

Stats News & Views

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

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Main Events

Thirty-Fifth (35th) Meeting Of The Standing Committee Of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) and Nineteenth (19th) Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC)

The Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (35th SCCS) and the Nineteenth (19th) Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) took place in Roseau, Dominica from 8–9 November 2010 and on the 10-11 November 2010 respectively. At the Thirty-Fifth Meeting of the SCCS, consideration was given to the progress of various areas of statistics and related developmental activities and decisions were taken as required. At the Nineteenth (19th) Meeting of the RCCC, specific focus was given to the current needs of countries that have completed their enumeration activities in 2010. An evaluation was also done on the progress of those countries preparing for their Census enumeration in 2011 and beyond. Some of the main technical issues discussed at these meetings are detailed in this issue.

Work Plan Under The 2010 Regional Strategy For 2011

At the Nineteenth (19th) Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) the CARICOM Secretariat reported on those census activities planned for next year (2011) and beyond. It was noted that the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland acting through the Department for International Development (DFID), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the European Union under the Caribbean Integration

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Main Events

Development Of Statistics On Information Communication Technologies (ICT)

The ICT statistical sub-committee focused attention on the following areas in its work plan in 2007:

- Defining the Scope of ICT;
- Identification of an Indicator Framework comprising all the International Indicators as well as themes and corresponding indicators that are of relevance to the region;
- Conduct of special surveys and studies;
- Establishment of regional benchmarks, best practices, review of work already put in place and the exchange of information

The following are the achievements to date:

- **Definition of the ICT Sector:** the sub-committee has reached consensus on the definition of the scope of ICT. The definition is based on the OECD definition but incorporates specific retail trade activities not included by the OECD. In addition measurement of external trade in goods and in services and employment as it relates to ICTs were incorporated in the definition.
- **Indicator Framework Development:** The sub-committee is in the process of identifying **Caribbean Specific ICT Indicators** incorporating those performance indicators of all the sub-committees and indicators based on themes thought relevant to the region. These themes include: Governance, ICT Sector Liberalisation, e-Commerce/e-Business, Local Content, Information Literacy, e-Learning, Health, Poverty Alleviation/

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Support Programme (CISP) Ninth European Development Fund (9th EDF) are among the International Development Partners that have supported activities under the 2010 Regional Strategy. However, there are still some activities for which funds have not yet been obtained such as for the analysis of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census Data.

Various activities to support the census took place during the period July to November 2010. Among them were the completion of Component II, Common Methodologies of the Common Census Framework Project funded by IDB/UNFPA, technical assistance in Mapping/Geographic Information System and the successful execution of the Second CARICOM Regional Workshop on Census Data Processing for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

The following activities would be implemented under the 2010 Regional Strategy of the support from November 2010 and in 2011–

- The UNSD and CARICOM Secretariat sponsored Follow-up Training Workshop on Census Data Processing for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses;
- Continued work on The Common Census Project – Component III - Compatibility of Dissemination Tools. The Consultant will be required to work closely with developers/trainers of the Redatam online and DevInfo/CensusInfo dissemination tools to certify that countries are assisted in ensuring that this online querying system of the census database is fully developed based on CARICOM specified online tabulation plans. The consultant is also expected to provide technical assistance to the countries to develop their existing information technology tools and support the adoption of a common regional tool, administrative boundary geospatial files
- Application of in-country technical assistance in data processing with focus on issues related to data capture (scanning) data editing using Teleform and CSPro with guidance from a DFID supported consultant.
- Planning for the commencement of a Common Census Data Analysis.

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- Social Inclusion, Agriculture, Security, Legal and Regulatory framework, Culture and Disaster Management.
- **Recognition of the Social Impact of ICT:** the definition of the ICT sector is essentially in economic terms. The sub-committee however recognises that the broader impact of the reach of ICT goes far beyond the economic impact to include empowerment of all sections of society; long distance education; tele-medicine; disaster management etc.; in the context of the broader impact of ICTs, the Statistics sub-committee has reviewed terms of reference for the conduct of a study on the social impact of ICT which would complement the work put to be put in place in the measurement of the economic contribution of ICT.

