



# Stats News & Views

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

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## Main Events

### Meeting of the Economic Statistics Experts: Assessment Of Methods In The Production And Compilation Of Key Economic Statistics

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened a **Meeting of Economic Statistics Experts: Assessment of Methods in the Production and Compilation Of Key Economic Statistics – Informing the CARICOM Economic Statistics Action Plans (CESAPs)**, from **21- 29 April 2009**, in **Georgetown Guyana**. The meeting was funded by the European Union (EU) as part of the process of improving and harmonizing statistics in CARICOM. The objectives of the meeting were to:

- Collate information on the approaches to the production and compilation of key economic statistics, on plans for major revisions and improvements of these systems of statistics and related updates;
- Conduct an assessment of the methods used, best practices, the development needs and the degree of harmonisation of the approaches across Member States;
- Consider the framework of activities to inform the CARICOM Economic Statistics Action Plans based on the identified developmental needs, best practices and the need for harmonisation.

The meeting was facilitated by a consultant recruited under the Caribbean Integrated Support Programme (CISP) and targeted statisticians working in the area of economic statistics (including short term economic indicators and merchandise trade. Some of the activities completed were:-

- Identification of best practices, data development needs and commonalities across Countries;
- Identification and prioritizing of detailed development needs in Economic Statistics; and
- Activation of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on National Accounts, Short-Term Economic Indicators and International Trade in Services.

The meeting achieved its objectives.

## Main Events

### Second Meeting of the CARICOM Information Communication Technology (ICT) - Sub-Committee on Statistics

The Second Meeting of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Sub-Committee on Statistics was held at the Amaryllis Beach Resort, Hastings, Christ Church, Barbados, from 12-13 February 2009. The main objective of this meeting was to continue work in the area of ICT with respect to an Action Plan which was developed at the first one-day meeting of the Statistics Sub-committee on ICT held in November 2007.

The objectives of the Meeting were to:-

- Define the scope of the ICT Sector, in an effort to ascertain measurable output;
- Identify themes, issues and concerns within the Region; and
- Consider core indicators which would facilitate the processing, monitoring and guiding of the development process.

At the meeting, the importance of establishing an ICT Regional Steering Committee was emphasised. The meeting was informed that there are presently five (5) active Sub-committees attempting to make this process possible, including the one on statistics. The main issues were as follows:

Defining the scope of the ICT sector from the Production perspective, as well as measurement of the ICT sector, in light of the development of trade in goods, trade in services and investment and employment, training, culture and related issues.

An assessment was also done of the data sources and the availability of data at the national level. Efforts to provide data were discussed based upon country reports, data

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## Main Events

### Workshop on Census Organization and Administration.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened the **CARICOM Workshop on Census Administration and Organisation for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses** from 18-22 May 2009 in St. George's, Grenada. The objectives of the Workshop were to:

- Build capacity with respect to Census Organisation and Administration;
- Provide an overview as well as information on some critical factors which impact the conduct of Population and Housing Censuses in the Region;
- Identify challenges that affect Census output;
- Forge consensus on best practices that can mitigate the challenges in the 2010 round of censuses.

During the workshop, participants were given an overview of the census process and informed of the required skills for the organisation and administration of their upcoming 2010 Round of Censuses. Some of the recommendations included the following:-

- The need for the involvement of all stakeholders i.e. political parties and funding agencies to assist in the planning and execution of the 2010 round of censuses;
- A cost benefit analysis should be done before considering outsourcing any census activity; and
- There is need for a census order even though a Statistics Act may mandate a National Statistics Office to conduct a census.

### Census Workshop on Adoption of Common Census Methodologies

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened the **CARICOM Workshop on the Development of Common Methodologies for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in the Region** from 25-29 May 2009 in St. George's, Grenada. This Workshop was part of a programme of activities under the Project— Common Framework for Population Census in CARICOM which is jointly funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). This workshop was held back-to-back with the CARICOM Workshop on Census Organisation and Administration. The aim of the workshop was to advance the process of designing a Common Framework for gathering and processing population data that could lead to the availability of comparable data in the Region to guide policy and decision-making, at both the Regional and National levels, and contribute to the strengthening of the CARICOM integration process.

Participants were arranged in three (3) groups to deliberate on the rationale for asking questions and the methodologies included in the category of each question.

## Main Events

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availability and data sources. Measures to assess the impact of ICT on society were discussed also.

This discussion was initiated by two presentations— “Background to Information Communication Technology (ICT) for Development—Societal Impact” and “The Perspective of the University of the West Indies (UWI) on the Impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the Appropriate Measures for Assessing the Impact”. These presentations were made by the Secretariat and UWI respectively.

