

Labour force, Employment and Unemployment – Fourth Quarter 2006

1. Introduction

This issue of Economic and Social Indicators presents a set of estimates of labour force, employment and unemployment for the fourth quarter of 2006, based on the results of the Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey (CMPHS) from October to December 2006. For comparison purposes, the estimates for the corresponding quarter of 2005 are also presented.

As from 2004, the Central Statistics Office (CSO) is using the CMPHS for the measurement of quarterly labour force, employment and unemployment. The methodology of the CMPHS and the definition of terms used are given at Annex I. Annex II shows a series of comparable annual estimates of labour force, employment and unemployment for the period 2000 to 2006.

It is to be noted that all estimates in this report are subject to sampling error that tends to be relatively large when the sample numbers are small.

For 2005, the survey was carried out every month and the survey reference week was the last week of the month. For the 2006 round, the reference week has been changed to the second week of the month so that estimates can be published within one quarter of the reference period, as required by the IMF Special Data Dissemination System (SDDS) to which the country expects to graduate by 2007.

2. Main findings

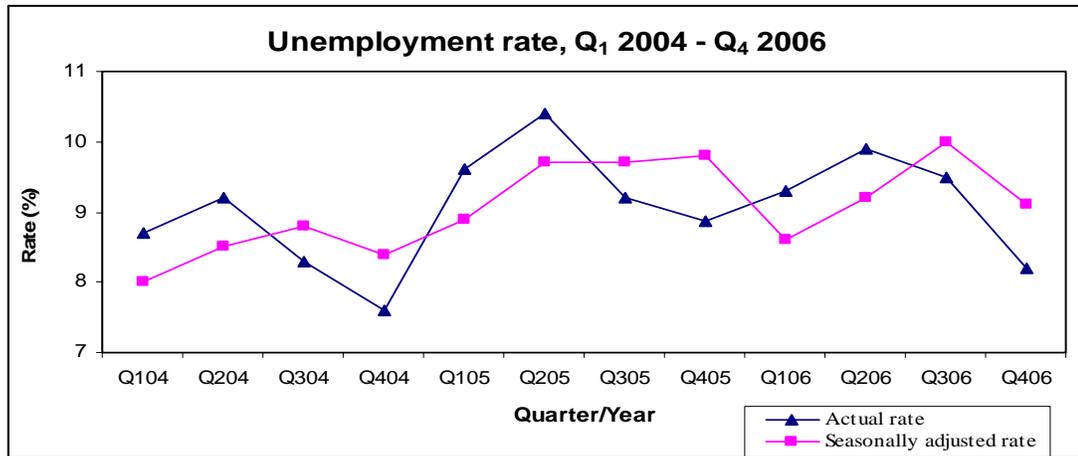
- (i) The number of employed persons for the fourth quarter of 2006 was estimated at 496,700 and the number of unemployed at 44,200. Labour force thus worked out to 540,900. Comparative figures for the corresponding quarter of 2005 were: 497,500 employed, 48,500 unemployed and a labour force of 546,000.
- (ii) The unemployment rate for the fourth quarter of 2006 was 8.2% compared to 9.5% at the previous quarter and 8.9% at the corresponding quarter of 2005.
- (iii) Labour force for year 2006 was estimated at 549,200, an increase of 6,700 over the 2005 figure. This smaller increase in labour force, as compared to the average annual increase of about 8,500 over the past five years, may be partly explained by a lower entry to labour force as more persons opt for higher studies instead of joining the labour market.
- (iv) Unemployment rate for the year 2006 is estimated at 9.1% against 9.6% in 2005. This drop may be due to a lower number of job losses in the EPZ sector compared to previous years.

Unemployment rate is influenced by seasonal factors. It is usually higher in the first half of the year because of school leavers joining the labour market, and lower in the second half with more casual jobs being available mainly in the trade sector (street vendors, salespersons in shops, etc.) at the end of the year. Based on the quarterly data for the period first quarter 2001 to fourth quarter 2006, seasonally adjusted unemployment rates have been calculated and are presented in Table 1 and Chart 1.

