

Main Events

INTRODUCTION



Keynote Speaker— the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada.

This newsletter presents a summary of the issues raised and recommendations made at these in October/November 2014 which included the Thirty Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (39th SCCS), the Twenty Third Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (23rd RCCC) and the Sixth (6th) Regional Statistical Research Seminar.

Thirty-Ninth Meeting Of The Standing Committee Of Caribbean Statisticians (39th SCCS) - October 2014.

The Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (39th SCCS) was held at the Princess Hotel, East Bank Demerara, Guyana, from 27-31 October, 2014. This annual meeting concentrated on the progress of the various areas of work within the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the countries of the Region.

The CARICOM Secretariat Regional Statistics section, also reported on the data collection process and efforts to build capacity for the various areas. The challenges experienced

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in collecting these datasets were also highlighted. Some of the main issues discussed at this meeting are found on page two and onwards.

The 39th SCCS was preceded by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics (15th AGS), where the following recommendations were made and endorsed by the SCCS. Some of the key recommendations included:

On the Second High Level Advocacy Forum (2nd HLF), the SCCS endorsed the recommendation of the 15th AGS that a document be prepared for the Prime Minister of Grenada on the main findings of the HLF, highlighting the major priorities and issues requiring high level interventions for him to take forward to the Heads of Government.

An Action Plan with recommendations of the 2nd HLF pertaining to the actions required by Governments is to be prepared and sent to the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, the Prime Minister of Grenada, who in his own words indicated “use me as an advocate for statistics”, and therefore is intent in taking this to the highest level of the community.

Relative to the Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP), the SCCS recommended that a close examination be undertaken to identify the themes/areas that countries are currently producing in their statistics work programmes; and

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Statisticians (CAPS), the SCCS recommended that there be a membership drive within countries including the use of flyers and advocacy materials by the Chief Statisticians within their NSOs and by other organizations. Further details can be found in this issue.

Twenty Third Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (23rd CCC) - October 2014.

The Twenty-Third Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) was held at the Princess Hotel, East Bank Demerara, Guyana on 30th October 2014. The objective of the meeting was to obtain feedback on the experiences and challenges encountered by countries who had completed the conduct of their census, as well as to allow for exchange of ideas and best practices. A status report was also done on the implementation of the regional strategy of support to the conduct of the 2010 Round of Population and housing Censuses.

Issues raised at the 2014 Regional Census Symposium were also discussed as countries prepare for the 2020 Round of Censuses. The international organisations that provided support to the census also reported on their contribution to the process and stated how they may be able to assist with future activities.

Sixth (6th) Regional Statistical Research Seminar - 1st November 2014

The Sixth Regional Statistical Research Seminar was held in Guyana on November 1st 2014. It 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; to promote research into statistical methods and applications; and to provide a forum for statisticians and other stakeholders to present their findings on issues that can aid the development of statistics and statisticians in the Region.

Some of the topics presented in this seminar were as follows:

- *Socio-Economic Status and Reported Health: A Study about Hypertension in the Barbados Population by Kira Deane—Statistician, Barbados Statistical Institute (BSS) and Dr. Godfrey St. Bernard, Senior Fellow at SALISES, UWI, St. Augustine Campus and Co-ordinator of the Masters of Science in Development Statistics;*
- *Development of a Short Term Business Statistic for Jamaica by Ms. Marsha Davis, Central Bank of*

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Jamaica (BOJ);

- *The Development of an Indicative Short-Term Yields Curve for Jamaica*, presented by Ms. Kai-Ann Falconner - Economic Statistician from the Bank of Jamaica; and
- *Documenting Language Capacity: The Role of the National Census*, written by Ms. Beverly Ann Carter and presented by Dr. Godfrey St. Bernard.

The presentations can be found on our website www.caricomstats.org.

Second High Level Advocacy Forum (2nd HLF) on Statistics. The Way Forward.

