



MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL,
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)
AMBASSADOR IRWIN LAROCQUE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
OBSERVANCE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY
15 OCTOBER 2020

It is my pleasure as Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, to send greetings on the launch of the Twelfth Observance of **Caribbean Statistics Day on 15 October 2020**.

This year also marks the Third Observance of **World Statistics Day**, which is being observed on **20 October 2020**, under the theme, "**Connecting the World with Data we can Trust**". This Theme will also be used for Caribbean Statistics Day. Statistical data drives a myriad of decisions that impact the lives of the people of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and worldwide. In this period of the Novel Coronavirus global pandemic, COVID-19, statistics are required to track the status of the pandemic, and its economic and social impact, reinforcing its value to society. Statistics as a science of learning provides an essential service, through making available data for decision-making in the face of uncertainty.

In the efforts to manage and overcome the pandemic, epidemiological data underpin the information base on the spread of the virus. The collection, compilation and dissemination of basic statistics includes the number of confirmed cases, the daily number of new cases and the pattern over time, the number of deaths, recoveries, active cases and the number of tests conducted. These are just a few of the data elements that are collected by the National Statistical Systems of countries to ascertain the magnitude of the impact of the virus on the population and on the economy, and to drive the decisions for solutions to mitigate that impact.

The extent of its effect on trade, government revenues, unemployment, access to education, on children that are below the poverty line with no smartphones or internet, are some of the issues on which our National Statistical Offices and Systems are required to provide information. Sound policy decisions by governments on restrictions to be put in place, on the closing or reopening of national borders, schools and certain business places, will only be possible by utilising trusted data from the statistical offices and systems.

Globally, statistical methods and analyses are employed to assist the clinical trials that are being undertaken to obtain a vaccine.

It is clear therefore, that the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS), with its strategic visioning for the improvement of statistics over the next ten (10) years, takes on added significance. The strategic framework of the RSDS was endorsed in July 2018, by the Conference of Heads of Government at its Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting. Already, the Implementation and Communication Plans for this Strategic Framework have been prepared, as well as drafts of the Resource Mobilisation and Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks, that are to be considered by the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) next month.

Investment in statistics to enable the implementation of the RSDS is critical, and I urge both Governments and our International Development Partners to continue to support the RSDS, given the vivid examples that we have seen of the importance of statistics during this global pandemic. Already the Decennial Population and Housing Census that should have started in the Region from this year and which provides a seabed of information for planning has had to be postponed by countries. The Census Framework, as a key aspect of the RSDS, would require financial and technical assistance in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the statisticians in CARICOM, including those at the Secretariat, for their tremendous efforts in producing and disseminating high quality statistics to assist in our quest to overcome our many development challenges.

In the context of the Coronavirus pandemic, this year's theme of "***Connecting the World with Data we can Trust***" for the observance of Caribbean and World Statistics Day is most relevant. To maintain that trust requires the necessary investment in statistics which in turn would lead to guiding evidence-based decisions geared towards an improved quality of life of the peoples of our Region and the world.