Table 1 – Actual and seasonally adjusted quarterly unemployment rates, Q₁ 2004 – Q₄ 2006

Unemployment rate (%)	2004					2005					2006				
	1st Qr	2nd Qr	3rd Qr	4th Qr	Mid year	1st Qr	2nd Qr	3rd Qr	4th Qr	Mid year	1st Qr	2nd Qr	3rd Qr	4th Qr	Mid year
Actual	8.7	9.2	8.3	7.6	8.5	9.6	10.4	9.2	8.9	9.6	9.3	9.9	9.5	8.2	9.1
Seasonally adjusted	8.0	8.5	8.8	8.4	8.5	8.9	9.7	9.7	9.8	9.6	8.6	9.2	10.0	9.1	9.1

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the fourth quarter of 2006 works out to 9.1% compared to 10.0% at the previous quarter and 9.8% at the fourth quarter of 2005.

Chart 1 - Actual and seasonally adjusted unemployment rates, Q₁ 2004 – Q₄ 2006

3. Characteristics of the unemployed

The main characteristics of the unemployed at the fourth quarter of 2006 were:

- The 44,200 unemployed comprised 15,400 males (35%) and 28,800 females (65%).
- Around 16,400 or about 37% of the unemployed were below 25 years. Some 6,000 or 39% of the unemployed males and 36% or 10,300 of the unemployed females were below 25 years.
- Around 20,200 (46%) unemployed were single. Among males, the majority (10,900 or 71%) was single while among females, the majority (19,500 or 68%) was ever married (including widowed, divorced or separated).
- Some 11,300 or 26% had not passed the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) examination or equivalent and a further 19,300 (44%) did not have the Cambridge School Certificate (SC) or equivalent.

- Around 27,400 (63%) had been looking for work for up to one year and the remaining 16,800 (37%) for more than one year.
- About 30,600 (69%) had working experience and 13,600 (31%) were looking for a job for the first time.
- Around 15,500 (35%) were registered at the Employment Service.
- There were 6,700 (15%) young persons aged 15 to 24 years, not yet married and looking for a first job. Some 3,300 (49%) of them had not passed SC.
- Ever married (including widowed, divorced or separated) unemployed persons aged 25 to 44 years and having worked before numbered 11,800. Among them 9,500 (81%) had not passed SC.
- 5,300 or 12 % of the unemployed were heads of households.
- 7,500 (17%) lived in households with no employed persons.

4. Activity status of the population aged 15 years and over

Among the 946,000 persons aged 15 years and over, in the fourth quarter of 2006, 540,900 or 57% were active, with 496,700 (52%) having a job and 44,200 (5%) unemployed. The remaining 405,100 (43%) persons were inactive. The estimates for the corresponding quarter of 2005 were 497,500 (53%) employed, 48,500 (5%) unemployed and 386,400 (42%) inactive persons.

Standard errors and confidence intervals have been calculated for the main labour force estimates and are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2 - Estimated labour force, employment, unemployment and inactive population by sex, 4th quarter 2005 & 2006

