

Launch of Statistics 2013

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF STATISTICS

International year of Statistics 2013 (Statistics2013) was launched on Wednesday, 6th March 2013 in the Executive Lounge of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat Headquarters. Present at the launch were, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Ambassador Robert Kopecky, Head of the Delegation of the European Union, Mr. Lennox Benjamin, Chief Statistician, Guyana Bureau of Statistics (GBS), staff members of the GBS and of the CARICOM Secretariat. The Media was also in attendance. A background to Statistics2013 is presented on *Page three Column two*.

EMPIRICAL DECISION MAKING CAN ENGENDER A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ALL OUR CITIZENS

Highlights of the Remarks by the Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Ambassador Irwin LaRocque.

In his remarks, Ambassador Irwin LaRocque, Secretary General of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), welcomed all in attendance to the launch of Statistics2013. He also pointed out that this year marks the Fortieth (40th) Anniversary of the Community. In-keeping with the theme for Statistics2013 “Statistics in Everyday Life, Let’s Educate and Appreciate”, he stated, *“There is no doubt of the critical inputs of statistics in devising plans for and measuring scientifically the path to sustainable economic and social development.* He further emphasized that

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THE SEXY JOB FOR THE NEXT TEN YEARS WILL BE STATISTICIANS

Highlights of the Opening Remarks by The Project Director, Regional Statistics, Dr. Philomen Harrison.



Ambassador Robert Kopecky, Head of the European Delegation, making a point at the event held in June 2013 as part of the celebrations for the International Year of Statistics.

Dr. Philomen Harrison, Project Director, Regional Statistics Programme at the CARICOM Secretariat quoted that ***“the sexy job over the next ten years will be Statisticians”***. (See Harvard Business Review (HBR) October 2012). In her opening remarks the Project Director expressed her gratitude to share the launch of this event with the Member State of Guyana. She highlighted the recognition of the importance of statistics in the region at a very early stage, stating that - *“The importance of Statistics in the Community was recognised at an early stage, since one year after its founding, the Standing Committee of Caribbean*

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“enabling empirical decision-making in the private and public sectors, monitoring public opinion, keeping abreast of social trends, as well as probably the best known activity, that of population and housing censuses, are means through which statistics can assist in business growth, poverty alleviation, and the engendering of a better quality of life of all our citizens.”

He also stated that, “The overriding goals of dedicating an entire year to statistics are to:

- Increase public awareness of the power and far-reaching impact of statistics on all aspects of society;
- Promote and nurture statistics as a profession, especially among young people; and
- Promote creativity and development in the sciences of probability and statistics.

He expressed the hope that there would be increased public awareness on the many ways that statistics has improved the quality of life and has led to the advancement of society, stating that, *“While educating stakeholders about statistics will be the general thrust of activities to observe the year, added focus will be placed on attracting young people to the career opportunities which it offers. Already, for example, our Statistics Department participated in the Career Day Programme at the University of Guyana. Other facets of our programme for this Year of Statistics will pivot around that core youth cohort and this thrust will be in keeping with the focus of activities to observe the 40th Anniversary of the Community.”*

The Secretary-General further informed the gathering that the National Statistical Offices were among the key organisations leading the promotional efforts in Member States and Associate Members. He stated that, *“Apart from this joint launch with the Government of Guyana here at the Secretariat Headquarters, there were activities in The Bahamas, Barbados, Jamaica, Montserrat and the Cayman Islands launching their observance of the Year of Statistics2013. Other Member States are planning to have their launch at the same time as the release of their national census results, a major statistical activity. The University of the West Indies (UWI) is also involved, as its Mona Campus is a partner in the major event in Jamaica.”*

In concluding his remarks the Secretary-General expressed thanks to the international organizations for their support to statistics. He also expressed gratitude to the staff of the Regional Statistics Programme for the good work that they have been doing.

Statisticians (SCCS), was established.” She further stated that a major turning point in the agenda of the SCCS was the Resolution on Regional Statistical Development and the common Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) which was respectively passed and approved by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Community Council of Ministers in 2005. She informed the gathering that the SCCS is now supported by an Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) in its efforts to advance the development of statistics including a regional approach to the Access to Micro Data and the establishment of a Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians which is expected to be launched this year.

