



# Stats News & Views

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

December, 2011

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## Main Events

### Thirty-Sixth (36th) Meeting Of The Standing Committee Of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS),

The Thirty-Sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) was held at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Plaza, Belize City, from 22-24 October, 2011. This annual meeting concentrated as usual on the reporting of information for the various areas of work in the Statistics offices of each country present. The CARICOM Secretariat statistics section, also reported on data collection for the various areas as well as the challenges involved in collecting same.

### The Ninth Advisory Group on Statistics Meeting (9th AGS), Belize, 20-22 October 2011.

The objective of the Meeting was to advance the development of statistics through the work of the AGS focusing on matters discussed at the Eighth Advisory Group (AGS) Meeting which was held from 27 June to 1 July, 2011. A follow up Meeting was also held on 2 July, 2011 in Kingston, Jamaica which discussed matters which were taken to the Thirty Sixth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (36<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the SCCS) for approval.

Some of the matters discussed included:

- Components I and II of the Inter-American Development Bank Project – Common Framework for the Production of Statistics;
- The Action Plan on the High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics;
- The High Frequency Indicators: Implications for the Minimum Data Set and the Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy, International Comparison Programme (ICP) 2011 Round;

## Main Events

### Twenty First (21st) Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC),

The Twenty-First Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) was held at the Best Western Belize Biltmore Hotel, Belize City, Belize on 27 October 2011. The objective of the Meeting was to obtain feedback on the experiences and challenges of countries that had conducted the enumeration phase of their 2010 Round of Census in 2011, as well as to allow for exchange of ideas and best practices. It also sought information on the preparatory activities of the countries that were yet to conduct their census enumeration and to identify areas where assistance would be needed.

### Fourth (4th) Research Seminar, Belize - 28th October 2011.

The Fourth Regional Statistical Research Seminar provided a forum for the production and presentation of research and analysis on statistical issues. Following the format of the previous seminars, this Seminar served as a mechanism to encourage the use of statistics; promote research into statistical methods and applications; and provide a forum for statisticians and other stakeholders to present their findings for review or inform on issues that can aid the development of Statistics and of statisticians in the Region. In particular, graduates from training workshops and participants who have attended other meetings and workshops were invited to present papers on topics that may interest them at this Seminar.

Research topics presented ranged from work done on the organization and use of data, work done in the area of Information Technology and Communication as well

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**Main Events—** *The 36th Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians; The 9th Advisory Group on Statistics Meeting; 21st meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee; The 2011 ICP; Seminar on the SNA 2008.*

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## Main Events

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- The development of a Code of Ethics for Statisticians in the Region: and The formation of a Professional Association of Statisticians in the Region.

While the discussions covered a broad spectrum of activities in the region, work in the areas of the Environment as well as the International Comparison Programme (ICP) was noted. Achievements such as the workshop in the area of the environment was discussed as well the way forward for ICP in the region.

### **The 2011 Round of the International Comparison Programme**

With the new round of ICP and the Caribbean countries' effort to participate, work has commenced in this area by the CARICOM Secretariat and UNECLAC. The meeting was therefore informed of the work being put in place for participation in this round. A number of activities were undertaken which included a training workshop on price collection in April 2011 and one in October 2011.

Upcoming activities related to the execution of the project included:

- Technical support in National Accounts to at least five (5) pilot countries within the next six months;
- A workshop in the first half of 2012;
- Data collection scheduled to commence in the last quarter of 2011 and the first quarter of 2012 in eighteen countries; and
- Provision of funds where needed for technical assistance needs.

Countries requested additional information on the methodology to be used to back cast the data from 2012 to 2011 since concern was expressed over the proposed methodology to be used by UNECLAC. Ten (10) countries indicated their willingness to begin the price collection exercise in the fourth quarter of 2011, but that decision was dependent on the finalising of the regional list of items being finalised by mid-November. These countries were: The Bahamas, Dominica, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Lucia, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Anguilla, Bermuda and the British Virgin Islands. Seven (7) countries planned to commence their price collection in January 2012. These countries were Barbados, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Cayman Islands and

## Main Events

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St. Lucia's report on their 2010 Census.

