

# **REPORT ON CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS**

## **REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS**

### **A. CIVIL REGISTRATION**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Civil Status Division is a department under the Prime Minister's Office. It operates under the Civil Status (Amendment) Act 1981 which came into force on the 1st of January 1982. The Act lays down procedures for the registration of births, deaths, marriages and for other matters relating to the civil status of persons in Mauritius. The 1981 Act has replaced the law of 1819.

The Division is responsible for the registration of births, deaths, marriages and other matters relating to the civil status of persons in Mauritius and Rodrigues Island and for the issue of civil status certificates. It is the custodian of all records and documents produced during registration.

The Civil Status Division is also responsible for the production of National Identity Cards for all citizens of Mauritius attaining the age of 18. An identity card will be issued only if the person is properly registered in the civil registration database.

The Civil Status Division has also set up a Central Population Database which holds basic information on all individuals registered in Mauritius and contributes to the development and the monitoring of policies by government.

In Mauritius, people have access to social benefits and services only on presentation of vital events documents. This has enhanced the need for the public to register vital events.

#### **2. Registration Services**

Registration services are performed in 47 offices located across the country, of which 32 are fully computerized and provide instant registration. In non-computerised offices, entry forms are manually filled in and transferred to the computerised office for registration. The documents are returned back to the original office, where the applicant collects the issued documents.

A unique identification number for each citizen of Mauritius is assigned automatically at the time of birth registration. With the introduction of computerised operations, it is compulsory to produce the National Identity Card for every civil status transaction.

The first issue of a birth, death and marriage certificate is free of charge. Such certificates are available instantly at the computerised offices.

## **2.1 Registration of Birth**

A birth should be registered within 45 days from the date of birth at the civil status office of the locality within the district in which the birth took place or in which the parents resided at the time of birth.

The informant delivers required documents to the Civil Status Officer. He inspects the documents and enters information into the birth entry form at the computerised system. Then extract of the birth entry is printed and handed over for the informant for verification. If information in the extract is correct, it is certified with the signature of the informant, and is regarded as application form. It is a good approach to ensure correctness of the entry (e.g. eliminate technical mistakes), because entry is verified and confirmed by the informant.

Registration of birth and first issue of the certificate is free of charge. Also, since 2001, every registered child receives 200 Rupees from the government at an open account at the post office.

## **2.2 Registration of Marriage**

### *Civil marriage between two residents*

A publication of the proposed civil marriage should be made 10 days prior to the proposed date of marriage at the civil status office of the locality within the district where the marriage is to take place.

### *Marriage of a non-citizen to a citizen of Mauritius*

The non-citizen should have resided in Mauritius for a continuous period of at least 7 days before publication. The publication of a proposed civil marriage between a non-citizen and a citizen of Mauritius is made only at the Central Civil Status Office in the capital city. The civil marriage shall take place at the Central Civil Status Office after a period of 10 days as from the date of publication.

### *Marriage between two non-citizens*

Application for a certificate of non-citizen/non-resident should reach the Central Civil Status Office at least one month before the intended date of marriage. The civil marriage may be celebrated after one day of publication. On their arrival in Mauritius the parties should call at the Central Civil Status Office for verification of original documents.

### *Religious marriage having civil effect*

Persons as authorized by the Registrar of Civil Status may celebrate a Religious Marriage Having Civil Effect. No publication is required for the celebration of a Religious Marriage Having Civil Effect. Where a person is not authorized to celebrate a Religious Marriage Having Civil Effect, a Civil Status Officer may be designated to assist in the ceremony and register the marriage with civil effect.

### *Fees for the celebration of marriages outside office premises*

Civil marriages celebrated at any civil status office in Mauritius and Rodrigues are free of charge. Members of the public are invited to make full use of this facility.

Marriage fees are applicable in the following situations:-

- Celebration of a marriage on private residential premises: Rs 1,500 and celebration of civil marriages at premises other than office or private residence: Rs 2,000 (applicable for both spouse being Mauritian citizens)
- for marriages celebrated in hotels and premises other than office where both spouse are non- citizens of Mauritius : Rs 5,000.

## **2.3 Registration of Death**

A death registration may be made at the civil status office of the locality within the district where the death occurred or where the deceased last resided. The body of the deceased shall not be disposed until examined by the medical practitioner and issuance of the burial/cremation permit after registration. This helps to obtain the cause of death of each deceased and ensures the completeness of the civil registration system.

An on-call service is available on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays from noon to 17.00 hours for the registration of deaths requiring an early burial i. e. before the expiry of 24 hours after the death of the person. To that effect, the relatives of a deceased should call at the local Police Station to fill in the appropriate Request Form in order to obtain the services of a Civil Status Officer.

## **3. Recent Improvement in Registration**

### **Civil Status Certificates**

Since February 2012, the civil status certificates are delivered on the very day of applications for records which have been updated.

### **Declaration of Birth**

Since year 2008, in the case of death of a person, it is mandatory for the declarant to bring along the I.D Card of the deceased. The I.D Card is then punched at the time of registration, thus avoiding any fraudulent practices.

### **National Identity Cards (NIC)**

Since September 2009, data, photo and signature on National Identity Cards are saved digitally on the NIC Database and therefore cannot be deleted or amended.

#### **4. Collaboration with Statistics Mauritius**

There is a strong collaboration and coordination between the Civil Status Division and Statistics Mauritius. Vital records are submitted to Statistics Mauritius on a regularly basis for the production and dissemination of vital statistics. Availability of up to date and timely vital statistics helps in the monitoring and evaluation of services by policy makers.

