



Stats News & Views

Facts, Figures and Updates from the Statistics Section of the Caribbean Community Secretariat

December, 2005

Volume 4, Issue 2

Main Events

Thirtieth (30th) Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS)

The Thirtieth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (30th SCCS) took place in Kingston, Jamaica on 26 - 28 October 2005. The December issue of this Newsletter presents some of the main deliberations and decisions of this meeting as well as current and past events of importance to regional statistical development. The late dissemination of this Volume is regretted.

Regional Statistical Programme

In January 2005, the Community Council of Ministers (Council) approved a Regional Statistical Programme and a Resolution calling on Governments of the Region to give priority to increasing investment in statistics. It is now left for these decisions to be implemented by Member States.

Essentially the implementation of the Regional Statistical Programme is to enable the production of statistics required to inform the new arrangements being put in place, relative to the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). It is anticipated that the programme will provide the data required for the CSME establishment, monitoring and evaluation as well as to ensure that data are relevant, timely, are available approximately around the same time period across Member States, are of high quality, are comparable through conformity to international and regionally agreed standards. Underpinning this programme is the critical need to achieve harmonisation

(Continued on page 2 Column 1)

Main Events

Honouring Past and Present Chief Statisticians/Directors of Statistics

In recognition of the 30th SCCS Meeting, the CARICOM Community Secretariat incorporated activities to honour past and present Chief Statisticians/Directors of Statistics at the opening ceremony of this SCCS meeting. Information was collected from Member States on Chief Statisticians/Directors of Statistics who served during the period 1973 to 2005 and on their main contributions to the statistical development of their respective countries. This information was presented in the form of a PowerPoint presentation with accompanying audio. Recognition was also given to the contribution of Mr. Osmond Gordon, who served in the CARICOM Secretariat Statistics Section as Programme Manager for the period 1986 to 2004 and as CARICOM'S Census Coordinator for the last (two) 2 years of this period.

It is the intention of the Statistics Sub-programme to continue this exercise, expanding it to include other individuals in the Region who have contributed to regional statistical development. The presentation can be found online at www.caricomstats.org and can be made available on compact disks (CD).

Free Movement Statistics: Status Report

Following a training workshop for Free Movement Officials in October 2004, Member States commenced submission of data on movement of persons under this provision of the CSME, to the Secretariat's Statistics Sub-programme, in accordance with the format agreed to by the relevant officials. While the rate of data submission was slow, the Secretariat received partial data during 2005 from four Member States.

(Continued on page 2 Column 1)

Contents

Main Events— Highlights of the Thirtieth (30th) Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS)- Several articles; Regional Statistical Programme, Honouring Past and Present; Chief Statisticians/Directors of Statistics Free Movement of Statistics	1
Current Events – Status Of 2000 Census Data Analysis Project; Government Procurement Statistics	2
Past Events and Outcomes: Regional Workshop on Social and Gender Statistics	3
Publications - Forthcoming publications	4

Main Events

(Continued from page 1 Column 1)

in the methodological approaches and processes in regional statistical development.

At the 30th SCCS Meeting, an Advisory Group was established to facilitate implementation of the Regional Statistical Programme and of the Resolution calling on governments to give priority to investing in Statistics, within Member States. It was agreed that the Advisory Group would comprise members of the existing advisory group that operates in the area of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics, with the addition of the Assistant Director of Statistics of Trinidad and Tobago's Central Statistical Office. Currently, a web-based forum is in progress to facilitate the activation of the Regional Statistical Programme.

Status of Merchandise Trade Statistics

In 2005, five (5) Member States met the April timeline for the submission of Merchandise Trade Statistics to the Secretariat, compared to seven (7) Member States that submitted on time in 2004. Dominica was the first Member State to submit 2004 data as early as February 2005. As at 22nd November 2005, nine (9) Member States submitted 2004 data, which was similar to submissions in 2004 of 2003 data. With regard to the Revised Common External Tariff (CET) based on the HS 2002 (Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System), to date six (6) Member States have implemented the updated CET.