The second HLF was held in May 2014 in Grenada under the theme “A Data Revolution for Sustainable Development in CARICOM” with a new international initiative to improve the quality of statistics and information available to citizens. At this forum a number of issues were raised and recommendations made to advance statistics in the Region. The main issues and recommendations are summarized in this article.

The Keynote Address was delivered by the Prime Minister of Grenada, the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell who offered himself as an advocate for Statistics in the Region. Further considerations of the recommendations arising from the HLF led to the development of an Action Plan that was endorsed by the SCCS. With respect to the Government, the following were endorsed:

- Greater investment in statistics is required by Governments to fuel the data revolution;
- Ensuring the incorporation of ICT in the production and dissemination of statistics;
- Governments being champions of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) process;
- Governments continued commitment to the revision and updating of statistical legislation and/or transforming statistical offices of CARICOM into autonomous bodies. This should take into consideration the United Nation's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics (FPOS);
- Governments promotion of careers in statistics by offering scholarships to its citizens in this area and by making efforts to include statistics to a larger extent in the school curriculum;
- Governments endorsement and promotion of the

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Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians (CAPS); and

- The development of statistics to optimise scarce resources in the strengthening of the national statistical systems.

With respect to the NSOs, the following recommendations were made:

- National Statistics Offices (NSOs) should seek to promote the increased use of ICT in the acquisition and provision of statistical data via the increased use of databases, web and mobile technologies in the collection, processing, storage, archiving and dissemination of official statistics;
- For those countries that are transitioning to Central Computer Services, NSOs should ensure that they retain a high level of computing proficiency suited to the provision of high quality statistical services;
- That statisticians be trained as data scientists to meet the demands of the data revolution;
- Every effort be made to continue to improve and enhance the collaboration with public and private institutions holding administrative and/or “BIG” data well suited to enhancing the quality, extent and scope of official statistics produced by NSOs;
- NSOs should align the RSWP to their respective statistical work programme.
- Chief Statisticians should actively champion the development of the NSDS that are aligned to their national development plans;
- The Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians (CAPS) be a key mechanism to professionalise statistical services in the region and that the NSOs widely promote membership to this association; and
- Chief Statisticians actively champion the development of the NSDS that are aligned to their National Development Plans.

On the role of the International Development Partners (IDPs), the following were the key recommendations:

- The IDPs continue investing in statistics in the region while adhering to the (FPOS); and
- The IDPs collaborate relative to their interventions in the region so as not to overburden the NSOs.

The Regional Statistical Work Programme will continue to follow up the outcomes of the 2nd HLF.

The Implementation of The Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) – Advancing The Process

Work continued in the area of the RSWP. While only (Jamaica and Suriname formally adopted the 2005 RSWP, other countries had informally included elements of it in their work programme.

The updated RSWP (RSWP 2011) was incorporated within the Statistical Act of Antigua and Barbuda and this country intends to move forward with the transition process into a Bureau with the intention to implement the RSWP fully.

Barbados focused on the traditional areas of work but hoped to form a Producers’ Committee and formulate a National Statistical Work Programme which will be based on the RSWP.

Dominica and Bermuda are also advancing the implementation of the RSWP based on what was seen in presentations at previous meetings of the AGS/SCCS.

Grenada is intent on making greater efforts to implement the RSWP.

Guyana’s main focus was on its final census results but steps were taken to train its staff in survey design and analysis which would be important for the implementation of the RSWP.

Saint Lucia referenced the RSWP in formulating development plans for statistics.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines also focused on its census results, but the RSWP was used as a guide for the work over the past year and it is hoped that in the future there will be focus on a more successful implementation of the RSWP. In Trinidad and Tobago, efforts were made at implementation but this was affected by the problems with accommodation for staff as well as staffing. It was however recognised that countries had already implemented domains/themes of the RSWP in their current work programme. An implementation guide will be prepared to provide support for this process.

