



Africa :: Mauritius

Introduction :: Mauritius

Background:

Although known to Arab and Malay sailors as early as the 10th century, Mauritius was first explored by the Portuguese in the 16th century and subsequently settled by the Dutch - who named it in honor of Prince Maurits van NASSAU - in the 17th century. The French assumed control in 1715, developing the island into an important naval base overseeing Indian Ocean trade, and establishing a plantation economy of sugar cane. The British captured the island in 1810, during the Napoleonic Wars. Mauritius remained a strategically important British naval base, and later an air station, playing an important role during World War II for anti-submarine and convoy operations, as well as the collection of signals intelligence. Independence from the UK was attained in 1968. A stable democracy with regular free elections and a positive human rights record, the country has attracted considerable foreign investment and has earned one of Africa's highest per capita incomes.

Geography :: Mauritius

Location:

Southern Africa, island in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar

Geographic coordinates:

20 17 S, 57 33 E

Map references:

Africa

Area:

total: 2,040 sq km

country comparison to the world: 181

land: 2,030 sq km

water: 10 sq km

note: includes Agalega Islands, Cargados Carajos Shoals (Saint Brandon), and Rodrigues

Area - comparative:

almost 11 times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

177 km

Maritime claims:

measured from claimed archipelagic straight baselines

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

Climate:

tropical, modified by southeast trade winds; warm, dry winter (May to November); hot, wet, humid summer (November to May)

Terrain:

small coastal plain rising to discontinuous mountains encircling central plateau

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m

highest point: Mont Piton 828 m

Natural resources:

arable land, fish

Land use:

arable land: 38.24%

permanent crops: 1.96%

other: 59.8% (2011)

Irrigated land:

212.2 sq km (2003)

Total renewable water resources:

2.75 cu km (2011)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.73 cu km/yr (30%/3%/68%)

per capita: 568.2 cu m/yr (2003)

Natural hazards:

cyclones (November to April); almost completely surrounded by reefs that may pose maritime hazards

Environment - current issues:

water pollution, degradation of coral reefs

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Wetlands

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

the main island, from which the country derives its name, is of volcanic origin and is almost entirely surrounded by coral reefs; former home of the dodo, a large flightless bird related to pigeons, driven to extinction by the end of the 17th century through a combination of hunting and the introduction of predatory species

People and Society :: Mauritius

Nationality:

noun: Mauritian(s)

adjective: Mauritian

Ethnic groups:

Indo-Mauritian 68%, Creole 27%, Sino-Mauritian 3%, Franco-Mauritian 2%

Languages:

Creole 80.5%, Bhojpuri 12.1%, French 3.4%, English (official; spoken by less than 1% of the population), other 3.7%, unspecified 0.3% (2000 census)

Religions:

Hindu 48%, Roman Catholic 23.6%, Muslim 16.6%, other Christian 8.6%, other 2.5%, unspecified 0.3%, none 0.4% (2000 census)

Population:

1,322,238 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 156

Age structure:

0-14 years: 21.3% (male 143,874/female 137,850)

15-24 years: 15.7% (male 104,861/female 102,671)

25-54 years: 44.3% (male 292,714/female 293,590)

55-64 years: 10.6% (male 66,460/female 73,964)

65 years and over: 8% (male 42,718/female 63,536) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 39.8 %

youth dependency ratio: 27.6 %

elderly dependency ratio: 12.2 %

potential support ratio: 8.2 (2013)

Median age:

total: 33.5 years

male: 32.6 years

female: 34.4 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

0.68% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 143

Birth rate:

13.62 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 148

Death rate:

6.79 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 141

Net migration rate:

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 98

Urbanization:

urban population: 41.8% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 0.57% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

PORT LOUIS (capital) 149,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.02 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 0.9 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.67 male(s)/female

total population: 0.97 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

60 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 100

Infant mortality rate:

total: 10.89 deaths/1,000 live births

country comparison to the world: 138

male: 12.95 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 8.73 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 74.94 years

country comparison to the world: 101

male: 71.48 years

female: 78.58 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

1.78 children born/woman (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 157

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

75.8% (2002)

Health expenditures:

6% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 108

Physicians density:

1.06 physicians/1,000 population (2004)

Hospital bed density:

3.4 beds/1,000 population (2011)

Drinking water source:**improved:**

urban: 100% of population

rural: 99% of population

total: 99% of population

unimproved:

urban: 0% of population

rural: 1% of population

total: 1% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:**improved:**

urban: 91% of population

rural: 88% of population

total: 89% of population

unimproved:

urban: 9% of population

rural: 12% of population

total: 11% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

1% (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 47

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

8,800 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 102

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

fewer than 500 (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 88

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

18.5% (2008)

country comparison to the world: 105

Education expenditures:

3.7% of GDP (2010)

country comparison to the world: 122

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 88.8%

male: 91.1%

female: 86.7% (2011 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 14 years
male: 13 years
female: 14 years (2008)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 21.7%
country comparison to the world: 52
male: 17.3%
female: 28% (2011)

Government :: Mauritius

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Mauritius
conventional short form: Mauritius
local long form: Republic of Mauritius
local short form: Mauritius

Government type:

parliamentary democracy

Capital:

name: Port Louis
geographic coordinates: 20 09 S, 57 29 E
time difference: UTC+4 (9 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

9 districts and 3 dependencies*; Agalega Islands*, Black River, Cargados Carajos Shoals*, Flacq, Grand Port, Moka, Pamplemousses, Plaines Wilhems, Port Louis, Riviere du Rempart, Rodrigues*, Savanne

Independence:

12 March 1968 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 12 March (1968)

Constitution:

12 March 1968; amended 12 March 1992

Legal system:

civil legal system based on French civil law with some elements of English common law

International law organization participation:

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICCT jurisdiction

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Rajkeswur Kailash PURRYAG (since 21 July 2012); note - former President Sir Anerood JUGNAUTH resigned on 31 March 2012

head of government: Prime Minister Navinchandra RAMGOOLAM (since 5 July 2005)

cabinet: Council of Ministers appointed by the president on the recommendation of the prime minister (For more information visit the [World Leaders website](#) [Ⓔ])

elections: president and vice president elected by the National Assembly for five-year terms (eligible for a second term); elections last held on 21 July 2012 (next to be held in 2017); prime minister and deputy prime minister appointed by the president, responsible to the National Assembly; note - former President Sir Anerood JUGNAUTH resigned on 31 March 2012

election results: Rajkeswur Kailash PURRYAG elected president by unanimous vote; percent of vote by the National Assembly - NA

Legislative branch:

unicameral National Assembly (70 seats; 62 members elected by popular vote, 8 appointed by the election commission to give representation to various ethnic minorities; members to serve five-year terms)

elections: last held on 5 May 2010 (next to be held in 2015)

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - AF 41, MMM 18, MR 2, FSM 1; appointed seats - to be assigned 8

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court of Mauritius (consists of the chief justice, a senior puisne judge, and 17 puisne judges)

judge selection and term of office: chief justice appointed by the president after consultation with the prime minister; senior puisne judge appointed by the president with the advice of the chief justice; other puisne judges appointed by the president with the advice of the Judicial and Legal Commission, a 4-member body of judicial officials including the chief justice; all judges serve until retirement at age 62

subordinate courts: Court of Civil Appeal; Court of Criminal Appeal; Public Bodies Appeal Tribunal (formed by a 2008 constitutional amendment)

Political parties and leaders:

Alliance of the Future or AF [Navinchandra RAMGOOLAM] (governing coalition - includes MLP, MMSM, MR, MSD, PMSD)

Mauritian Labor Party or MLP [Navinchandra RAMGOOLAM]

Mauritian Militant Movement or MMM [Paul BERENGER]

Mauritian Militant Socialist Movement or MMSM [Pravind JUGNAUTH]

Mauritian Socialist Militant Movement or MSMM [Madan DULLOO]

Mauritian Solidarity Front of FSM [Cehl FAKEERMEEAH]

Mauritian Social Democratic Party or PMSD [Xavier Luc DUVAL]

Rodrigues Movement or MR [Joseph (Nicholas) Von MALLY]