	4th Quarter 2005				4th Quarter 2006			
	Estimates	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval		Estimates	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Limit	Upper Limit			Lower Limit	Upper Limit
Labour Force								
Both Sexes	546,000	10,700	525,100	567,000	540,900	12,000	517,300	564,500
Male	350,800	7,200	336,700	365,000	350,600	7,800	335,300	365,900
Female	195,200	5,800	183,900	206,500	190,300	6,900	176,800	203,900
Employment								
Both Sexes	497,500	10,200	477,400	517,600	496,700	10,800	475,300	518,000
Male	332,600	6,800	319,200	346,000	335,200	7,500	320,500	349,900
Female	164,900	5,400	154,300	175,400	161,500	5,900	149,800	173,200
Unemployment								
Both Sexes	48,500	3,100	42,400	54,700	44,200	3,600	37,100	51,400
Male	18,200	1,900	14,400	22,000	15,400	1,900	11,600	19,200
Female	30,300	2,500	25,300	35,300	28,800	2,700	23,400	34,200
Inactive Population								
Both Sexes	386,400	8,600	369,600	403,300	405,100	9,200	387,000	423,100
Male	108,100	4,100	100,100	116,100	115,100	4,500	106,100	124,000
Female	278,300	6,800	264,800	291,800	290,000	7,300	275,600	304,300
Activity rate (%)								
Both Sexes	58.6	0.6	57.3	59.8	57.2	0.7	55.8	58.6
Male	76.4	0.7	75.0	77.9	75.3	0.8	73.7	76.9
Female	41.2	1.0	39.3	43.2	39.6	1.2	37.3	41.9
Unemployment rate (%)								
Both Sexes	8.9	0.5	7.8	10.0	8.2	0.6	7.0	9.4
Male	5.2	0.5	4.2	6.2	4.4	0.5	3.3	5.4
Female	15.5	1.2	13.2	17.9	15.1	1.3	12.7	17.6

Table 3 shows quarterly and annual estimates of labour force, employment and unemployment for 2004, 2005 and 2006.

Table 3 - Quarterly estimates of labour force, employment, unemployment and inactive population by sex, 2004 - 2006

	Year 2004	1st Quarter 2005	2nd Quarter 2005	3rd Quarter 2005	4th Quarter 2005	Year 2005	1st Quarter 2006 ¹	2nd Quarter 2006 ¹	3rd Quarter 2006 ¹	4th Quarter 2006	Year 2006 ¹
Labour Force											
Both Sexes	532,100	537,300	538,800	549,000	546,000	542,500	548,300	548,200	551,900	540,900	549,200
Male	348,200	347,900	347,800	351,500	350,800	349,400	352,600	352,300	351,000	350,600	352,000
Female	183,900	189,400	191,000	197,500	195,200	193,100	195,700	195,900	200,900	190,300	197,200
Employment											
Both Sexes	487,000	485,800	482,700	498,700	497,500	490,400	497,500	494,100	499,300	496,700	499,100
Male	327,900	326,500	324,900	333,400	332,600	329,100	333,500	331,300	330,900	335,200	332,500
Female	159,100	159,300	157,800	165,300	164,900	161,300	164,000	162,800	168,400	161,500	166,600
Unemployment											
Both Sexes	45,100	51,500	56,100	50,300	48,500	52,100	50,800	54,100	52,600	44,200	50,100
Male	20,300	21,400	22,900	18,100	18,200	20,300	19,100	21,000	20,100	15,400	19,500
Female	24,800	30,100	33,200	32,200	30,300	31,800	31,700	33,100	32,500	28,800	30,600
Inactive Population											
Both Sexes	381,500	385,200	387,200	380,600	386,400	383,700	388,000	391,400	391,100	405,100	390,400
Male	101,600	106,100	108,000	106,000	108,100	106,500	108,200	110,100	113,200	115,100	110,400
Female	279,900	279,100	279,200	274,600	278,300	277,200	279,800	281,300	277,900	290,000	280,000
Activity rate (%)											
Both Sexes	58.2	58.2	58.2	59.1	58.6	58.6	58.6	58.3	58.5	57.2	58.4
Male	77.4	76.6	76.3	76.8	76.4	76.6	76.5	76.2	75.6	75.3	76.1
Female	39.7	40.4	40.6	41.8	41.2	41.1	41.2	41.1	42.0	39.6	41.3
Unemployment rate (%)											
Both Sexes	8.5	9.6	10.4	9.2	8.9	9.6	9.3	9.9	9.5	8.2	9.1
Male	5.8	6.2	6.6	5.1	5.2	5.8	5.4	6.0	5.7	4.4	5.5
Female	13.5	15.9	17.4	16.3	15.5	16.5	16.2	16.9	16.2	15.1	15.5

¹ Revised in the light of latest population estimates

5. Employment

The number of employed persons during the fourth quarter of 2006 was estimated at 496,700 with 335,200 males and 161,500 females. Employment sex ratio works out to approximately 2 males to 1 female.