The following recommendations were therefore endorsed by the SCCS on the RSWP:

- The RSWP needs to be aligned with national statistics work plans and national development plans;
- Countries that have commenced substantive implementation of the RSWP should contribute inputs on the approaches being used in practice for inclusion in the RSWP Implementation Guide.
- There should be a reporting format for countries to report on the progress made on implementation.

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The development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the RSWP could be based on work already put in place by the Member State of Barbados. The Director of Statistics of this Member State agreed to review this work. It was further recommended that countries formalise the process of the RSWP implementation through undertaking a close examination to identify the themes that were already implemented in their work programme. It was also recommended that countries identify the areas of statistics within themes that they were producing/not currently producing as well as prepare an implementation plan with time lines for the incorporation of the themes that were not currently being produced.

Progress on the 2011 Round of the International Comparison Programme (ICP). Feedback on the Results and Recommendations to be submitted to the ICP Global Office.

Following the comments made by the CARICOM countries and the Secretariat at the Forty-Fifth Meeting of the United Nations Statistical Commission (40th UNSC) in February 2014, on the 2011 Round of the ICP, and specifically the reservations of the Region with respect to the National Accounts component, the Friends of the Chair (FOC) group was established by the UNSC to conduct an evaluation of the ICP. To the best of the knowledge of Suriname, a member of the FOC group, nothing has since been done in this area. It was therefore recommended that Barbados, the representative for CARICOM on the UNSC, formally submit the evaluation results of CARICOM as approved by the Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the SCCS and enquire about the progress with the evaluation. This recommendation was endorsed at the 39th SCCS meeting.

It was also recommended that NSOs see how best the ICP results which were released could be used within their countries and that there be further discussions of the ICP processes and results at the regional level.

The Development of The CAPS - Update.

Work continued on advancing the development of CAPS. A final draft of the By-Laws and the Constitution were completed. The draft application form was prepared and reviewed and issues pertaining to the address were discussed. A temporary website was designed by the staff of the CARICOM Secretariat and the link was sent to members of the Executive Committee. Articles on the CAPS were provided to the International Statistical Institute (ISI) and the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) for publication in their respective newsletters, post the

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establishment of the CAPS.

The Council Member resident in Trinidad and Tobago was undertaking work on the incorporation of the CAPS in that Member State and informed the meeting on the progress. It was requested that the CSO, Trinidad and Tobago use this office's address for registration of this statistics body, since in the interim, the address that was being used was the residential address of the Council Member.

It was recommended that there be a downward revision in the fees to attract membership. This was endorsed by the SCCS. It was also recommended that there be a membership drive within countries including the use of flyers and advocacy materials by the Chief Statisticians within their NSOs and other organisations present at the meeting. It was suggested by the Statistics Canada Representative that CAPS be advertised in a news article in the International Association of Survey Statisticians (IASS) Newsletter. This initiative was also welcomed by the SCCS.

Caribbean Statistics Day Celebrations, October 2014

WHAT DID WE DO AT THE SECRETARIAT.

Caribbean Statistics Day 2014 was commemorated under the theme, "Data Revolution for Sustainable Development of CARICOM- Designing and Operationalising a Framework for Statistics in the Post 2015 Development Agenda".

At the Secretariat, the celebration was conducted for the entire week. The theme for this year's celebrations was sent out to countries and the activities were uploaded to the Regional Statistics Section's website. A banner was also placed outside of the Secretariat's building. T-shirts were worn by the staff of the Regional Statistics Department which carried the logo for Caribbean Statistics Day along with a shortened version of the theme to the back. There was also a display of the section's output which included the Statistics Model Bill and the code of Good Statistical Practices for Member States and Associate Members. Training sessions were also held for staff of the Secretariat on the DevInfo 7.0 software as well as Tradsys Online. A demonstration was also conducted on the Census E-portal.

*Published By: Statistics Sub-programme
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