The Project Director highlighted the international partners who provided support such as: the European Union (EU) under the Ninth European Development Fund, PARIS21- Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the UN system and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB). She therefore stated, *“It is clear that these partners understand the saying that, you can’t manage what you don’t measure” (see Harvard Business Review (HBR), October 2012)”*.

She contended that while statistical agencies need to produce statistics to satisfy the needs of users, some agencies cannot satisfy the ever-increasing demand due to constraints of size and/or resources. As a result agencies are faced with new areas of statistics as well as updated international standards such as the System of National Accounts 2008 and measurement of Trade Value Added. She stated, *“The issue of Big Data is now with us i.e. Data that are generally collected by huge corporations including Credit Card companies, through online shopping and through the use of social networks and which are likely to impact official Statistics.”*

She expressed the need for mechanisms that can take countries forward into this century and beyond such as the identification of Best Practices and Centres of Excellence; the engagement with schools/universities on the teaching of mathematics and statistics and the provision of support to statistical agencies in their modernization process.

Statistics Must No Longer Be Something Abstract to Most

Highlights of the Opening Remarks by the Chief Statistician, Guyana Bureau of Statistics (GBS), Mr. Lennox Benjamin.

In his remarks, the Chief Statistician of the GBS acknowledged the lack of knowledge as it relates to the importance of statistics in society. He also highlighted some of the events which led to statistics being celebrated among a wider group, stating, *“Most of us, from the individual right up to the Regional Organisational levels have failed to grasp the importance/ reality of the steadily growing momentum of Statistics in most aspects of our individual and professional lives. That recent momentum commenced with the first CARICOM Statistics Day in October 2009, which at the level of the SCCS was so planned to be a precursor of the wider global event one year later, the celebration of the first World Statistics Day in October 2010, under the auspices of the United Nations Statistics Division.* He contended that the success of the first World Statistics Day in October 2010 led to the Resolution for the observance of a World Statistics Day once every five (5) years.

Like the Secretary General of CARICOM and the Project Director of Statistics, the Chief Statistician stood in support of statistics being celebrated for an entire year. He stated in his remarks, *“For both the practitioners of Statistics, the users of Statistics and those on the periphery who are consciously aware of the benefits of national, regional and global Statistics, successful as the regional (CARICOM) and Global (World) Statistics days have been, Statistics globally are now too dominant, too large, to be observed, by just a single day’s (more practically a week’s) celebration.”* He emphasized that *“The stepping up therefore of dedicating a whole year, rather than a day, to the observance and celebration of Statistics, was inevitable.”*

It was also his belief that statistics should no longer be seen as something abstract to most or difficult to grasp since it affects our everyday lives—from the weather forecasts to predicting areas for high crime activity.

He also was of the belief that this years’ celebrations should impact the minds of our youths. The Chief Statistician therefore stated, *“Early exposure and comfort with Statistics among our school-age population has to be one of*

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the major activities of the Year of Statistics.”

He further expressed the view that there can be no greater incentive for Statistics as a career, when in this era of continued global economic slowdown marked by both loss of/and difficulty in obtaining jobs, the global statistical community has forecast that the demand for statisticians and data analysts is expected to increase by 4.4 million jobs worldwide in the years ahead. Therefore he ended by saying, that as an educational and learning tool, the Bureau, like some other National Statistics Offices in CARICOM intends to utilize the dissemination of its preliminary Census results later this year as a first step to bringing information back to communities, back to households, back to individuals and teaching how the understanding of and utilization of statistical data can empower each one of us in our daily lives.”

BACKGROUND— Why Celebrate International Year of Statistics?

The year 2013 has been designated the International Year of Statistics (Statistics2013) to be commemorated as a worldwide event. The rationale behind the celebration of Statistics2013 is based on the powerful and far-reaching effects of statistics on everyone, while at the same time there is an inherent lack of awareness by many people of how statistics improve their lives.

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat through its Regional Statistics Programme and with the support of the Public Information Unit (PIU) collaborated with Member States of CARICOM in the observance of International Year of Statistics 2013 under the theme ***“Statistics in Everyday Life; Let us Educate and Appreciate”***.

The founding organisations for Statistics2013 included the International Statistical Institute, the Royal Statistical Society and the American Statistical Association. The imperatives of Statistics2013 are as stated in the over-riding goals of Statistics2013 by the Secretary-General of CARICOM earlier in this newsletter.

