



# Mauritius

## Mauritius: Current Path

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## Mauritius: Current Path

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### Mauritius: Current Path forecast

Chart 1: Political map of Mauritius



This page provides an overview of the key characteristics of Mauritius along its likely (or Current Path) development trajectory. The Current Path forecast from the International Futures forecasting (IFs) platform is a dynamic scenario that imitates the continuation of current policies and environmental conditions. The Current Path is therefore in congruence with historical patterns and produces a series of dynamic forecasts endogenised in relationships across crucial global systems. We use 2019 as a standard reference year and the forecasts generally extend to 2043 to coincide with the end of the third ten-year implementation plan of the African Union’s Agenda 2063 long-term development vision.

Mauritius is a small island nation located in the Indian ocean, 800 km east of Madagascar. The country is classified as

upper middle-income by the World Bank and forms part of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Regional Economic Communities. Chart 1 shows the capital of Port Louis situated in the north-west region, where the majority of the population is located.

The climate is tropical, with a dry winter and a wet summer during which a cyclone season poses a threat. Over the past four decades, the country has faced 13 noticeable cyclones which have caused damages in excess of US\$400 million. [1]

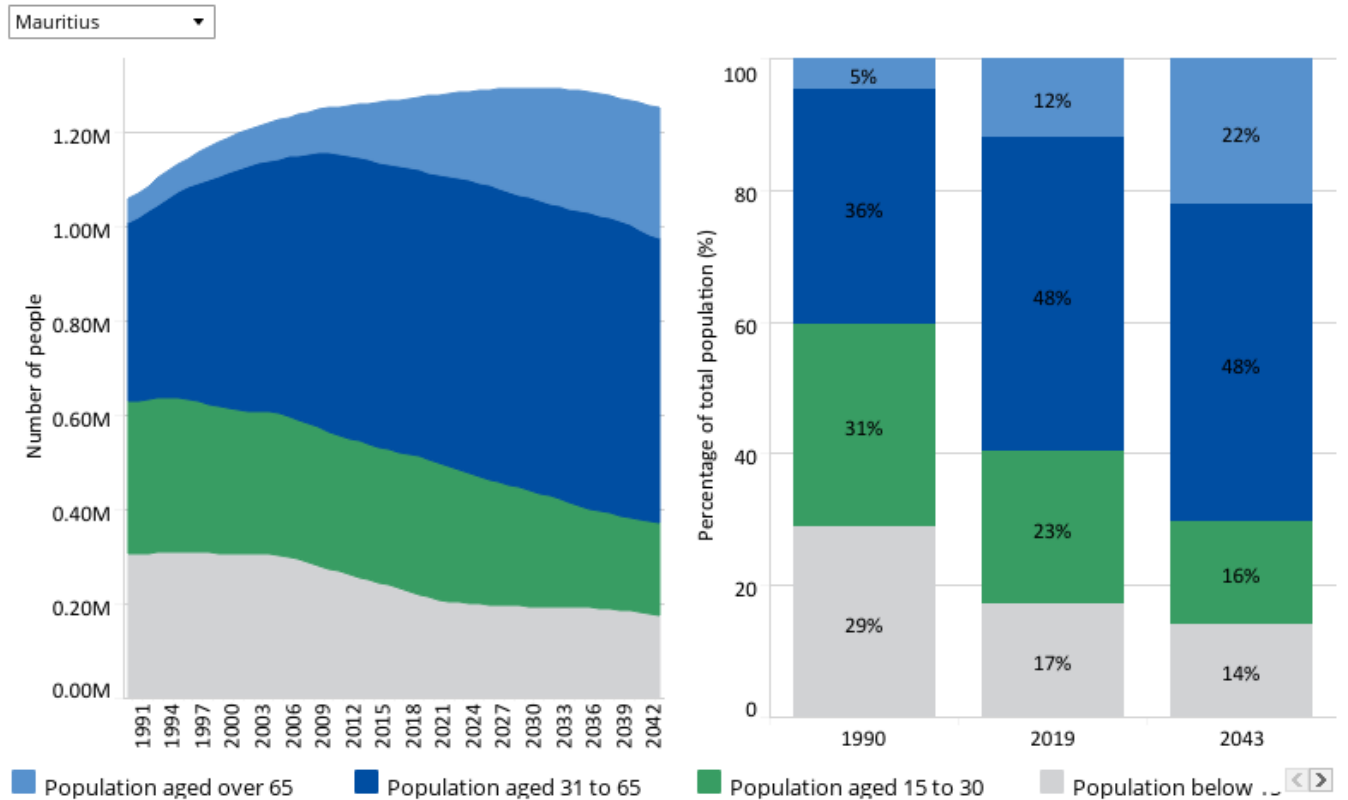
Forecasts suggest that storms are increasingly reaching cyclone strength as the number of rainy days decrease, adding pressure on the water supply and agricultural activity.



## Demographics: Current Path

### Chart 2: Population structure in CP, 1990–2043

By cohort and % of population



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from UN Population Division Population Prospects estimate and World Development Indicators population data