Third (3rd) Regional Statistics Research Seminar

On the 12th November 2010 in Roseau Dominica, the CARICOM Secretariat Regional Statistics Sub-programme convened its third Regional Statistics Research Seminar. The idea of this seminar was first discussed at the Second Meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) in San Ignacio, Belize. The need for such a seminar became evident given the challenges faced by National Statistical Offices (NSOs) due to the limited capabilities of research programmes in the Region. It has been noted that the benefits of conducting these seminars include enabling a better understanding of the data; allowing for methodological research ; and facilitating the process of anonymisation/ dissemination of microdata.

Four (4) papers were submitted to the Secretariat from Member States as well as International and Regional organisations. These were as follows:-

- Leadership in the work place
- Poverty mapping in Suriname with Census 2004 data
- Methodology of determining household consumption of population and housing census data
- Measuring the prevalence of domestic violence in Caribbean societies

The Secretariat is extremely appreciative of the excellent presentations received which were very informative to the Seminar and to the debate on statistical issues.

Current Events

Consultancy for Statistical Programming and the development of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS)—Country Visits

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the Statistical Programming process at the Regional and National levels, including enabling a strategic approach to the development of statistics in countries through National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) mechanisms that are being promoted by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty First Century (PARIS21). The project supports the formulation and implementation of NSDS that would take into account the following levels of programming:-

- At the CARICOM Secretariat which would ensure the relevance of the Statistics agenda to the policy objectives and priorities of the regional integration process;
- Among the Statistics Offices of the Region, setting the orientation for development of statistics in the Region, including the use of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) as a policy forum;
- Within the national statistical systems, initiating discussions between users, producers and suppliers through regular and institutionalised consultations.

The consultants recruited to executed this project have already completed several tasks as part of an overall work plan in their first mission of visits to the CARICOM Secretariat and three Member countries (Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago). Information was collected on the present situation of statistical programming in Member States from available documentary information at the CARICOM Secretariat and specific information was also collected about the three Member countries during their individual visits. The consultants also collected information about NSDS and programmatic activities under the responsibility of the Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB). A questionnaire was also designed to collect information on good statistical practices and disseminated to Member States. An analysis has begun based upon the information collected; this analysis is important for an overall assessment of the capacity of CARICOM Member countries as it relates to the convergence to the Regional Statistics Work programme.

Work will continue in this area. A second mission is scheduled for the period October to December.

Current Events

Consultancy for the Improvement in the Basic Data Production in National Accounts—Country Visits

The main objective of the project is to provide support to Member States to improve the basic source for data production which can be used to compile more complex national economic statistics. Activities include a review of the framework for the production, operation and maintenance of Statistical Business Registers (BR) in Member States; identification of possible sources for improving the coverage and updating of the business register including administrative sources, household surveys and Population and Housing censuses; an assessment of basic data needs for the compilation of National Accounts and the preparation of recommendations aimed at providing technical assistance in areas where there are gaps with respect to GDP estimates; preparation of a methodological framework to assist Member States to use the basic data in the compilation of GDP estimates; and training of relevant staff to efficiently and effectively update and maintain the BR database and sustain the production of basic data.

The consultants recruited to work on this project have chosen a four-prong approach in the implementation of the project as follows: - Phase I- Inception, Phase II- Review and assessment, Phase III- Analysis, Recommendation and Methodological Framework preparation and Phase IV- Assistance.

Under Phase 2, the consultants designed a questionnaire as a template for gathering information about the Statistical Business Registry (SBR) from the national statistical offices of Member States. This questionnaire was sent to Member States for completion so as to enable the consultants to develop and strengthen survey data capabilities through improvement in the establishment and maintenance of a SBR for the Member States.