CARICOM'S Launch of Statistics2013

During the launch of Statistics2013 at the Headquarters of the CARICOM Secretariat, invitees were treated to a video presentation on “*What is Statistics*”. Highlights of other presentations are found below.

The GBS made a presentation on “Guyana’s Population and Housing Census 2012”. This provided details on the process of the census in Guyana with emphasis on the way enumeration took place in the interior of Guyana. This edifying presentation captured the interest of the audience as persons learnt of the processes involved in the vital process of census taking.

This was followed by two presentations by the Secretariat entitled “Population Aging in the Caribbean—Issues and Implications and another on the Implementation of the DevInfo 7.0 software, developed by the United Nations (UN) system for disseminating the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The event concluded with a special drama presentation entitled “*Need the Facts, Get the Stats*” by two (2) staff members of the Statistics Programme. This dramatic piece emphasized the importance of statistics in everyday life. It also highlighted some of what was being done by the Secretariat to advance statistics in the Region and is found at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lei7kRiWFUI>

Participation at University of Guyana’s Career / Open Day



Staff of the Regional Statistics Programme activated and promoted the booth at the University of Guyana’s Career Day Celebration.

In February 2013 the Regional Statistics Programme of

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the CARICOM Secretariat participated in the University of Guyana’s Career/Open Day. The Programme eagerly capitalized on this awareness activity organized by the University of Guyana for current and prospective students of the University as well as primary and secondary school students from over one hundred (100) public and private schools across Guyana. The event also targeted Technical Institutions such as the Government Technical Institute (GTI), the Critchlow Labour College (CLC) etc. The objective of the Career/Open Day was to sensitize students on the various areas of work and to actively engage their interest in a variety of careers.

The booth was promoted by staff members of the Regional Statistics Sub-Programme. It offered students information on statistics in keeping with the theme—“*Statistics in Everyday Life; Let us Educate and Appreciate*”.

Students were informed on the following areas:

- What is statistics ?
- How does statistics affect them?
- Why statistics would be an excellent career choice?

Students were also educated on the various career paths that can be followed after attaining a degree in Statistics. There was also a publication display which included published data produced by the Regional Statistics Programme in a variety of subject areas such as Economics, Social/Gender and the Environment Statistics. Students were also enlightened on the work of the Secretariat, its Member States and Associate Members to strengthen regional unity within CARICOM.

HOW WAS STATISTICS2013 LAUNCHED THROUGHOUT THE REGION

Like the CARICOM Secretariat, activities will be ongoing throughout the year in all Member States and Associate Members up to the time of Caribbean Statistics Day (October 2013). The Secretariat will be

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hosting an activity each month of the year in collaboration with the Guyana Bureau of Statistics. Highlights of activities being undertaken in countries, include the following

Antigua and Barbuda

The Statistical Office of Antigua and Barbuda launched International Year of Statistics on 6th March 2013—the day designated as the official “*launch date*”. Some of the activities for the launch included the dissemination of the preliminary 2011 census results and the production of a census report. A Labour force survey was conducted and labour market statistics were produced.

The Bahamas

The Bahamas Department of Statistics celebrated the launch of international year of statistics through a Press Release in the local newspaper which informed the public of the international year of statistics.

Barbados

The Barbados Statistical Service (BSS) commemorated the launch of international year of statistics through media publicity. A Press Release was issued to announce the event and some provisional results from the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census were release on their website.

Guyana

The Chief Statistician and staff of the Guyana Bureau of Statistics (GBS) participated in the launch of International Year of Statistics by collaborating with the CARICOM Secretariat. An informative presentation was made on the 2010 Census exercise.

Jamaica

The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) - like most of the other countries launched International year of statistics on 6th March 2013. The events to commemorate this day included a Mathematics Seminar which introduced the IYOS 2013. This was done in collaboration with the University of the West Indies. The publications, “*Facts and Figures*” as well as “*The Students Handbook for Caribbean Statistics Day*” were also launched on this occasion.

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Montserrat

International year of statistics was launched in Montserrat through the execution of the following activities:

A message from the CARICOM Secretariat was posted on “Spirit of Montserrat” and also sent to a local print media - Montserrat Reporter. An IYOS flyer was also posted on the Spirit of Montserrat. The following items were undertaken on the local radio station: a news item on the launch and commemoration of International Year of Statistics.