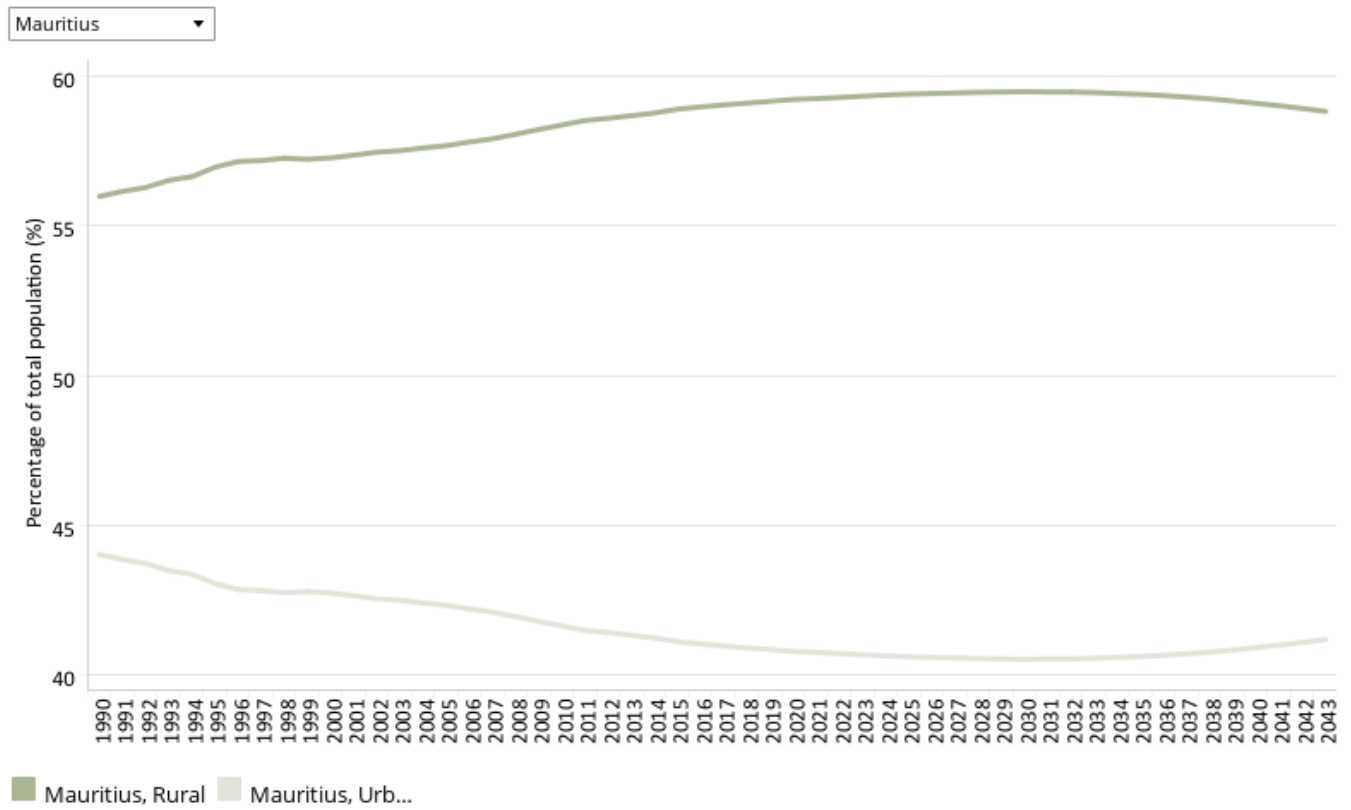
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Chart 2 shows the composition of Mauritius' population by age cohort and how it is expected to change in the Current Path forecast. In 2019, 70.8% of the population was in the working-age cohort resulting in a ratio of 2.4 workers for every dependant. The population is expected to become more elderly: those aged above 65 constituting an extra 10 percentage points of the total population by 2043. The ageing population could result in problems in the future as additional elderly dependants place added pressure on the working-age population. Mauritius' social protection system focuses heavily on pensions, and recent increases in pension payouts combined with increased life expectancy will cause rising expenditure, possibly to the detriment of other welfare distribution spending. [2]

Stagnating population growth results in the size of the population being smaller by 2043 than in 2019, decreasing by 22 000 people. The decline is due to a very low total fertility rate, with 1.4 births per woman in 2019, 0.7 below the replacement rate.

Chart 3: Urban and rural population in CP, 1990–2043  
% of population



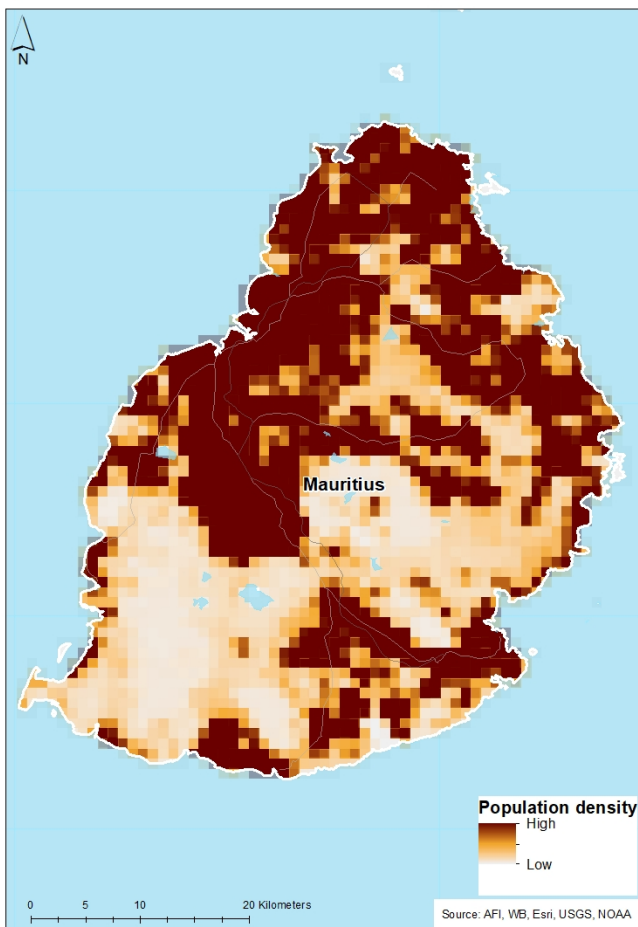
Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from UN World Urbanization Prospects estimate

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Chart 3 shows how Mauritius’ population is projected to remain predominantly rural as only 41.2% of people will be living in urban areas by 2043—a very small increase from 40.8% in 2019. Mauritius has the lowest rate of urbanisation among its upper middle-income peers in Africa. In 2019, 19% of all available land was protected forest [3] while 39.4% was used for agricultural cultivation. The lack of available land area on the main island restricts urban expansion into the hinterland, and it is forecast that the country will remain the least urbanised among its income peers.