The meeting broke out into groups to discuss the identification of themes, issues and concerns on ICT which are of relevance to the Region and to consider a list of core indicators relevant to the Region. It also ascertained the way forward for statistics on ICT by establishing benchmarks and examining lessons learnt. Recommendations made by the various groups were discussed and presented to the meeting.

### Census Workshop on Adoption of Common Census Methodologies

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The questions were agreed upon at the Common Questionnaire Workshop held in Dominica in May 2008.

It was recognised that the process of adopting Common Methodologies must take into consideration issues that are country specific together with issues that are common throughout the Region. Issues were identified with regard to data collection, data capture, data validation and the tabulation processes, relative to the common questionnaire that was developed. Lengthy discussion arose in the topic area of “economic activity”. Recommendations included an agreement that tables for regional comparison will cover age 15 years and over for all age-group data. Also an individual's main job will be considered with respect to hours worked during the past week. It was agreed that countries can add additional questions to capture hours for other jobs. The completed report for this workshop can be viewed at our website, [www.caricomstats.org](http://www.caricomstats.org).

## Current Events

### Fourth Regional Workshop on Demographic Analysis - 8 June to 24 July 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago

The Workshop is being held at the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) on the St. Augustine Campus of the University of the West Indies, and is being made possible under a Grant from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) that covered the conduct of workshops in this area for the past three (3) consecutive years.

## Current Events

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The first workshop was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat.

Seventeen participants (17) are currently being trained in essential concepts and methods in demography, including Evaluating the Quality of Demographic Data, Demographic Theories, Measures of Fertility, Nuptiality and Mortality, Preparation of Model-Life Tables and Indirect Techniques of Estimation.

The workshop gives preference to the “younger” staff members. It is aimed at building capacity and sustaining the ability of the Region to conduct demographic analyses in the future, and to assist in the forthcoming 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. A Short Course on the Principles of Demography was conducted on 12-22 January 2009 which targeted senior personnel from the Statistical Offices in all Member States.

This year the closing ceremony for the workshop took place on Friday 24th July 2009. The members of the Advisory Group on Statistics are invited to this event and will play a role in the ceremony.

## Past Events and Outcomes

### **DevInfo Implementation Meeting with CDB/UNICEF, 23-24 January 2009, Ocho Rios—Jamaica.**

The main objective of this workshop was to assess the implementation of DevInfo in various countries in the Region. It was sponsored by the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) – a perspective sponsor for training in DevInfo within the Region. The meeting was held back-to-back with the Short Course on Demography Workshop.

The use of this software package has been extended beyond the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and has been extended to the various areas of Economic statistics. Barbados, Dominica, Jamaica and Saint Lucia presented their adaptation of DevInfo. Both Dominica and Saint Lucia officially launched their web-enabled versions of the software in 2008

Activities at the workshop included the following:

- A background to the implementation of DevInfo in the Region; and
- An overview of DevInfo, through demonstrations of individual country adaptations.
- The implementation of DevInfo in the Region – approaches, outcomes, challenges and opportunities.

## Past Events and Outcomes

The workshop was a rich exchange of knowledge as each country shared their accomplishments as it related to their country-specific adaptations.

Countries were encouraged to further their expansion of the DevInfo database in their country as they became aware of the capacity of the software. The challenges being faced by countries were also highlighted. The meeting accomplished its objectives.

### **Enhancement of Trade Data at the Grenada's Central Statistical Office - 18-20 February 2009**

The CARICOM Secretariat, through the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funded project – *Enhancement of Trade Data Dissemination in CARICOM – Strengthening of Tradsys*, evaluated the trade data processing and dissemination system in Member States. One of the recommendations made was the need to enhance the Trade Information Systems in Member countries. Currently, the trade processing software being used by the OECS countries is the Eurotrace DOS software. These countries indicated their readiness to upgrade to the New Eurotrace Software (Windows version). A pilot version of the New Eurotrace Software was introduced to the CARICOM Secretariat and Member States through a User-Training Workshop which was held in Saint Lucia in 2004. Further to that, two (2) participants from the Community, one (1) from St. Vincent and the Grenadines and one (1) from Grenada benefited from both basic and advanced training of the software. These workshops were facilitated by the European Statistics Division (Eurostat).

In an effort to enhance its trade data processing and dissemination system, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) of Grenada requested assistance from the Secretariat to upgrade its Eurotrace DOS based application to the New Eurotrace Windows version. This was done by conducting a pilot test of the New Eurotrace for Windows by installing the application and developing a Eurotrace Domain for the processing and dissemination of the country's trade data.

