

# Mauritius

## Geography

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

Area:

total area: 1,860 sq km

land area: 1,850 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 177 km

Maritime claims:

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

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

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

Natural resources: arable land, fish

Land use:

arable land: 54%

permanent crops: 4%

meadows and pastures: 4%

forest and woodland: 31%

other: 7%

Irrigated land: 170 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: water pollution

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

# People

Population: 1,127,068 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 28% (female 152,892; male 158,891)

15-64 years: 66% (female 376,049; male 372,910)

65 years and over: 6% (female 39,088; male 27,238) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 0.89% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 18.91 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6.38 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: -3.64 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 17.8 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 70.84 years

male: 66.9 years  
female: 74.95 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.2 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:  
noun: Mauritian(s)  
adjective: Mauritian

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

Religions: Hindu 52%, Christian 28.3% (Roman Catholic 26%, Protestant 2.3%), Muslim 16.6%, other 3.1%

Languages: English (official), Creole, French, Hindi, Urdu, Hakka, Bojpoori

Literacy:  
total population: 80%  
male: 85%  
female: 75%

# Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Mauritius

conventional short form: Mauritius

Type: parliamentary democracy

Capital: Port Louis

Independence: 12 March 1968 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 12 March (1968)

Constitution: 12 March 1968; amended 12 March 1992

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: four equal horizontal bands of red (top), blue, yellow, and green

# Economy

Industries: food processing (largely sugar milling), textiles, wearing apparel, chemicals, metal products, transport equipment, nonelectrical machinery, tourism

Agriculture: accounts for 10% of GDP; about 90% of cultivated land in sugarcane; other products - tea, corn, potatoes, bananas, pulses, cattle, goats, fish; net food importer, especially rice and fish

Illicit drugs: illicit producer of cannabis for the international drug trade; heroin consumption and transshipment are growing problems

## Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Highways:  
total: 1,800 km

Ports: Port Louis

Airports:  
total: 5

Defence Forces

Branches: National Police Force (includes the paramilitary Special Mobile Force or SMF, Special Support Units or SSU, and National Coast Guard)