Chart 4: Population density map for 2019

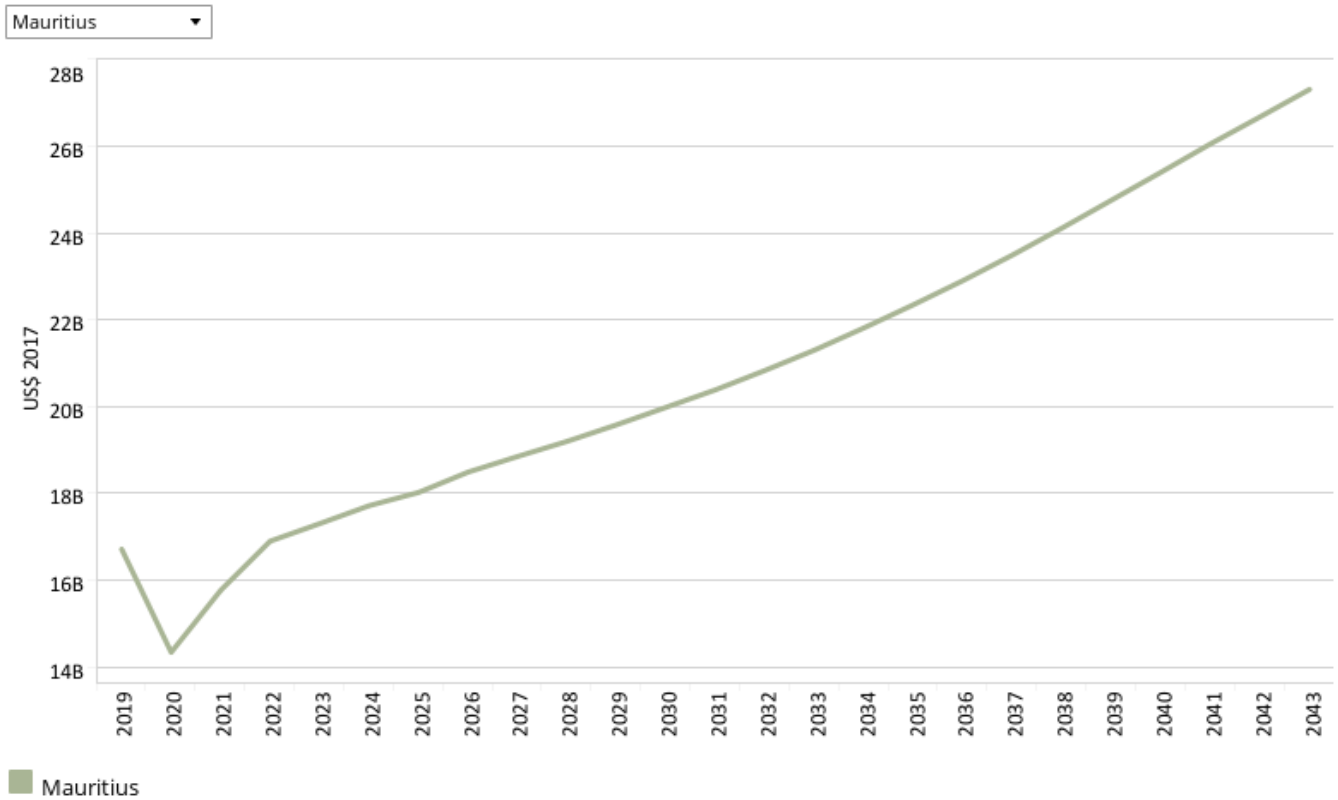


The highest levels of population density, as shown in Chart 4, are seen in Port Louis and the urban areas south west of the capital. Other areas of higher density are dotted around the island where smaller urban centres are situated. Due to large areas of land being used for agriculture, density is low in most areas of the country, as seen in the southern areas of the island. Average population density is the highest in Africa at 6.3 people per hectare in 2019, with an urban density of 36.4 people per hectare.



## Economics: Current Path

Chart 5: GDP in CP, 1990–2043  
Market exchange rates



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook database

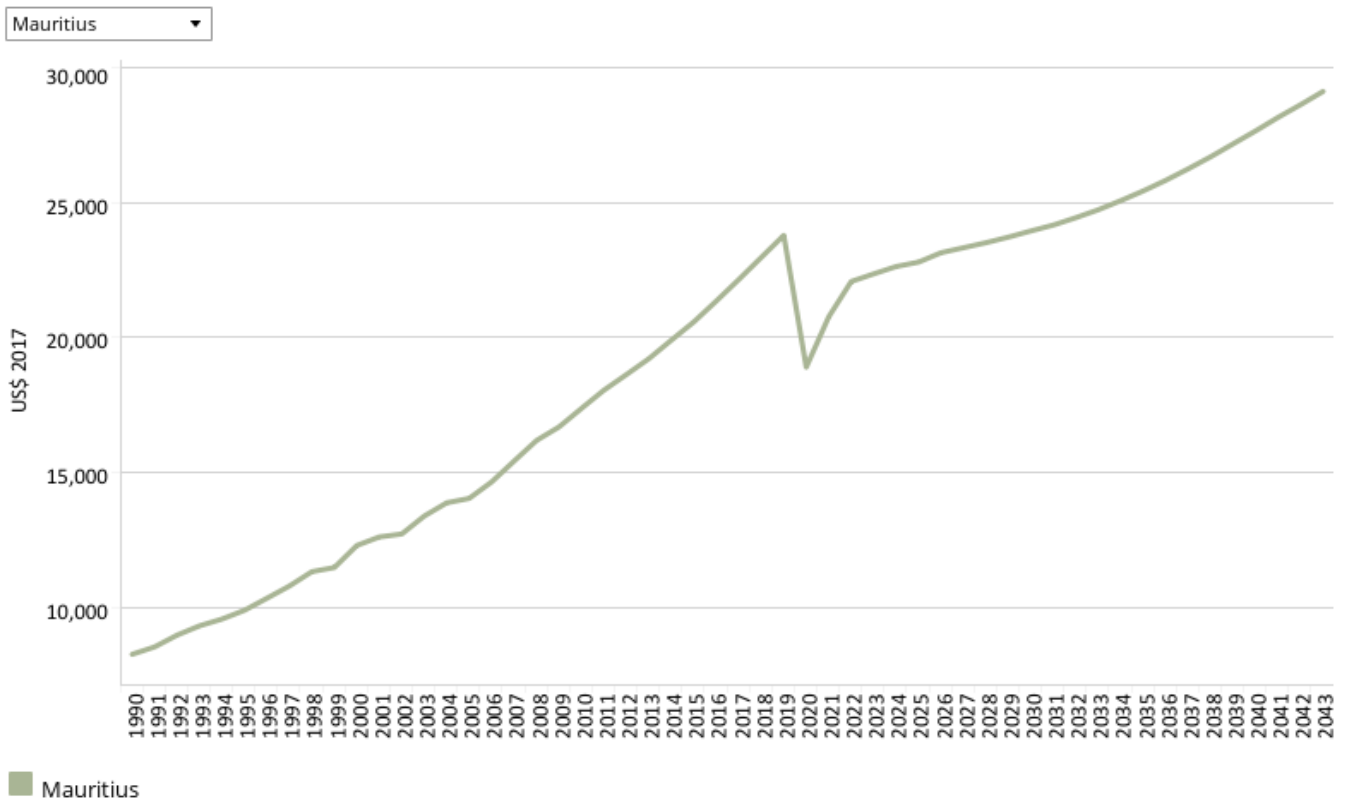
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Average growth has been steady for the last decade, averaging between 3% and 4% per year. The economy is largely driven by tourism, financial services and sugar exports, with more than 90% of cropland being used for sugar cane production. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the country's economy significantly, especially due to its reliance on the tourism sector, resulting in a severe retraction in 2020. Chart 5 shows how Mauritius' GDP is expected to continue to increase steadily until 2043, with the size of the economy growing to US\$27.3 billion from US\$16.7 billion in 2019.