Rodrigues Peoples Organization or OPR [Serge CLAIR]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

other: various labor unions

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AOSIS, AU, C, CD, COMESA, CPLP (associate), FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (NGOs), ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, InOC, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, NAM, OIF, OPCW, PCA, SAARC (observer), SADC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Somduth SOBORUN

chancery: 1709 N Street NW, Washington, DC 20036; administrative offices - 3201 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 441, Washington, DC 20036

telephone: [1] (202) 244-1491 through 1492

FAX: [1] (202) 966-0983

Diplomatic representation from the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Shari VILLAROSA

embassy: 4th Floor, Rogers House, John Kennedy Street, Port Louis

mailing address: international mail: P. O. Box 544, Port Louis; US mail: American Embassy, Port Louis, US Department of State, Washington, DC 20521-2450

telephone: [230] 202-4400

FAX: [230] 208-9534

Flag description:

four equal horizontal bands of red (top), blue, yellow, and green; red represents self-determination and independence, blue the Indian Ocean surrounding the island, yellow has been interpreted as the new light of independence, golden sunshine, or the bright future, and green can symbolize either agriculture or the lush vegetation of the island

National anthem:

name: "Motherland"

[▶ PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Jean Georges PROSPER/Philippe GENTIL

note: adopted 1968

Economy :: Mauritius

Economy - overview:

Since independence in 1968, Mauritius has developed from a low-income, agriculturally based economy to a middle-income diversified economy with growing industrial, financial, and tourist sectors. For most of this period, annual growth has been on the order of 5% to 6%. This achievement has been reflected in more equitable income distribution, increased life expectancy, lowered infant mortality, and a much-improved infrastructure. The economy rests on sugar, tourism, textiles and apparel, and financial services, and is expanding into fish processing, information and communications technology, and hospitality and property development. Sugarcane is grown on about 90% of the cultivated land area and accounts for 15% of export earnings. The government's development strategy centers on creating vertical and horizontal clusters of development in these sectors. Mauritius has attracted more than 32,000 offshore entities, many aimed at commerce in India, South Africa, and China. Investment in the banking sector alone has reached over \$1 billion. Mauritius, with its strong textile sector, has been well poised to take advantage of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Mauritius' sound economic policies and prudent banking practices helped to mitigate negative effects of the global financial crisis in 2008-09. GDP grew in the 3-4% per year range in 2010-12, and the country continues to expand its trade and investment outreach around the globe.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$20.53 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 130

\$19.88 billion (2011 est.)

\$19.15 billion (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$11.47 billion (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

3.3% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 102

3.8% (2011 est.)

4.1% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$15,800 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 87

\$15,400 (2011 est.)

\$14,900 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

Gross national saving:

32% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 18

31% of GDP (2011 est.)

31% of GDP (2010 est.)

GDP - composition, by end use:

household consumption: 73.5%

government consumption: 13.5%

investment in fixed capital: 23.1%

investment in inventories: 0.5%

exports of goods and services: 54.5%

imports of goods and services: -65.1%
(2012 est.)

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 4.4%

industry: 23.5%

services: 72% (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

sugarcane, tea, corn, potatoes, bananas, pulses; cattle, goats; fish

Industries:

food processing (largely sugar milling), textiles, clothing, mining, chemicals, metal products, transport equipment, nonelectrical machinery, tourism

Industrial production growth rate:

2.5% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 92

Labor force:

626,900 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture and fishing: 9%

construction and industry: 30%

transportation and communication: 7%

trade, restaurants, hotels: 22%

finance: 6%

other services: 25% (2007)

Unemployment rate:

8.1% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 96

7.9% (2011 est.)

Population below poverty line:

8% (2006 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: NA%

highest 10%: NA%

Distribution of family income - Gini index:

39 (2006 est.)

country comparison to the world: 68

37 (1987 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$2.456 billion

expenditures: \$2.664 billion (2012 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

21.4% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 154

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-1.8% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 79

Public debt:

56.5% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 53

57.4% of GDP (2011 est.)