5.1 *Employment by industrial sector*

As shown in Table 4, during the fourth quarter of 2006, the primary sector comprising agriculture, and mining & quarrying, provided jobs to about 9% of the working population. The secondary sector, which includes manufacturing, electricity & water and construction, employed another 33%, and the tertiary sector, which covers trade, hotels & restaurants, transport and all the other service industries, the remaining 58%.

Table 4 - Percentage distribution of the employed population by industrial sector and sex, 4th quarter 2005 & 2006

Industrial sector	4th quarter 2005			4th quarter 2006		
	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Primary	10.5	11.3	8.7	9.5	11.1	6.1
Secondary	32.4	33.3	30.7	32.6	34.5	28.9
of which Manufacturing	21.2	16.6	30.4	21.2	17.8	28.1
Construction	10.5	15.5	0.3	10.8	15.7	0.7
Tertiary	57.1	55.4	60.6	57.9	54.4	65.0
of which Wholesale and retail trade	14.5	14.8	13.9	14.4	13.5	16.3
Hotels and restaurants	7.0	6.8	7.3	7.1	7.7	6.0
Transport, storage and communications	6.3	8.3	2.4	6.7	8.7	2.6
Public administration and defence	8.1	9.2	5.8	7.9	9.0	5.8
Education, health and social work	9.0	6.2	14.7	9.1	6.4	14.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

5.2 *Employment by occupation*

During the fourth quarter of 2006, 34% of the working population were employed as “skilled agricultural and fishery workers or craft and related trade workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers”. Workers engaged in “elementary occupations” and “service workers and shop and market sales workers” accounted for 21% and 18% of the workforce respectively. The remaining consisted of “legislators, senior officials and managers; professionals; technicians and associate professionals” (17%) and “clerks” (10%).

Analysis by sex shows that 40% of males were employed as “skilled agricultural workers and fishery workers; craft and related trades workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers”

In the fourth quarter of 2006, the majority or 82% of workers were employees and the remaining 18% were working in their own or family enterprises with 16% as either employers or own account workers and 2% as contributing family workers (Table 6).

Analysis by sex shows that the proportion of employees was higher among working women (85%) than among working men (80%), while the proportion of employers and own account workers was higher among men (19%) than among women (11%). On the other hand, contributing family workers constituted about 5% of working women compared to only one per cent of working men.

5.4 *Hours of Work*

Table 7, on distribution of employment by hours worked, shows that some 4% of employed persons did not work during the reference week, either because they were sick or on leave and some 52% reported having worked for more than 40 hours. Those workers were mostly in manufacturing enterprises (15%), followed by wholesale & retail trade (9%), construction (6%), hotels & restaurants (5%) and transport (3%).

The average number of hours worked per week, including overtime but excluding all leaves and lunch time, was 40.2 with men reporting having worked 42.6 hours on average and women, 35.3 hours.

Table 7 - Percentage distribution of the employed population by sex and number of hours worked during the survey reference week, 4th quarter 2005 & 2006

Actual number of hours worked per week	4th quarter 2005			4th quarter 2006		
	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
0	3.9	3.3	5.1	4.1	3.9	4.7
1 - 23	6.8	4.9	10.6	7.6	4.7	13.5
24 - 40	34.3	31.0	40.8	35.9	32.6	42.8
41 - 50	34.5	37.1	29.4	32.8	35.5	27.3
51 and above	20.5	23.7	14.1	19.6	23.3	11.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

6. Unemployment

The number of unemployed persons in the fourth quarter of 2006 is estimated at 44,200 comprising 15,400 males and 28,800 females. The unemployment rate, defined as the percentage of unemployed to labour force, works out to 8.2% (4.4% for males and 15.1% for females). The 95% confidence interval for the overall unemployment rate is 7.0% to 9.4%. The seasonally adjusted rate works out to 9.1% with the rate being 5.1% for males and 16.4% for females.