**Chart 6: GDP per capita in CP, 1990–2043**  
Purchasing power parity



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from UN Population Division World Population Prospects and World Development Indicators data

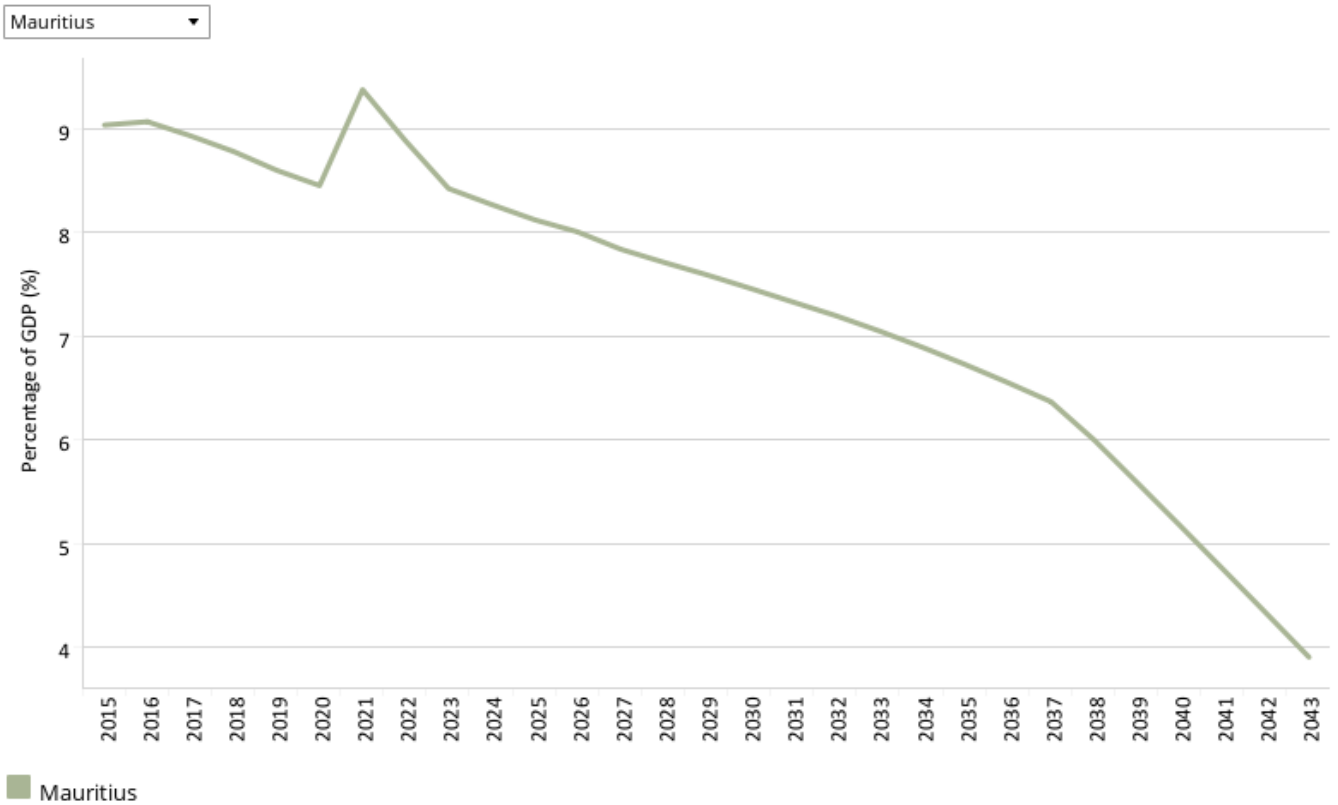
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Although many of the charts in the sectoral scenarios also include GDP per capita, this overview is an essential point of departure for interpreting the general economic outlook of Mauritius.

GDP per capita grew at a steady pace between 1990 and 2019, making Mauritius the country with the second highest income per capita in Africa. This growth trend is projected to continue, after recovering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching US\$29 114 by 2043, a rise of US\$6 725 compared to 2019. The 30% increase is attributable to population growth stagnating and GDP growth remaining robust due to the continuation of sound economic policies. Mauritius already outperforms SADC, COMESA and upper middle-income economies in Africa, and by 2043 the gap would have widened even further.