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Curacao.

Countries requested that UNECLAC provide an implementation plan to guide countries in the budgeting and implementation of their activities. UNECLAC would attempt to source funds from the Global Office in Washington to support countries participating in this current round of the ICP.

### **Seminar on the Implementation of The System of National Accounts 2008 (SNA 2008).**

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat in collaboration with Eurostat hosted a Seminar on the Implementation of the System of National Accounts 2008 (2008 SNA) for Heads of Statistical Offices and National Accounts. It was held in Belize City, Belize from 31 October – 4 November 2011 and followed the annual round of meetings.

The Implementation Programme for the 2008 SNA and supporting statistics represented a global statistical initiative, which was mandated by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) at its Fortieth Session following the adoption of the 2008 SNA as the international standard for the compilation of National Accounts.

The main objective of the seminar was to assist countries in the implementation of the 2008 SNA, which in turn would support sound macro-economic management and evidence-based policy formulation. The workshop focused on key principles—to name a few such as :

- A Strategic Approach for 2008 SNA Implementation – improvement of the Statistical Systems;
- Institutional issues, such as the legislative framework for the implementation of the 2008 SNA;
- Monitoring, Coordinating and Reporting;
- Quality Assurance Frameworks;
- Statistical Infrastructure requirements – capacity challenges with respect to staffing, staff -turnover;
- The non-observed economy and the informal sector.

It was anticipated that during this seminar, the main recommendations that have emerged from the international discussions on the 2008 SNA Implementation will be reviewed in the context of the current situation in CARICOM countries.

## Current Events

### **Workshop on Information Communication Technology (ICT) Statistics, 5—9 December 2011—Antigua and Barbados.**

The CARICOM Secretariat convened a workshop on the Development of Caribbean Specific Information and Communication Technologies (CSICT) Statistics and Indicators in St. John's, Antigua and Barbuda, from 5 to 9 December 2011. It was funded by the European Union, Caribbean Integrated Support Programme (CISP) under the Ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) EDF.

The main objectives of the meeting were:

- To discuss the developmental work on the measurement of ICT with specific emphasis on the economic contribution of ICT;
- To review the draft Caribbean Specific ICT (CSICT) Statistics and Indicators; relative to refinements or additional indicators that may be required; and
- To develop a draft work plan for the compilation of the CSICT Statistics and Indicators for the measurement of the economic contribution to ICT.

The meeting took the form of a round table discussion where each country informed the meeting of the statistics available in their country. They also presented those indicators available for ICT within their organization. This data was submitted to the Secretariat.

The main sources for the data were the Population and Housing Census. However, other data sources were the Labour Force Survey, the Survey of Living Conditions, the Country Poverty Assessment Survey, the Annual Economic Survey and data from the local telephone company.

Country presentations were prepared around the question "How can ICT impact each area?". It followed the preparation of key terms, the identification of sub-themes, the identification of indicators under each sub-theme and the justification for each indicator. Twelve (12) themes were identified for the compilation of ICT statistics. Information was however presented on nine (9) of the twelve (12) themes.

The workshop concluded with participants working in groups to develop a work plan for the compilation of the Caribbean Specific ICT indicators and metadata at the national level.

The workshop accomplished its objectives. Work continues in this critical area throughout the region.

## Current Events

### **Workshop on the Development of a Literacy Survey., 28 November - 4 December 2011 in Trinidad and Tobago.**

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened the First Technical Workshop on a Common Framework for a Literacy Survey from 30 November to 2 December 2011 in Port of Spain, Trinidad at The Crowne Plaza Hotel. This activity was part of the Inter-American Development Bank's Common Framework for a Literacy Survey project, under the Regional Public Good Facility.

The Workshop targeted one Statistician from the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and one official from the Ministry of Education for each Member State and Associate Member.