The visit achieved the following:

- an assessment of the existing hardware and software capacity at the Statistical Office;
- the building of a functioning domain for processing trade data ; and
- a basic demonstration in the use of software to three members of staff.

Additional work would be required to ensure the domain is working efficiently and the relevant staff members are trained in the use and maintenance of the system. In this regard, a Consultant was recruited to continue this process in Grenada and to assist in improving the Trade Information System in other Member States.

## Future Events

### **High-Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics: The Urgency of Statistics and the Global Crisis – Enabling Development in the Caribbean Community**

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat will be convening a **High-Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics: The Urgency of Statistics and the Global Crisis – Enabling Development in the Caribbean Community**, on **30 July 2009** at the **Hyatt Regency Hotel in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago**. This Forum which is jointly organised by the CARICOM Secretariat and PARIS21 will be held in collaboration with a number of organisations - the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), Small Island Development States (SIDS); the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC), and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).

The theme for this Forum is “**Better Statistics for Better Management and Better Development Outcomes**”. The Meeting will be discussing the implications for official statistics arising from the systemic aspects of the global financial crisis and economic downturn of the world economy. It further seeks to mobilise international, regional and national resources to enable the development and repositioning of the statistical infrastructure to provide high quality statistics that are complete, timely, relevant, reliable and comparable, to enable an understanding of the crisis and to foster development of the Region.

It also seeks to explore the development of a monitoring framework comprising a coherent set of official statistics that are useful in providing the policy makers and analysts, with an information base to understand the nature of the crisis and to monitor and report on the transmission mechanisms that may give rise to systemic risks and vulnerabilities of the Region’s economies.

### **Regional Workshop on National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), 27-29 July, 2009 ,Trinidad and Tobago.**

A regional workshop on National Strategies for Development of -Statistics in CARICOM will be held from 27—29 July 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago. This Meeting is being funded by the Ninth European Development Fund (9th EDF) under the Caribbean Integrated Support Programme (CISP) and relates to the activity to develop statistical programming in Member States. The Workshop will be facilitated by representatives of the organisation, **Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (PARIS21)**. The NSDS provides a framework for statistical capacity building across the entire National Statistical System, through a development and strategic management perspective, augmenting the link between statistics and national development policy framework. This **Regional NSDS Workshop** will seek to enable the visioning of the National Statistical Systems and to provide a coherent framework that can reposition statistics to a prominent role relative to the achievement of development outcomes at the national level. Some of the objectives of this Workshop include the provision of training to statis-

## Future Events

tical personnel on the development of a Strategic Plan for the National Statistical System; to enable a greater role for statistics in improving development outcomes; and to integrate evidence-based policy of statistics into policy frameworks such as on Poverty Reduction.

### **The Fourth Advisory Group on Statistics (4th AGS) Meeting, 21-25 July 2009, Trinidad and Tobago.**

The Fourth Advisory Group on Statistics (4th AGS) Meeting will be held from 21-25 July 2009, in Trinidad and Tobago. This Meeting will be funded by the Ninth European Development Fund (9<sup>th</sup> EDF). It will seek to build upon the progress made at the Second and Third Meetings in Belize and Barbados respectively.

Among the issues to be discussed are two major projects - the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Common Statistics Production, and the Literacy Survey Project.

### **CARICOM Training Workshop on Merchandise Trade Statistics Using the New Eurotrace Software Package, 20-31 July, 2009 ,Trinidad and Tobago.**

This workshop is being convened in collaboration with the Statistics Office of the European Communities (Eurostat) under the Ninth European Development Fund (9<sup>th</sup> EDF). The main objective of the workshop is to improve the production and dissemination of Merchandise Trade Statistics by providing training for Trade Statisticians/Data Processors from the National Statistical Offices of Member Countries in the use of the New EUROTRACE Software Package. The first week of the Workshop will introduce participants to the Eurotrace software package and provide training in some of the basic features of the package. The second week of the training would focus on some of the more advanced features. It is anticipated that this workshop would enable the production of high quality trade statistics that can be submitted in a timely manner, using a common data submission format to compile the Regional Trade Information System (TradSys).

## Publications

Forthcoming publications:

- *CARICOM’s National Accounts Report –2003-06;*
- *Selected Economic Indicators 2002-2006.*
- *CARICOM Trade: A Quick Reference to some summary data: 2001-2006*
- *CSME Profile:2005-2007*

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