Chart 7: Informal sector value in CP, 2015–2043  
% of GDP



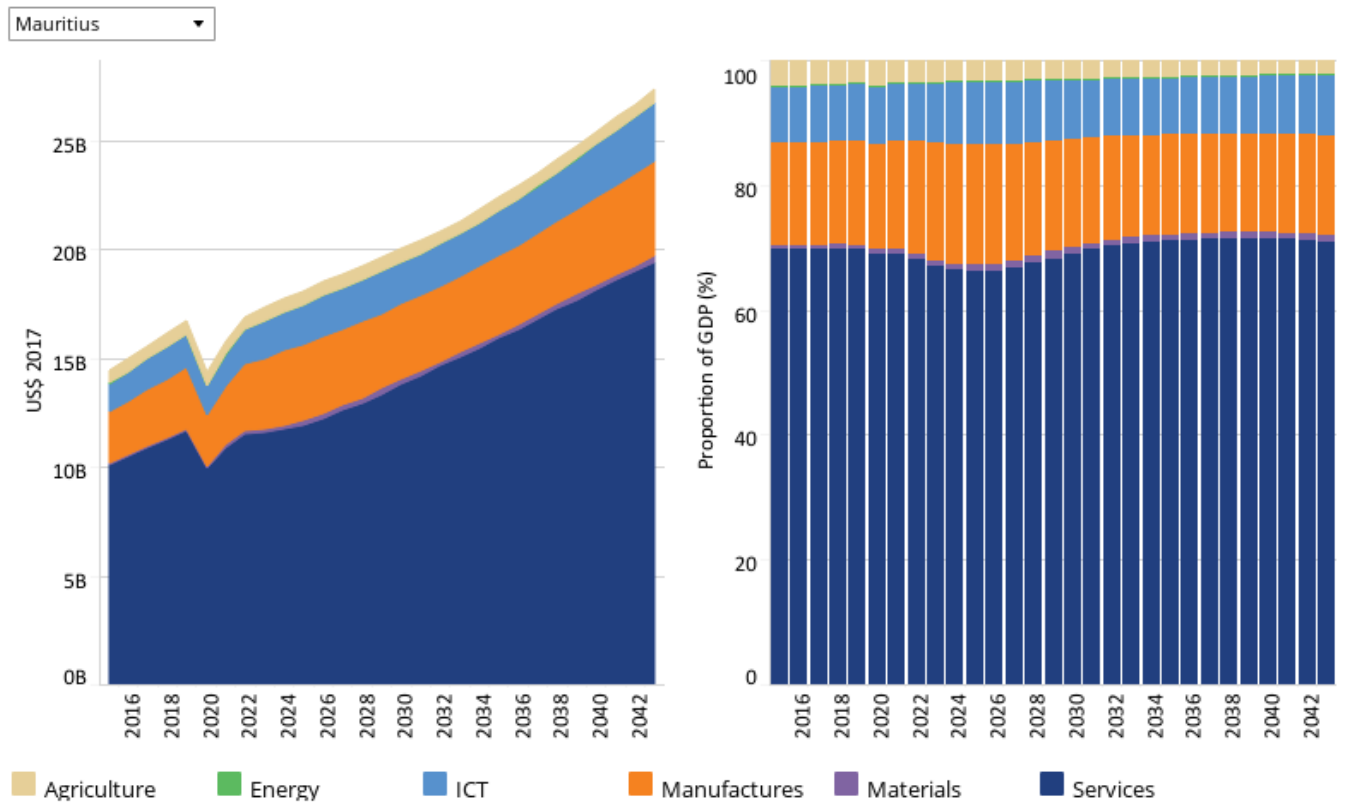
Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from UN Economic Commission for Europe [2008]; Elgin and Oztunali [2012]; Schneider and Enste [2012]

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The size of the informal sector in Mauritius is small, and its value as a per cent of GDP falls 5.4 percentage points below the average for its upper middle-income peers in Africa. In 2019, the value of the sector was 8.6% of GDP and is projected to fall to 3.9% by 2043. In 2019, 12.4% of non-agricultural labourers were classified as informal—a number projected to drop 3.9% by 2043. Lower levels of informality are advantageous for a country as workers are more productive and better protected in the formal sector. Government revenues are also boosted through additional tax income gathered in the formal sector—a benefit the country already enjoys.

Chart 8: Value added by sector in CP, 2015–2043  
Billions US\$ 2017 and % of GDP



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook database

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The IFs platform uses data from the Global Trade and Analysis Project (GTAP) to classify economic activity into six sectors: agriculture, energy, materials (including mining), manufactures, services and information and communications technology (ICT).

The sectoral composition of the Mauritian economy displayed in Chart 8 clearly shows services adding the most value in the economy at 69.7% of GDP in 2019. Manufacturing accounts for 16.6% of GDP, while ICT (9.2%) and agriculture (3.6%) follow behind in third and fourth place.

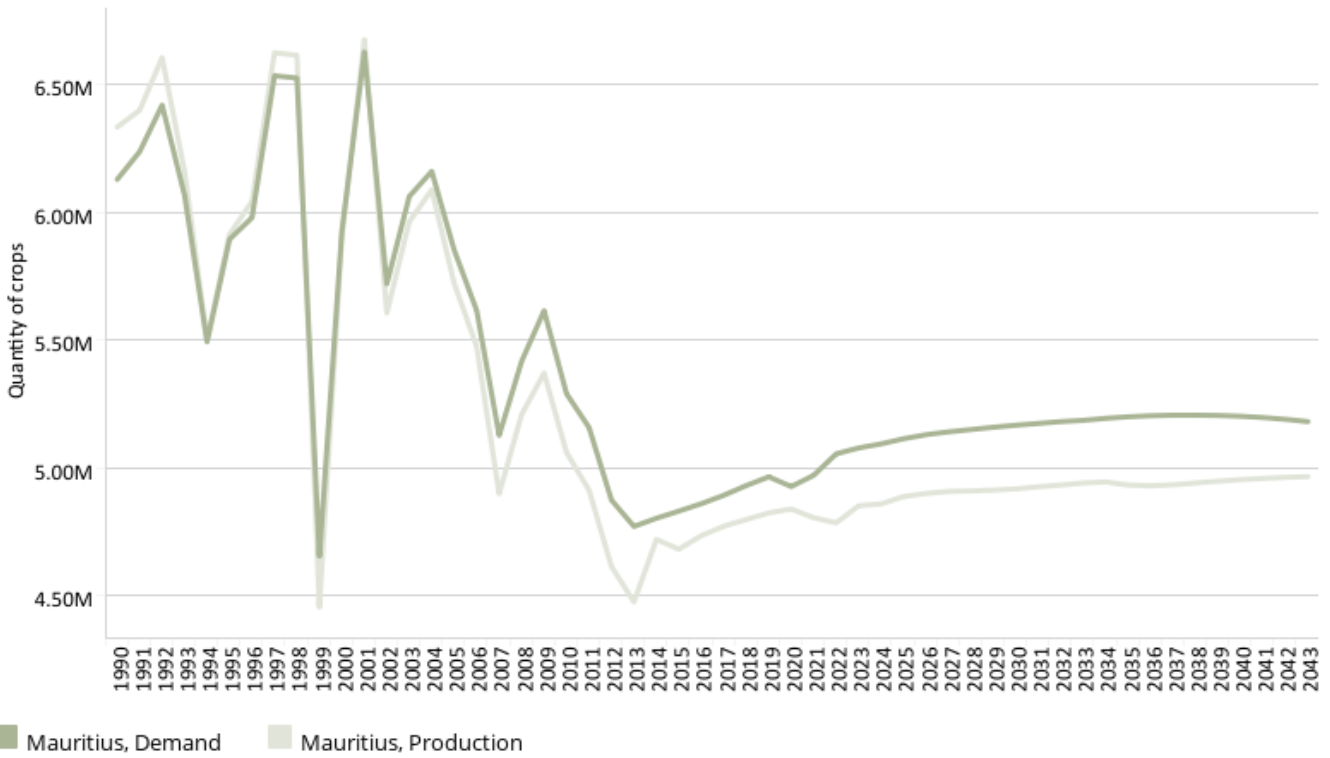
The shift away from agriculture and manufacturing towards services has created a skilled labour supply shortage. [4] The effect has been increasing wage income inequality, felt most keenly among women, as their labour force participation rate remains low compared to men. Youth unemployment is also increasing as fewer young people are willing to work in low-skilled agricultural- and manufacturing-type employment. [5] The government's efforts to redistribute growth through a social protection system has proven effective, but an emphasis on increasing female labour force participation is needed. [6]

