**Press Communique**

**Monitoring the Socio-Economic Effects of COVID-19 on Mauritian Households – Rcmphs May 2020**

Statistics Mauritius (SM) together with the World Bank (WB) launched a series of rapid phone household surveys, known as Rapid Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey (RCMPHS), to monitor the socio-economic effects of COVID-19 on the lives of Mauritian households over the period May to July 2020.

Information was collected through a questionnaire comprising 7 modules soliciting information about economic activity of individuals aged 16 to 64 years not in full-time education, access to basic goods and services, food insecurity, household income, shocks and coping strategies.

Classification of individuals by activity status (employed/unemployed/inactive) is according to the ILO recommendations. Hence, employed persons are those who have worked for at least one hour during the survey reference week as well as those who were absent from work for personal reasons or because of temporary disorganisation of work (e.g workplace closed due to COVID 19 legal restrictions) and maintained a job attachment. Unemployed persons are those who were not working but who were looking for work and were available for work during the reference period.

**Highlights – May 2020:**

* About 1 in 5 Mauritian households report to have not been able to purchase basic food items between the start of the lockdown and the month of May.
* About 17 percent of Mauritian households have skipped a meal since the lockdown started and only about 3 percent of households where at least one member had to skip once all the meals of a day.
* Over 71 percent of Mauritian households who require medical treatment have been able to access it since the lockdown started.
* About 85 percent of Mauritian households with children in school age have been able to access home based education since schools were closed.
* Over 1 in 3 Mauritian households posted a reduction in income compared with the 12 months before the lockdown.
* Relative to the first quarter of 2020, the number of employed declined by almost 129,400 units or about 24 percent. As at May 2020, the number of employed is estimated at 405,400. This refers to individuals ages 16-64 who worked for pay or profit for at least 1 hour in the reference week or were temporarily absent from a job and maintained a job attachment.
* The decline in employment is largely ascribable to informal employment (- 69 percent).
* The unemployment rate (based on a labor force comprising individuals ages 16-64 not in full time education) is estimated at 10.2 percent relative to 7.2 percent in the first quarter of 2020.
* The number of inactive individuals (ages 16-64 not in full time education) increased to 336,900 in May from about 205,100 in the first quarter of 2020.

**21 August 2020**