Fiscal year:

1 July - 30 June

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

3.9% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 122

6.5% (2011 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

9% (31 December 2010 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

8.67% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 103

8.92% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$2.378 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 121

\$2.263 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$26.17 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 80

\$23.87 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$12.87 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 93

\$11.71 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$6.54 billion (31 December 2011)

country comparison to the world: 80

\$6.506 billion (31 December 2010)

\$4.74 billion (31 December 2009)

Current account balance:

-\$1.433 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 124

-\$1.164 billion (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$2.674 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 135

\$2.647 billion (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

clothing and textiles, sugar, cut flowers, molasses, fish

Exports - partners:

UK 18.7%, France 16.4%, US 10.4%, South Africa 9.7%, Spain 7.6%, Italy 7.1%, Madagascar 6.7% (2012)

Imports:

\$5.107 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 129

\$4.925 billion (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

manufactured goods, capital equipment, foodstuffs, petroleum products, chemicals

Imports - partners:

India 23.7%, China 15.3%, France 8.9%, South Africa 6.3% (2012)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$3.046 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

\$2.779 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Debt - external:

\$3.275 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 133

\$2.686 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:

NA

Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:

NA

Exchange rates:

Mauritian rupees (MUR) per US dollar -
30.051 (2012 est.)
28.706 (2011 est.)
30.784 (2010 est.)
31.96 (2009)
27.973 (2008)

Energy :: Mauritius

Electricity - production:

2.889 billion kWh (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 128

Electricity - consumption:

2.687 billion kWh (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 134

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 102

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2010 est.)
country comparison to the world: 212

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

885,200 kW (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 125

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

75.2% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 100

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 139

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

6.7% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 121

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

18.1% of total installed capacity (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 7

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2011 est.)
country comparison to the world: 166

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 153

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 96

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2012 est.)
country comparison to the world: 165

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)
country comparison to the world: 206

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

24,710 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 201

Refined petroleum products - imports:

22,750 bbl/day (2008 est.)

country comparison to the world: 101

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 172

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 146

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 170

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

4.545 million Mt (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 126

Communications :: Mauritius

Telephones - main lines in use:

374,600 (2011)

country comparison to the world: 107

Telephones - mobile cellular:

1.294 million (2011)

country comparison to the world: 150

Telephone system:

general assessment: small system with good service

domestic: monopoly over fixed-line services terminated in 2005; fixed-line teledensity roughly 30 per 100 persons; mobile-cellular services launched in 1989 with current teledensity roughly 100 per 100 persons

international: country code - 230; landing point for the SAFE submarine cable that provides links to Asia and South Africa where it connects to the SAT-3/WASC submarine cable that provides further links to parts of East Africa, and Europe; satellite earth station - 1 Intelsat (Indian Ocean); new microwave link to Reunion; HF radiotelephone links to several countries (2011)

Broadcast media:

the government maintains control over TV broadcasting through the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), which operates 3 analog and 10 digital TV stations; MBC is a shareholder in a local company that operates 2 pay-TV stations; the state retains the largest radio broadcast network with multiple stations; several private radio broadcasters have entered the market since 2001; transmissions of at least 2 international broadcasters are available (2007)

Internet country code:

.mu

Internet hosts:

51,139 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 95

Internet users:

290,000 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 131

Transportation :: Mauritius

Airports:

5 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 180

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 2

over 3,047 m: 1

914 to 1,523 m: 1 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 3

914 to 1,523 m: 2

under 914 m:

1 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 2,066 km

country comparison to the world: 173

paved: 2,066 km (includes 75 km of expressways) (2009)

Merchant marine:

total: 4

country comparison to the world: 129

by type: passenger/cargo 2, petroleum tanker 1, refrigerated cargo 1 (2010)

Ports and terminals:

Port Louis

Military :: Mauritius

Military branches:

no regular military forces; Mauritius Police Force, Special Mobile Force, National Coast Guard (2011)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 343,628 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 280,596

females age 16-49: 283,317 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 10,193

female: 10,104 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

0.1% of GDP (2012)

country comparison to the world: 170

Transnational Issues :: Mauritius

Disputes - international:

Mauritius and Seychelles claim the Chagos Islands; claims French-administered Tromelin Island

Illicit drugs:

consumer and transshipment point for heroin from South Asia; small amounts of cannabis produced and consumed locally; significant offshore financial industry creates potential for money laundering, but corruption levels are relatively low and the government appears generally to be committed to regulating its banking industry