The economy's composition is projected to remain largely unchanged by 2043: agriculture will see a decrease of 1.5 percentage points, while services will grow by 1.2 percentage points. In absolute terms, the services sector will add US\$7.7 billion more in value by 2043, whereas agriculture will add US\$0.03 billion less. Manufacturing and ICT are both projected to grow to be US\$1.6 billion and US\$1.2 billion larger by 2043 respectively.

Chart 9: Agriculture production/demand in CP, 1990–2043  
Crops million tons



Mauritius



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from Food and Agriculture Organization Food Balance Sheets

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The data on agricultural production and demand in the IFs forecasting platform initialises from data provided on food balances by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). IFs contains data on numerous types of agriculture but aggregates its forecast into crops, meat and fish, presented in million metric tons. Chart 9 shows agricultural production and demand as a total of all three categories.

Mauritius has a small shortfall of agricultural production compared to demand, amounting to 140 000 metric tons in 2019. Chart 9 shows that in the Current Path forecast the gap will gradually widen to 250 000 metric tons by 2043. Agricultural production is dominated by sugar cane, most of which is exported due to limited local demand. The demand for agricultural produce is mostly met through imports, with 20.8% of all imports in 2019 being agricultural. [7] The slow nature of population growth over the forecast period means agricultural demand will remain in check, with demand growing from 5 million metric tons in 2019 to 5.2 million metric tons by 2043.



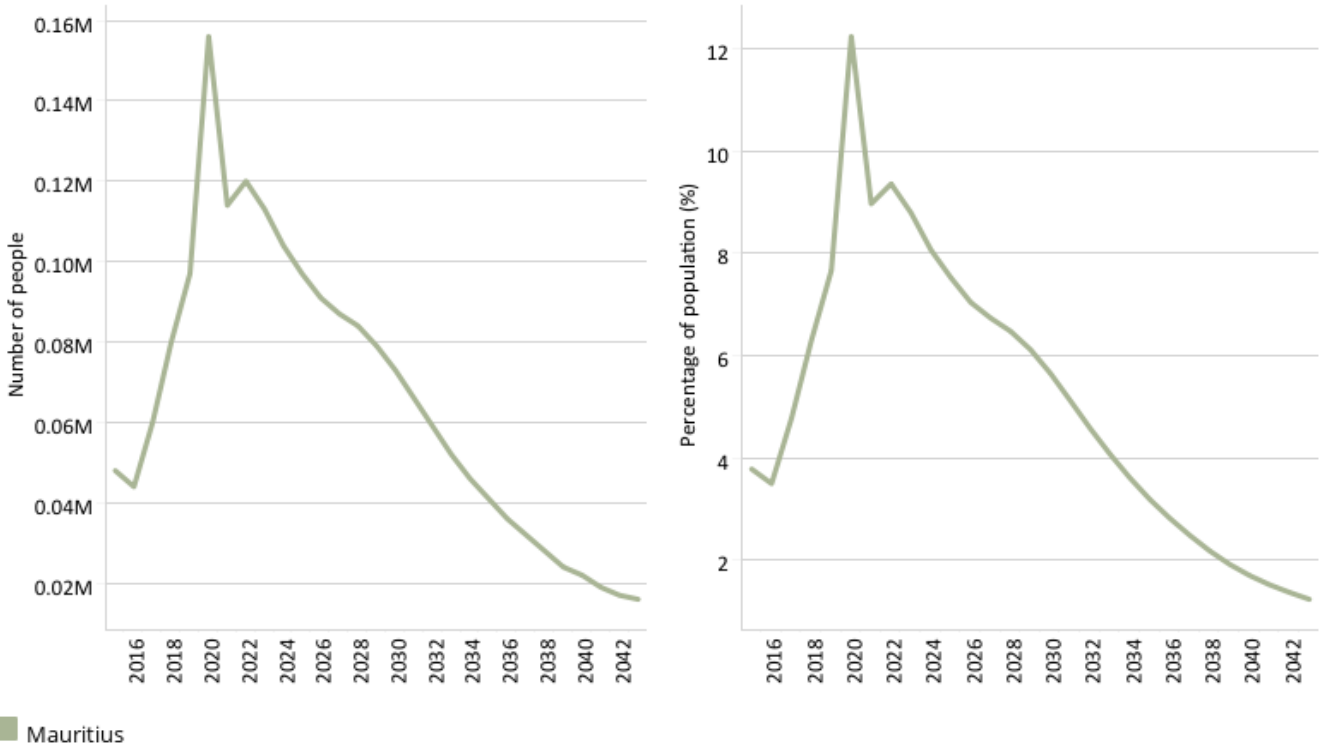
## Poverty: Current Path

### Chart 10: Poverty in CP, 2015–2043

Millions of people and % of total population



Mauritius \$5.50



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from UN Population Division Population Prospects estimate, World Development Indicators population data and PovcalNet World Bank data