6.3 *Educational attainment*

From Table 10, it is observed that in the fourth quarter of 2006, 26% of the unemployed had not reached the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) level, and a further 44% did not possess the Cambridge School Certificate (SC). The proportions of unemployed with SC and Higher School Certificate (HSC) were respectively 20% and 4%. The number of unemployed having studied up to the tertiary level represented about 6%.

Table 10 - Percentage distribution of the unemployed population by educational attainment and sex, 4th quarter 2005 & 2006

Educational attainment	4th quarter 2005			4th quarter 2006		
	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Primary	35.8	38.8	34.0	36.0	45.5	30.9
Below CPE	20.3	22.5	19.0	25.6	40.7	17.5
Passed CPE	15.5	16.3	15.0	10.4	4.8	13.4
Secondary	55.0	50.7	57.6	57.9	49.1	62.6
Below SC	31.2	29.3	32.3	33.1	29.9	34.8
Passed SC	17.2	14.0	19.2	20.4	15.8	22.8
Passed HSC	6.6	7.4	6.1	4.4	3.4	5.0
Tertiary	9.2	10.5	8.4	6.1	5.4	6.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Analysis by sex shows that the proportion of the unemployed having only primary or lower secondary education, that is they had not reached the SC level, was higher for males (75%) than for females (66%). The proportion of unemployed having achieved SC was 16% for males and 23% for females. Corresponding figures for HSC holders were 3% and 5%. The proportion of unemployed males with a tertiary qualification was 5% against 7% for females.

6.4 *Duration of unemployment*

During the fourth quarter of 2006, 63% of the unemployed reported being without a job for up to one year and 37% for more than one year. Analysis by sex shows that women were unemployed for longer periods than their male counterparts. About 43% of the unemployed females had been looking for work for more than a year compared to 26% of males.

Table 11 - Percentage distribution of the unemployed population by duration of unemployment and sex, 4th quarter 2005 & 2006

Duration of unemployment (months)	4th quarter 2005			4th quarter 2006		
	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Up to 12	68.5	77.2	63.5	62.7	74.1	56.7
13 - 24	18.3	13.9	20.9	23.8	13.3	29.3
More than 24	13.2	8.9	15.6	13.5	12.6	14.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

6.5 *Work experience*

Around 31% of the unemployed were first job seekers while the remaining 69% had work experience. The proportion of males having work experience was 79% while that for females stood at 64%.

6.6 *Job search*

Table 12 - Percentage distribution of the unemployed population by job search method and sex, 4th quarter 2005 & 2006

Job search method	4th quarter 2005			4th quarter 2006		
	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Checked at factories, worksites, etc.	47.5	62.0	39.1	53.7	61.4	49.7
Applied to prospective employers	45.6	52.8	41.4	49.1	45.9	50.7
Registration at Employment Service	42.2	44.9	40.3	35.0	26.2	39.6
Sought assistance or advice	23.3	16.6	27.2	32.3	36.5	30.1
Placed or answered advertisements	26.7	22.0	29.4	28.0	26.5	28.7
Tried to set up own business	7.4	6.1	8.1	8.4	8.3	8.4

As regards job search, some of the unemployed had recourse to more than one method. As shown in Table 12, during the fourth quarter of 2006, the most common method of job search was “checked at factories, worksites, etc.”, as reported by 54% of the unemployed, followed by “applied to prospective employers”, being reported by 49% of them. Around 35% were registered at the Employment Service. Only 8% of the unemployed had taken steps to start a business of their own.

7. Inactive population

The number of persons aged 15 years and over, not forming part of the labour force (inactive population) was estimated at 405,100 (115,100 males and 290,000 females). As given in Table 13, the inactive population comprised 40% (163,000) homemakers, 24% (96,900) retired or old persons, 24% (97,800) students, and 8% (30,700) sick or disabled persons.