The consultants along with staff from the CARICOM Secretariat also visited six (6) Member States. During these visits, an assessment was conducted of the basic data needs for the compilation of National Accounts statistics as it relates to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimates by industry and expenditure; and for the Supply and Use tables whether these have been developed or not. The assessment undertaken during the visits has enabled the consultants to make recommendations and update on the development of the Statistical Business Registry in Member States. These recommendations were presented at the CARICOM Training Workshop on National Accounts which was held in the Bahamas in November 2010.

Past Events and Outcomes

CARICOM Training Workshop on National Accounts and International Trade in Services Statistics, 22-26 November 2010 Nassau, The Bahamas

Funded by the European Union (EU) under the Ninth European Development Fund, Caribbean Integration Support Programme (CISP), this workshop targeted statisticians from the National Statistical Offices and personnel from the Central Banks who are required to compile statistics on National Accounts and on International Trade in Services and Investment Statistics.

During the first two days, the meeting considered the framework for the development and maintenance of the Statistical Business Register and the use of administrative data sources for the compilation of National Accounts. The statisticians were informed that only enterprises from the formal sector are included in the SBR defined as business activities performed by economic operators with official records. Information on the informal sector can be maintained in an auxiliary register.

At the end of these two days, Trinidad and Tobago and Jamaica were identified as best practices in the Region given the coverage, fields and size of their Business Registers. Delegates also asked that the Regional Statistics Sub-programme identify best practices for deflating data related to Banking and Insurance recognizing that there were challenges in getting deflators for these industries.

In the remaining three days, the meeting considered the activities related to the production of Trade in Services and Investment statistics with focus on the Extended Balance of Payments Services (EBOPS) classification, the Foreign Affiliates Statistics (FATS) and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Flows and Stocks. During discussions, it was highlighted that the two main challenges to effectively collecting data in this area were the lack of a developed business register in some countries and a low response rate. In the latter respect, it was highlighted that there was a need for more sensitization and education of the key public sector stakeholders, the data providers and other stakeholders especially in the emerging sectors. National compilers of Trade in Services should initiate these sensitization programmes.

In assessing the present situation for trade in Services and investment statistics, it was noted that countries could use the Balance of payment (BOP) database which contains source data for the EBOPS as a starting point in expanding to the EBOPS. Countries were also urged to start compiling the FATS variables and some countries have indicated their willingness to start work in this area.

Future Events

Working Sessions On The Enhancement Of Eurotrace Domains– Data Quality, February 2011

The CARICOM Secretariat proposes to convene two Working Sessions on the Enhancement of Eurotrace Domains – Data Quality during the month of February. The main objective of these sessions is to offer training to Member States in the modification of the Eurotrace domain, which has been built in many Member States. The workshop will also address issues in data quality encountered in the processing of merchandise trade statistics and attempt to propose solutions for these. It is anticipated that this training will augment and sustain the improvement in the range and the quality of merchandise trade statistics in Member States. The training will also provide an opportunity for the sharing of country experiences in addressing data quality issues and would ultimately serve to enable more timely and high quality Merchandise Trade data production and dissemination for decision-making. The main expected output will be the strengthening of the capacity of the participants in the use and enhancement of the respective Eurotrace country domains.

CARICOM Data Dissemination Workshop on DevInfo and CensusInfo, February 2011

This workshop targets experienced Regional DevInfo Focal Points in Statistical Offices who would be positioned to provide leadership on the implementation of the software application in their respective countries. The workshop will be used as forum to discuss and agree to a harmonized approach to the creation of future versions of DevInfo adaptations in the Region. Additionally, participants will learn how to successfully use the CensusInfo database system to organize census data, create their own databases, and generate customized presentation objects from the databases.

Publications

Forthcoming publications:

- *Selected Economic Indicators 2002-2009;*
- *CARICOM's Trade—A Quick Reference to Some Summary Data—2001-2006*
- *CARICOM's Trade in Services 2005—2009*

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