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There are numerous methodologies and approaches to defining poverty. We measure income poverty and use GDP per capita as a proxy. In 2015, the World Bank adopted the measure of US\$1.90 per person a day (in 2011 international prices), also used to measure progress towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 1 of eradicating extreme poverty. To account for extreme poverty in richer countries occurring at slightly higher levels of income than in poor countries, the World Bank introduced three additional poverty lines in 2017:

- US\$3.20 for lower middle-income countries
- US\$5.50 for upper middle-income countries
- US\$22.70 for high-income countries.

Mauritius had been an upper middle-income country since 1993, and it was upgraded to high-income status in 2020, lifting its poverty line to US\$22.70 per person per day for the first time. The subsequent jump in extreme poverty was dramatic, but the country was downgraded back to upper middle-income status in 2021 following the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and export of goods. At the poverty level of US\$5.50, Mauritius had a poverty rate of 7.7%

in 2019 and is projected to eliminate extreme poverty at this level by 2036; it is projected to decline to 1.2% by 2043. The low poverty rate is largely due to social transfers aimed at redistributing wealth, which significantly reduce poverty and the country's Gini coefficient. [8]

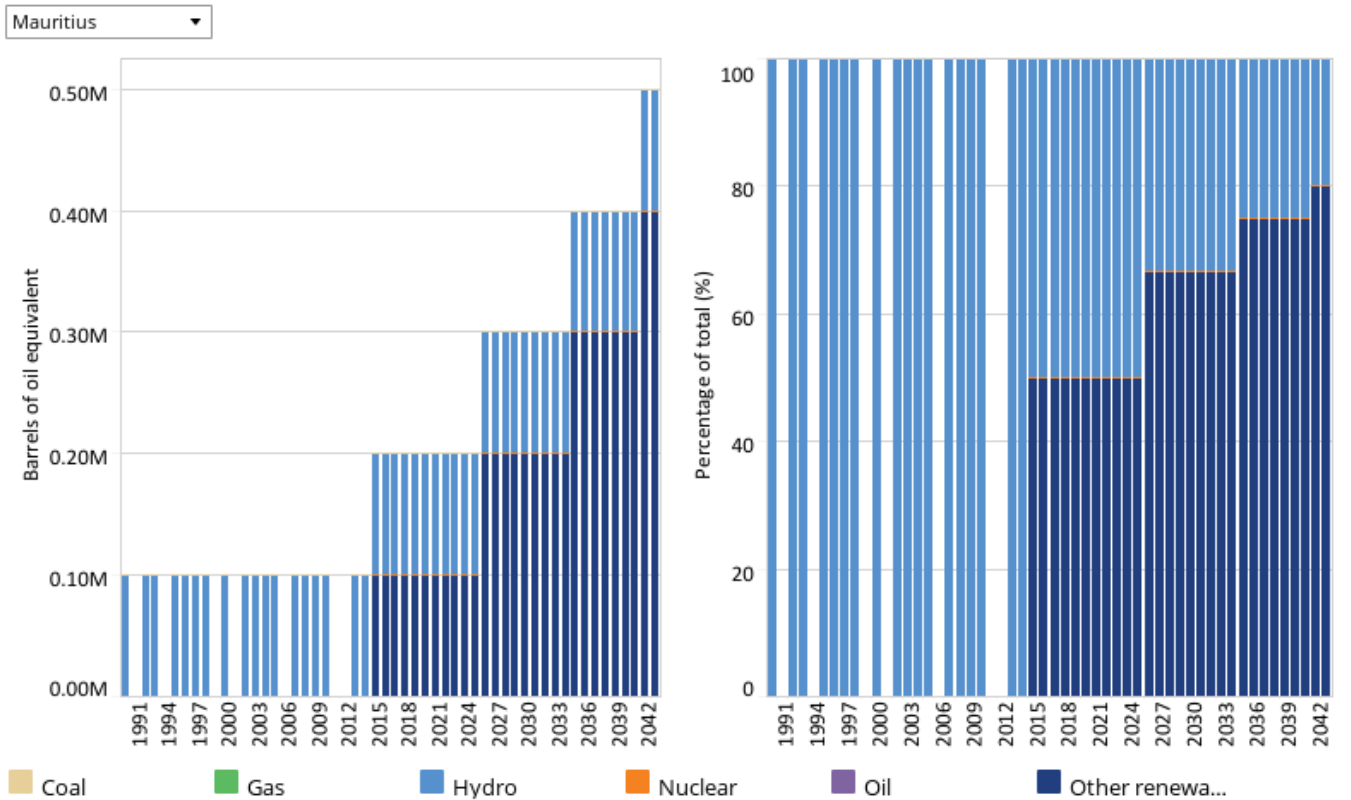
Compared to COMESA and SADC, whose poverty rates are measured at US\$1.90, Mauritius performs significantly better: COMESA's poverty rate was 35.4% in 2019, while SADC's was higher at 51%. The two RECs make progress, COMESA reaching 18.8% and SADC 34% by 2043, but both are well above Mauritius' level.

When compared to its upper middle-income peers, Mauritius also does substantially better: in 2019, upper middle-income Africa had a poverty rate of 45.9% and is projected to make limited progress to reach 39.7% by 2043.



