa Statistics Day for the year is to exchange views on the theme of the day as well as to discuss progress in the implementation.

Historically, Africa's FDI, as well as its regional and global value chain participation, have been consistently

low compared to the rest of the world, hampered by barriers to trade and competitiveness.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a flagship project of Agenda 2063 aimed at creating a single African market for goods and services facilitated by free movement of persons, capital, investment to deepen economic integration, promote and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development, gender equality, industrialisation, agricultural development, food security and structural transformation.

Participation in bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements like the AfCFTA, standards regimes and related frameworks can help firms better mitigate their operating costs, barriers to market entry, compliance with non-harmonized standards and regulations across borders and enable them to grow their industries more

effectively in support of local and regional economic development and transformation.

You would agree with me that to monitor and accelerate the implementation of (AfCFTA) the availability of timely and high-quality statistics becomes a precondition for in-depth analysis of production, consumption, employment, income, investment and overall welfare at both the country and global levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we could also reflect on the second part of the agenda which calls for modernising data ecosystems in the continent for production and utilisation of high-quality official statistics and seize the opportunities of big data.

Because of widespread and constant use of telecommunications and other devices driven by innovations in technology, digital information is

continuously generated, such as data from: Global Positioning System (GPS) devices, automated teller machines, scanning devices, sensors, mobile phones, satellites and social media. The high volume, high velocity and wide variety of these data, which are commonly referred to as big data, and are potentially useful for official statistics, require new tools and methods for capturing, managing and processing them efficiently.

The potential of big data sources resides in the timely — and sometimes real-time — availability of large amounts of data, which are usually generated at minimal cost. The conduct of activities associated with traditional data sources, such as household and business surveys, takes time and those activities are often costly in respect of data production. Utilization of big data could supplement, reduce or replace the use of such types of data collection.

However, the statistical community is conscious of the fact that before introducing big data into official statistics and in order to take advantage of these innovative data sources including their application to the monitoring and reporting on the sustainable development goals, it needs to adequately address issues pertaining to methodology, quality, technology, data access, legislation, privacy, management and finance, and provide adequate cost-benefit analyses.

The successful utilisation of Computer-Assisted Personal Interviews (CAPI) technology for census data capture in 2022 allowed the timely release of the Census results.

Ladies and gentlemen, the use of CAPI for the 2022 Census and other current surveys is already a commendable improvement and still, we need to innovate.

Thus, I would request Statistics Mauritius to make thoughtful use of the latest available technologies as well as other resources in order to be better predisposed to produce timelier and more cost-effective outputs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before ending, I would like to express my deep appreciation to Statistics Mauritius for the efforts made in organising this workshop

I wish you success in all the activities you undertake in the commemoration of the African Statistics Day 2023.