A Message from the CARICOM Secretariat was recorded and aired and radio quiz activities were conducted. The logo and theme for Statistics2013 were attached to the email signature of all staff. Census T-shirts were the attire for that day. A banner was erected outside of the Statistics Office and will remain there for the remainder of the year.

Saint Lucia

Saint Lucia Statistics Department will celebrate this activity by re-launching their website at a later date.

Suriname

Suriname Bureau of Statistics launched international year of statistics with a series of activities. A Press Release was issued that lauded the contributions of women statisticians. A flyer was also produced to celebrate this activity. Other promotional material and calenders were distributed to Elementary, Junior and Secondary schools as well as District Offices in the interior.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Anguilla

Anguilla Statistics Unit joined with the rest of the world to celebrate international year of statistics. A Press Release was issued on 28 December 2012 as a pre-activity to this event. Like Suriname, a Press Release was also issued which lauded the contributions of female Statisticians on International Women’s Day on 8th March 2013. The office also registered on the IYOS 2013 website. Additional activities were to be

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announced during the course of the year leading up to Caribbean Statistics Day which will be celebrated on 15th October 2013.

Bermuda

The Bermuda Department of Statistics is commemorating Statistics2013 with a number of monthly activities.

In January, a two day in-house training workshop was held on the Introduction to Basic Statistics. It was attended by representatives from various departments such as Human Affairs, Human Resources and Labour and Employment. In March 2013, the department registered on the IYOS website. In May, an official launch of the 2013 Household Expenditure Survey was undertaken as well as an official launch of Statistics2013. An Advertisement on “Quick Statistical Facts” was also produced. These advertisement are e-mailed on a monthly basis to all government employees and are also broadcast each month on Bermuda’s Community Television page. These and other activities will continue right up to Caribbean Statistics Day, 15th October 2013.

Cayman Islands

A Press Release was also issued on March 6th for Statistics2013 and its theme “Statistics in Everyday Life – *Let us Educate and Appreciate*”. Presentations were made in the area of economic statistics - System of National Accounts (SNA), Balance of Payments, etc at the Cayman Prep and High Schools. On 7th March 2013 presentations were also made on “Understanding Economic Statistics.”

The National Statistical Coordination Committee (NSCC) was launched at that time, subject to notation by Cabinet of its terms of reference. in the first week of March. The NSCC was launched in March 2013 with data producers from the public sector.

Activities slated for the rest of the year by The Cayman Islands included one outreach activity per month, culminating in a statistics fair in October under the theme “**Understanding Cayman through Statistics**” with the aid of visual aids (maps, posters, etc) and presentations from various departments/NSCC members.

OBSERVER COUNTRIES

Curacao

The statistics office of Curacao showed their support by registering on the IYOS website. They also published their census results in March 2013.

Many of the Member States as well as and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat have registered on the Statistics2013 website.

CARICOM SECRETARIAT'S CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

June 2013

For the month of June, the Regional Statistics Programme in collaboration with the Guyana Bureau of Statistics (GBS) held a Presentation on the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and a Demonstration of the National Statistics Submission System (NSSS) in the Executive Lounge of the CARICOM Secretariat Headquarters. In attendance were Amb. Robert Kopecky, Head of the Delegation of the European Union, Mr. Michael Gills, Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Guyana and staff members from the CARICOM Secretariat and of the GBS. The media also attended the opening of this activity. The presentation featured results from the 2010 Census Round from countries that have disseminated preliminary and final data. The demonstration of the NSSS entailed an exposition of key outputs of project activities that have been designed to improve data management, web-based data transmission and related frameworks that sought to exploit the use of Information Technology (IT) tools in the organisation of databases in the National Statistical Systems in Member States.

July 2013

An analysis in Merchandise Trade has been planned for Thursday, 25 July 2013 at the Secretariat’s Headquarters.

August 2013

There will be a promotion of the online forum on the topic “The Statistics you need” and a Demonstration of DevInfo 7.0.

September 2013

On schedule for September is the judging of the essay competition which is being hosted by the Secretariat. There will also be the judging of the logo and motto competition for the Caribbean Association of Professional Statistician (CAPS).

October 2013

In October we celebrate Caribbean Statistics Day. This will be commemorated with one week of activities including a quiz competition that would focus mainly on Mathematics and Statistics.