Table 13 - Percentage distribution of the inactive population by inactivity status and sex, 4th quarter 2005 & 2006

Inactivity status	4th quarter 2005			4th quarter 2006		
	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)	Both Sexes (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
Homemakers	43.9	0.5	60.8	40.4	0.2	56.4
Retired or old persons	23.7	40.4	17.1	24.0	39.5	17.8
Students	23.0	43.1	15.2	24.2	44.5	16.2
Sick or disabled persons	7.4	12.4	5.5	7.6	12.7	5.6
Other	2.0	3.6	1.4	3.8	3.1	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The inactives also included some 6,800 persons not interested to work, among whom 2,200 were aged 15 to 19 years.

Another 1,100 were classified as inactive although they were not working and were available for work because they were not actively looking for work. Those persons have been classified as inactive and not as unemployed since they do not satisfy all the three criteria for unemployment, i.e. not working, looking for work and available for work. From the survey responses, it is estimated that 90% or 1,000 of those 1,100 inactives either believed that suitable jobs were not available or did not know where to look for work.

An analysis of the inactive population by sex reveals that the male inactives comprised mostly old, retired, sick or disabled persons (52%) and students (45%). The inactive females were mostly homemakers (56%); old, retired, sick or disabled persons (23%) and students (16%).

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March 2007

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Definition of terms used

1. Household

A household is defined as either a person living on his/her own or a group of two or more persons, who may or may not be related, but who live together and make common provision for food and other essentials for living.

2. Employment

Employed population consists of Mauritians aged 15 years and above (15+) who have worked for pay, profit or family gain for at least one hour during the reference week of a month. It includes those who are temporarily absent from work for reasons such as leave with pay, leave without pay and temporary disorganization of work (bad weather, break down of equipment, lack of order, etc..).

3. Unemployment

Unemployed population comprises all Mauritians aged 15+ who are not working but who are looking for work and are available for work during the reference period.

4. Labour force

Labour force or active population is made up of employed and unemployed population.

5. Unemployment rate

Unemployment rate is the ratio (%) of unemployment to that of labour force.

6. Inactive population

Inactive population includes all Mauritians aged 15+, not forming part of the labour force for reasons such as attendance at educational institutions, engagement in household duties, retirement, old age and infirmity/disablement.

7. Activity rate

Activity rate is the ratio (%) of labour force to that of population aged 15+ (active + inactive population).

8. Employer

An employer is a person who operates his/her own business or trade and hires one or more employees.

9. Own account worker

An Own account worker is a person who operates his/her own business or trade but does not hire employees. He/She may be working alone or with the help of unpaid family members.

10. Employee

An Employee is a person who works for pay for someone else, even in a temporary capacity. An Apprentice, who is a person being trained for a job or trade and does not receive pay or may just receive some pocket money is also considered as an employee.

11. Contributing family worker

A Contributing family worker is a person who works without pay in an enterprise operated by a family member.

12. Educational attainment

Primary : comprises those who have studied up to a “Standard” between Standard 1 and the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) or equivalent.

Secondary : comprises those who have studied up to a “Form” between Form 1 and the Higher School Certificate (HSC) or equivalent.

Tertiary: comprises those who above their secondary certificates (SC and HSC or equivalent) also possess either a diploma/certificate, which is above the HSC but below a first degree, or a degree.

ANNEX II

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Labour force, Employment and Unemployment, 15 years and over, 2000 - 2006