Additionally, the Eurotrace software used by some Member States to process their trade data was upgraded to a Windows version by Eurostat. Member States were urged to test this software and report any problems detected to EUROSTAT since the software was not yet finalised. The Secretariat is also working along with the Guyana Bureau of Statistics in an effort to test and implement the upgraded software to process Guyana's trade data.

(Continued from page 1 Column 2)

Free Movement Statistics (continued)

Based on the data received, the following observations were noted:

- Further training is necessary in the use of the International Industry and Occupation Classifications. The NSOs can play a significant role in this activity;

Main Events

(Continued from Column 2)

- Some fields are not being completed, for example, information on spouse;
- More data fields than what were suggested by the officials are being captured in the database. Member States have reported that these are relevant for their needs;
- The agreed frequency for data submission was not followed.

The system is still very much in a developmental stage and will undoubtedly undergo modifications before becoming fully capable of measuring the movement of persons across the Region. It is important to note that free movement of persons is one of the key pillars of the CSME.

Other issues raised at the 30th SCCS Meeting include:

- *Progress Report on the Sixth and Seventh Meetings of the CARICOM Advisory Group– Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics Components;*
- *The Implementation of the 1993 United Nations Systems of National Accounts (1993 SNA) and Tourism Satellite Account development;*
- *An Overview of Development Work in the area of Government Procurement Statistics and Trade in Services*

Current Events

Status of 2000 Census Data Analysis Project

In January 2005 efforts to implement the activities in the Census 2000 Data Analysis Project were intensified. The project comprises five (5) components: the preparation of analytical National Census Reports (NCRs); the preparation of Regional Special Topic Monographs (RSTMs); the production of a Volume of Basic Tables (VBT); the conduct of a Demographic Analysis workshop and the convening of seminars to disseminate the main findings of the Census Data Analysis Project.

One of the major outputs of the project will be the completion of the analytical National Census Reports (NCRs). These reports would take the data beyond the descriptive into the analytical sphere and should therefore have implications for policy development and

(Continued on page 3 Column 1)

Current Events

(Continued from page 2 Column 2)

decision-making. In May 2005 two (2) data analysis consultants and sixteen (16) writers were contracted to prepare these reports, followed by the contracting of a Data Processing Consultant, whose main duties include the generation of the tables from the various countries' databases.

Of the eighteen (18) Member States participating in the Project, the Secretariat obtained databases of the results of the 2000 Round of Censuses from fifteen countries.

The UNFPA and UNECLAC provided technical assistance to support the Project through the visits of experts to the Secretariat's headquarters to review and edit the databases submitted by Member States. Having obtained error-free data it was anticipated that all tables would be generated by the end of December, 2005. The NCR reports were to be completed by the end of May, 2006.

Fundamentally, the objective of this Project is to promote the use of Census data in general, utilising the 2000 Census Round. It is planned to make full use of the conventional methods to disseminate the data, including convening national data dissemination seminars and workshops for major stakeholders in selected Member States, as a means of promoting the use of the data .

Government Procurement Statistics

The Statistics Sub-programme continued the implementation of activity under a project to establish Government Procurement Frameworks in CARICOM Member States. The Statistics Sub-Programme was responsible for Component II of this Project which dealt with the Collection and Analysis of Government Procurement Statistics in Member States. Detailed data were collected from six Member States for the period, 1998-2002 from the various Government Procurement Agencies. For other Member States, data were sourced from the national estimates of revenue and expenditure wherever detailed records were not available.

The first report that was completed was for The Bahamas. This was submitted to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) for review. The Statistics section provided counterpart support to enable the delivery of the outputs, undertaking a mission to assist the Team Leader with the heavy workload generated in the Project. At the end of the mission, three reports, Dominica, Grenada, and Trinidad & Tobago and

Past Events and Outcomes

St Vincent and the Grenadines were completed and submitted to the CSME Unit as a result of the mission. The Statistics Unit of the Secretariat also coded a huge amount of records for Barbados and Saint Lucia as well as for some of the countries mentioned above and generated tables for analysis in the reports.