The objectives of the workshop were to familiarise Member States with:

- The theory that is used to build and interpret literacy assessments;
- The practical issues pertaining to the conduct of an literacy assessment and the potential pitfalls; and on;
- The use of skill assessment data in informing policy.

Thirty-two (32) persons attended the workshop from thirteen (13) Member States and four (4) Associate Members. The workshop was facilitated by three consultants.

The workshop exposed the participants to the procedures involved in the planning and execution of a large-scale literacy assessment. They were exposed to:

- The science that underscores large scale literacy assessments;
- The pragmatics of implementing a literacy survey;
- Costing templates- data collection for paper and pencil and web-based approaches;
- The components of a National Planning Report;
- Basic consideration in developing questions to measure literacy;
- Methods to identify measurement goals;
- Considerations with regards to the building of assessments.

After workshop activities included:

The circulation of "background" documents to the participants through the Secretariat;

The completion and submission of country assessment questionnaires to the Consultant;

Follow-up is to ensure that participants complete the costing template and their respective National Planning report.

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## Past Events and Outcomes

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Finalisation of the methodological review of the various documents.

The commencement of Phase two (2) of the project activities.

### **DevInfo Technical Assistance to Grenada, 7 - 11 November 2011—Grenada Statistics Office.**

Technical assistance was provided to Grenada from 7 to 11 November 2011 to enhance their DevInfo database. The specific objective of this new round of technical assistance visit to Grenada was to enhance their DevInfo database, the output being a clean and updated database, which the country can use to engage the public via policy recommendations resulting from the analysis of indicators contained in the databases.

The first day of the visit, a meeting was held with the DevInfo team. Members of the team also requested assistance in other areas such as naming indicators as well as allocating sources for varying databases.

The exercise commenced with the vetting of Grenada's adaptation. Vetting was carried out as follows:

- The type of sectors and sub-sectors in the database
- The way indicators were classified under the various sectors and sub-sectors.
- The way indicators were named.
- The way indicators were matched to units and subgroups (IUS combinations).

Work was done on the way sources were allocated to various datasets. Additional work was done on the country's template with major emphasis on the "education" sector. Several indicators were renamed to enable consistency in the naming pattern of indicators.

The database was updated with data provided by the Economic unit of the Central Statistical Office. Additional sub-sectors were added to correctly classify some of the new data. All Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) found in UN's 2011 databases, were included in Grenada's adaptation. They were also linked to their respective IUS combinations.

The following were achieved from the technical assistance provided:

- SpicelsInfo 1.0 updated with indicator – unit-combinations (IUS) similar to that in the global registry.
- The database modified through the use of additional sectors and sub-sectors to accommodate the various indicators for Grenada.

## Future Events

- SpicelsInfo 1.0 updated with all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) found in UN's 2011 database.
  - IUS combinations re-linked to their correct sectors and sub-sectors.
- Database updated with new data up to 2010 in most cases.

### **Advancing the Work of DevInfo in the Region—Construction of a Regional Template and CensusInfo.**

In February 2011, CARICOM Secretariat conducted a Regional Workshop funded by the UNICEF and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Georgetown, Guyana with the aim of reviewing existing DevInfo adaptations in the Region as well as to explore the feasibility of harmonisation of these adaptations. This workshop also focused on CensusInfo.

The specific objectives of the Workshop were to :

- To explore the degree of harmonisation of the country adaptations as currently contained;
- To make recommendations on a process that can facilitate more harmonised adaptations across countries; and
- To advance the process of enabling the use of CensusInfo for the dissemination of data in the 2010 Census Round in a uniformed manner.

The workshop was attended by all Member States and Associate Members. CARICOM Secretariat made a presentation on the status of DevInfo in the region.

Prior to this meeting, the CARICOM DevInfo team perused the country adaptations available to ascertain the ability of harmonizing same. These findings provided the major discussions at the workshop.

## Publications

Forthcoming publications:

- *CARICOM's Trade—A Quick Reference to Some Summary Data— 2005—2010*
- *CARICOM's Trade in Services: 2006—2010*

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