Year	Labour force			Employment (including foreign workers)			Unemployment	
	Mauritian	Foreign workers	Total	in large establishments ¹	outside large establishments	Total	Number	Rate ²
Both sexes								
2000	505.2	14.6	519.8	298.7	187.2	485.9	33.9	6.7
2001	512.5	16.5	529.0	302.0	191.6	493.6	35.4	6.9
2002	514.2 ³	17.0	531.2	297.2	196.6	493.8	37.4	7.3
2003	522.7	18.2	540.9	296.9	203.5	500.4	40.5	7.7
2004	532.1	17.5	549.6	293.3	211.2	504.5	45.1	8.5
2005	542.5	16.6	559.1	292.2	214.8	507.0	52.1	9.6
2006 ⁴	549.2	16.7	565.9	295.1	220.7	515.8	50.1	9.1
Male								
2000	336.2	5.0	341.2	187.5	135.7	323.2	18.0	5.4
2001	339.5	5.8	345.3	188.3	138.1	326.4	18.9	5.6
2002	340.5 ³	6.4	346.9	188.2	140.4	328.6	18.3	5.4
2003	344.2	7.9	352.1	188.2	144.2	332.4	19.7	5.7
2004	348.2	9.0	357.2	189.1	147.8	336.9	20.3	5.8
2005	349.4	9.1	358.5	189.3	148.9	338.2	20.3	5.8
2006 ⁴	352.0	8.3	360.3	190.0	150.8	340.8	19.5	5.5
Female								
2000	169.0	9.6	178.6	111.2	51.5	162.7	15.9	9.4
2001	173.0	10.7	183.7	113.7	53.5	167.2	16.5	9.5
2002	173.7 ³	10.6	184.3	109.0	56.2	165.2	19.1	11.0
2003	178.5	10.3	188.8	108.7	59.3	168.0	20.8	11.7
2004	183.9	8.5	192.4	104.2	63.4	167.6	24.8	13.5
2005	193.1	7.5	200.6	102.9	65.9	168.8	31.8	16.5
2006 ⁴	197.2	8.4	205.6	105.1	69.9	175.0	30.6	15.5

¹ Average of March and September figures³ The low increase results from the implementation of the Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in the sugar industry² Unemployment as a percentage of Mauritian labour force⁴ Revised estimates

Methodology of the Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey

Data collection	Face to face interviewing of household members.
Frequency of data collection	Monthly except in 2004 when data collection was carried out every quarter. Up to 2005, the reference period for data on labour force was the last week of the survey month. As from 2006, the reference week has been changed to the second week of the survey month.
Scope and coverage of collection	Private Mauritian households in the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues.
Sampling method	<p>Stratified two-stage sampling design. At the first stage, Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) are selected with probability proportional to size and at the second stage, a fixed number of households is selected from each selected PSU. Prior to 2005, the first stage stratification factors were urban, semi urban and rural geographical locations. As from 2005, the Relative Development Index (RDI) is used as the spatial stratification factor. This index is based on 12 variables encompassing housing and living conditions, literacy and education, and employment derived from the 2000 Housing and Population Census to rank PSUs. A set of RDIs for administrative regions has been published in the series "Economic and Social Indicators" - Issue No. 393.</p> <p>The second stage stratification criteria are community, household size and average monthly expenditure of the household.</p>
Sample size	From 1999 to 2003, around 6,500 households were covered each year. In 2004, the sample was increased to 8,640 so that reliable quarterly estimates of labour force, employment and unemployment could be worked out. As from 2005, the sample for the year has been further increased to 11,280. Furthermore, in order to measure quarterly changes, 50% of the households sampled in a quarter are re-interviewed in the following quarter; for example, 50% of the households sampled in the first quarter of 2005 have been re-interviewed in the second quarter of 2005.

Questionnaire

The CMPHS questionnaire comprises three modules: a basic module common to all rounds of the survey covering the general characteristics of the population, one or more special topic modules dealing with subjects requiring in-depth investigation and a third module grouping other topics of interest but investigated in less details.

Every year different topics are covered according to users' needs. As from 2004, the CMPHS is also being used as the instrument for the measurement of labour force, employment and unemployment on a quarterly basis; hence, a set of core questions on the labour force has been included and will be kept constant at all rounds of the survey.

Estimation and reliability of results Estimates worked out from household survey data are inevitably subject to sampling variability since they are based on information collected from only a sample of households rather than from all households. The Standard Error (S.E) which is a measure of this variability, is used to set confidence intervals for any estimate (whether a total or a rate) derived from the sample. For example, a 95% confidence interval indicates that there is 95% chance that the upper and lower limits of the interval enclose the true value (which would be obtained if all households had been surveyed). Standard errors and confidence intervals are calculated for the main labour force estimates.