## Carbon Emissions/Energy: Current Path

Chart 11: Energy production by type in CP, 1990–2043  
Barrels of oil equivalent and % of energy production



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from World Energy Outlook data

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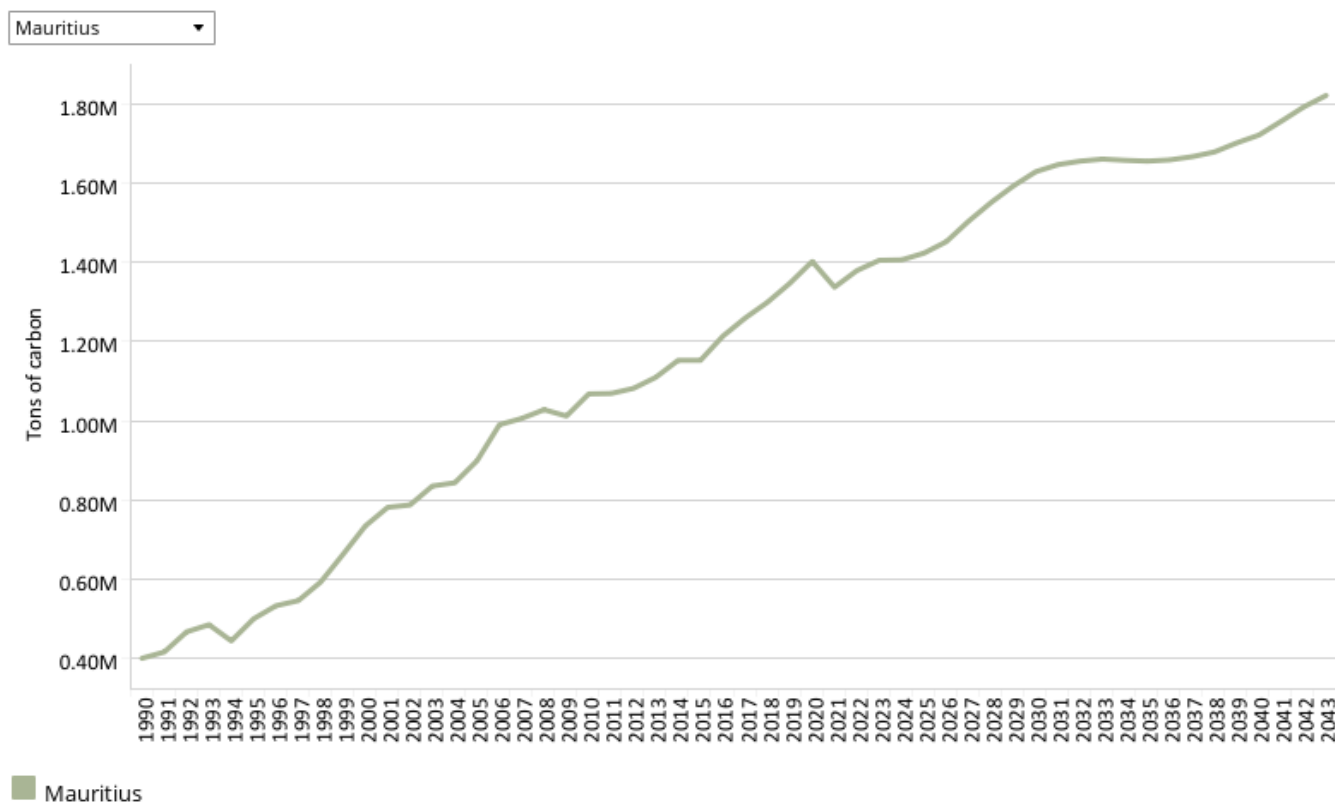
The IFs platform forecasts six types of energy, namely oil, gas, coal, hydro, nuclear and other renewables. To allow comparisons between different types of energy, the data is converted into billion barrels of oil equivalent (BBOE). The energy contained in a barrel of oil is approximately 5.8 million British thermal units (MBTUs) or 1 700 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy.

Mauritius' energy production of 0.0003 BBOE made it Africa's third smallest energy producer in 2019. The two sources of energy are hydro and other renewables, which both account for 50% of production, a balance which will shift to 20% hydro and 80% other renewables by 2043. Most of the renewable energy produced locally comes from bagasse, the organic material left over from crushing sugar cane. The demand for energy is almost exclusively met by energy imports, which accounted for 97% of demand in 2019. The near total dependence on imports will remain the norm as energy production increases by 0.0002 BBOE to reach 0.0005 BBOE by 2043.



## Chart 12: Carbon emissions in CP, 1990–2043

Million tons of carbon (note, not CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent)



Source: IFs 7.63 initialising from Carbon Dioxide Information Analysis Center data

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Carbon is released in many ways, but the three most important contributors to greenhouse gases are carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), carbon monoxide (CO) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). Since each has a different molecular weight, IFs uses carbon. Many other sites and calculations use CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent.

Chart 12 shows Mauritius' carbon emissions, which reached 1.3 million tons in 2019, a figure that has tripled since 1990. The country will steadily produce more emissions as the economy grows, particularly the manufacturing sector, with 1.8 million tons of carbon emitted by 2043. The 28.6% increase would be small in comparison to the rest of Africa as Mauritius moves from being the 26th biggest emitter on the continent in 2019 to the 41st by 2043.

Although a low emitter, Mauritius will still need to react to the effects of climate change with its rising surface and sea temperatures. The ND-GAIN Country Index, which ranks a country's vulnerability to climate change and its readiness to improve resilience against the negative consequences, [9] ranks Mauritius high for readiness and low for vulnerability, meaning it is well placed to respond to climate change-related events.

## Endnotes

1. EM-DAT, 2021, [www.emdat.be](http://www.emdat.be).
2. The World Bank, Mauritius - Through the eye of a perfect storm - Coming back stronger from the COVID crisis, April 2021
3. Government of Mauritius, [Forests in Mauritius](#)
4. The World Bank, Mauritius: [Addressing inequality through more equitable labor markets](#), 26 March 2018
5. The World Bank, Mauritius: [Earnings mobility and inequality of opportunity in the labor market in four charts](#), 24 April 2019
6. The World Bank, Mauritius: [Addressing inequality through more equitable labor markets](#), 26 March 2018
7. The World Bank, [Food imports \(% of merchandise imports\) - Mauritius, 2021](#)
8. The World Bank, Mauritius - Through the eye of a perfect storm - Coming back stronger from the COVID crisis, April 2021
9. University of Notre Dame, [ND-GAIN Country Index, 2021](#)

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## About the authors

Mr Du Toit McLachlan joined the ISS in February 2021 as an extern from the Auwal Socio-Economic Research Institute (ASRI). Du Toit holds an honour's degree in international relations from the University of Pretoria and is the AFI website manager.

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