November 2013

In November celebrations continue as we join the rest of the Secretariat in performing a skit about Statistics at the annual staff talent show.

December 2013

In December we bring the year to a close by publishing another special newsletter of this year’s events.

FOCUS ON YOUTHS**Essay Competition for Primary and Secondary Schools in Guyana**

An essay competition for Primary and Secondary Schools in Guyana, is one of the many activities being undertaken in observance of the international year of statistics (Statistics2013). The objective of the Competition is to stimulate interest in Statistics among young people through the nurturing of creative talents of students, providing a platform for them to compete with their peers.

The competition will be open to students at both the primary and secondary levels in the following

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categories: Category 1 – Primary: 5th - 6th Grade Students and Category 2 – Secondary: 3rd – 4th Form students.

Students are required to write an essay on one of eight topics. The topics include the following:

- I could not believe the impact that statistics have on our world today;
- Statistics is critical in our everyday life;
- Now I know why statistics is so useful to me in everyday life; and
- Why statistics are important to me.

A trophy and prize will be awarded to the first, second and third place winners of the competition. Certificates of Participation will be awarded to all entrants. The winners will be announced in September 2013 and will be presented with their prizes on 15 October 2013 - Caribbean Statistics Day.

The overall coordination of the essay competition will be undertaken by the CARICOM Secretariat in collaboration with the Schools as identified by the Ministry of Education.

CARICOM ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL STATISTICIANS (CAPS)

The CARICOM Secretariat convened a **High Level Advocacy Forum** on Statistics on July 30, 2009 in Trinidad & Tobago. Among the recommendations coming out of that forum was the formation of a Professional Association of Caribbean Statisticians which can further the development of the discipline of statistics in the Region.

The objectives of the Association are:

- To promote the contribution of statistics and its applications to evidence based decision-making in the CARICOM Region;
- To promote collaboration and discussion among professional statisticians;
- To be a forum for the discussion on statistical matters

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- To promote the continuous training and development of professional statisticians;
- To encourage research as it relates to statistical methodology and its applications, and to publish and disseminate the findings.
- To promote a culture of statistical literacy, awareness and the general use of statistics in everyday life.

It was anticipated that having a Regional Association will positively impact the Harmonization Process within the Region. An additional benefit may be that the Membership Directory of the Professional Association can be a catalyst for the establishment of a Database of Regional Experts in statistics.

Even though this process is in its infancy, it is envisaged that Chapters for a Professional Association of Statisticians in the CARICOM Region will consist of individual Member Countries, in the case of the larger countries and of groupings of Member Countries, in the case of the smaller countries. It is also envisaged that the Association will establish Committees to deal with Subject matters such as Official Statistics, Survey Statistics, Statistical Computation and Statistical Education.

It was decided that competitions to determine the motto and logo for the professional - CAPS will be undertaken. At the country level, there will be one winner for each

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category of the competition. At the regional level, it is anticipated that the judging of this competition will be undertaken in September 2013 among the winners at the country level.

Brochure on the Consumer Price Indices and Inflation Rates 2010—2012

In July 2013, a brochure was published on the Consumer Price Indices (CPI) and Inflation Rates. It was circulated at the Statistics2013 event held in July. This brochure provided basic information on the CPI such as its definition, calculation and the way it is connected to inflation.

Inflation rates were also published for all Member States for the period 2010 to 2012. These were presented in tabular and graphical forms. This brochure can also be found on the website of the Regional Statistics Programme, <http://www.caricomstats.org/Files/CPI%20Brochure.pdf>.

Consumer Price Indices (CPI) are index numbers that measure changes in the prices of goods and services purchased or otherwise acquired by households (which households use directly or indirectly) to satisfy their needs / wants.

2013 Statistics In Everyday Life
Let us Educate & Appreciate

In 2013, Let Us Celebrate The International Year of Statistics

CARICOM **INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF STATISTICS**
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MEMBER COUNTRIES

What have we planned?

1. Awareness Forums
2. Literary, Quiz and Project Competitions
3. Career Guidance & Teacher Resources
4. Drama Series via 'Edutainment'
5. Publication Launches
6. Launch of the Caribbean Association of Professional Statistics (CAPS)
7. Involvement in CARICOM's 40th Anniversary celebration
8. A High Level Forum on Statistics
9. Much More!

Help Us Work Together to Promote the Importance of Statistics through Combined Energies.