Regional Workshop on Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics

A regional workshop on Social and Gender Statistics was convened on 12 - 13 September 2005 in The Bahamas. The workshop was funded by the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building (TFSCB) and by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Some of the main conclusions and recommendations from the workshop were:

Social/Gender Statistics Component

- Member States were urged in cases where there were gaps in the data to draw on the experiences of those countries with established best practices such as the continuous Survey of Living Conditions for monitoring poverty in Jamaica;
- There should be increased collaboration and communication between statistical offices and line ministries as producers and/or users of social indicators and statistics including the MDGs;
- The absence of reliable data on literacy and other specific MDG indicators such as the net enrolment ratios was highlighted. The Secretariat intends to collaborate with agencies such as the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) to build capacity in producing reliable and accurate education statistics;
- The importance of having complete and accurate Civil Registration and Vital Statistics systems was emphasized as key sources of data on births and deaths. Pursuant to this objective, Member States were urged to strengthen collaboration with relevant national agencies;
- The need for strengthening of the surveillance of HIV/AIDS in Member States was highlighted since it is recognised that HIV/AIDS incidence is under-reported.

Environmental Statistics Component

Under the Agenda items of the Environmental Statistics the following were the main issues discussed:

Past Events and Outcomes

- The core environmental statistics and indicators and related MDGs compiled by the Member States were

(continued from page 3 column 2)

- reviewed as well as the identification of major gaps in the compilation of this data;
- There were discussion on the methodologies and procedures for filling the identified gaps

Among the recommendations that ensued were:

- CARICOM Secretariat should prepare a format for the collection of metadata on environmental statistics by Member States.
- It was suggested that the list of core indicators should be reviewed; and
- The data validation process of environmental statistics submitted to the Secretariat should be completed.

Certificate Course in Web Application Development Using Java Technologies

During the period September 7, 2005 to October 18, 2005, one Member of Staff in the Statistics Unit received training in Delhi, India under the CARICOM_India Cooperation Agreement, in web application development using Java technologies.

Facilitated by TATA InfoTech, the main objective of this course was to enable IT professionals and or programmers to be able to develop proficiency in authoring standard and web based applications. Organised by the Indian Government to promote IT development worldwide, participants, at the end of that course were expected to be able to apply Java and it's components to the World Wide Web.

There were three main approaches used to achieve the desired outcome, which included:

- Concept based training to create an understanding of the program to help programmers to build a strong foundation;
- Ample course exercises and assignments designed in a manner that programmers were most likely to commit mistakes;
- Finally, the rectification of any mistakes made to cement the programmers' training.

It is anticipated that the regional and national statistical offices can benefit from the application of this training to enhance statistical websites at these levels.

Training workshop on Economic Censuses and Surveys, 19 to 30 September, 2005, Washington, D.C.

An Economic Statistics workshop for statisticians in the CARICOM Region was held from 19—30 September 2005 in Washington, D.C. Technical assistance to support the attendance of participants for CARICOM Member States was provided by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and was supported by counterpart funding from the national offices and from the Caribbean Technical Assistance Centre (CARTAC). The course was facilitated by the United States Bureau of the Census Washington D. C.

The workshop was designed for statisticians and data processors responsible for producing Economic Statistics critical to the measurement of growth and development. In discussions between the Secretariat, the Bureau and United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), areas of possible interest that could lead to an improvement in this area were proposed. Suggestions that emanated from those discussions included - Economic Censuses, Sampling Design and Survey Methods with particular reference to Economic Surveys, and training in statistical analysis of survey data. These suggestions were further refined and broadened with input from the Chief Statisticians/Directors of National Statistical Offices (NSOs).

Over the ten– day period, the workshop took the form of a theoretical course on methodological issues, focusing mainly on the methodology involved in conducting an Economic Census within any country.

Publications

Forthcoming publications:

- *CARICOM's Trade—A Quick Reference to Some Summary Data—1996-2001 (released);*
- *Women and Men in CARICOM Member States: Labour Force Statistics 1980,1990 & 2000 censuses (released);*
- *CARICOM's National Accounts Report –2000-02;*
- *Balance of Payments of CARICOM Member States: 2000-03;*
- *Selected Economic Indicators 1998-2002.*

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