### **B. VITAL STATISTICS**

#### **1. Introduction**

Vital Statistics pertain to vital events which include live births, deaths, still births, marriages and divorces. These statistics are important as they indicate the trends that shape the society and reflect the dynamics of population change.

The Vital Statistics System of the Republic of Mauritius comprises the collection of information on vital events through civil registration, and the compilation, processing, analysis, evaluation and dissemination of these data in statistical form. Statistics Mauritius compiles vital statistics from data obtained from the computerised system in place at the Central Civil Status Office.

#### **2. Coverage & Data Source of Vital Statistics**

The vital statistics in Mauritius cover live births, still births, marriages, deaths and divorces. With the exception of divorces for which data are obtained from the Supreme Court, the data source for other vital statistics is the Central Civil Status Office.

#### **3. Compilation of Vital Statistics**

Statistics Mauritius obtains the records on live birth, still birth, marriage & death in electronic format from the Central Civil Status Office on a monthly basis with a lag of 2-3 weeks.

The data is uploaded into the Java-based Application Architecture newly developed under the E-Business Plan of the office. Most of the data variables are already coded by the Central Civil Status Office, except for district of residence, Town/Village Council Area and occupations, which the system automatically codes. The data are verified for completeness and consistency. The system is then used to generate a set of predefined tables based on the uploaded and coded data.

The monthly data are consolidated and compiled into quarterly, semesterly and yearly tabulations.

Statistics are produced on the vital events as well as derived rates such as birth rate, fertility rate, still birth rate, marriage rate, death rate, infant mortality rate and divorce rate.

The coding of causes of death is undertaken by the statistical staff of the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life using the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10<sup>th</sup> Revision. A copy of the death data file is submitted to the Statistics Unit of the Ministry on a monthly basis for the coding of causes of death and the tabulation of cause of death data.

Data on Divorces are obtained on hard copies on a yearly basis from the Judicial Department with 5 to 6 months lag.

#### **4. Compliance of Vital Statistics with desirable characteristics**

The vital statistics in Mauritius comply in every respect with the required characteristics given that the Civil Registration System potentially has all the desirable characteristics as opposed to enumeration through surveys.

There is universal coverage of vital statistics in the country. There are Civil Status Offices located all over the country, thus allowing easy access to the population for registration purposes. Also, given that the registration of children at school requires a birth certificate and that the disposal of a dead body strictly requires the registration of the deceased leads towards complete birth and death registration.

The collection of data and compilation of vital statistics are continuous so that monthly, quarterly, semesterly and annual reporting can be made. This allows the identification of short-term fluctuations, seasonal movements as well as longer-term movements.

The vital statistics published in Mauritius are governed by the Statistics Act. The confidentiality of the information obtained from the civil registration system is assured. The information is used for statistical purposes and published only in aggregated form.

Though vital statistics are published on a semesterly and yearly basis, they are compiled and available on a monthly basis, prompt enough for health interventions, population interventions and administrative uses. The monthly vital statistics are available with a timeliness of about one month.

## **5. Dissemination of Vital Statistics**

Statistics Mauritius disseminates vital statistics through various publications.

*Economic & Social Indicators* are semesterly publications, presenting the main statistical data on population and vital statistics. The statistics for January to June, together with the forecast for the year, are released in September of the same year, while those for January to December are published in March of the following year.

*Digest of Demographic Statistics* is a yearly report presenting detailed and more comprehensive statistics on population and vital events. A set of population projections and life-tables are also included. The publication for a specific year is released in August of the following year.

*The Annual Digest of Statistics* publishes, in a concise and readily accessible form, population and vital statistics among other statistics available on the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the Republic of Mauritius.

Population and vital statistics, also available in printed version, can be accessed on the website of Statistics Mauritius at <http://statsmauritius.gov.mu>. The site also contains historical series of population and vital statistics as from 1972.

The Civil Status Division also disseminates population and vital statistics in its annual report.

## **6. Uses of Vital Statistics**

Vital statistics provide statistical data to inform policy makers. Statistics on births were widely used to shape and monitor population policies in the past when fertility was high.

The death statistics derived from the civil registration provide reliable information on mortality by cause of death. They are used for the assessment and monitoring of the health status of the population and for the planning of adequate health interventions. Also, the timely recording of deaths by cause provides early insights into trends in disease prevalence, thus helping to design prompt prevention or intervention strategies.

Together with data from population census, vital statistics allow in-depth analysis of fertility, morbidity and mortality. Life tables & expectancy of life statistics also permit in-depth analysis.

The statistics are used for international comparison, and they also provide inputs for the UN Demographic Yearbook – a major instrument for international statistical data dissemination.

Furthermore, vital statistics are used to monitor the MDGs where indicators are directly derived as in cases of reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS, malaria & other diseases.

## **7. Progress in the Compilation of Vital Statistics**

In the context of the implementation of the E-Business Plan for Statistics Mauritius, a new Application Architecture has been developed for the processing of data on vital events. The application is operational as from year 2011.

The system caters for the automatic coding of some data items and generates a pre-defined set of tables for monthly, quarterly, semesterly and yearly statistics. It also caters for the production of ad hoc tables.

In addition to the more efficient use of resources, the system has enhanced the analysis and reporting capacity of Statistics Mauritius on vital statistics.

**Civil Status Division and Statistics Mauritius**

**Republic of Mauritius**

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