

**Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social/Gender
and Environment Statistics and Indicators in the
CARICOM Region**

*Implementation Plan
Social/Gender Component*

MARCH 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND.....	1
2. GOALS OF THE CURRENT PROGRAMME.....	1
2.1 Overview.....	1
2.2 Foundation Activities: immediate preparation and the compilation of indicators.....	2
2.3 Establishing National Committees.....	2
2.4 Training in the Compilation of Social and Gender Statistics.....	3
2.5 The Preparation of User Manuals.....	4
2.6 Regional Publications.....	4
3. WORK PLAN.....	5

1. Background

In 2000, the United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, Statistics Sub-programme teamed up to implement a project, *Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the CARICOM Region*. The overall objective of this project was to strengthen capacity among member states to generate social/ gender and environment statistics through reinforcing intra-regional capacity among the national statistical systems and to develop a critical mass of statisticians trained in these areas of statistics. The direct focus of this project was to develop capacities specifically to assess commitments made by countries to meet certain social goals. These commitments were made at the various United Nations Conferences including the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Fourth World Conference for Women in Beijing (1995). The UNSD/CARICOM project involved the conduct of a regional workshop on Social and Gender issues, the provision to all member states of state-of-the-art computer equipment, installation and maintenance of the cost over a fixed period of high-speed Internet access and basic training in Information Technology. There were also technical assistance visits to selected countries or group of countries and exchange visits. Another major output of the project is a set of regional publications, which will shortly be published.

From the outset of the UNSD/CARICOM project, it was recognized that in order to sustain and institutionalize the compilation of these statistics and indicators on a regular basis, a more focused follow up programme will be necessary. As a consequence, the Advisory Group, which comprises selected Directors of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the sub-region, and staff of the CARICOM Secretariat statistics sub-programme and UNSD, was established to prepare a more focused programme to further strengthen capacities in the areas of Social and Gender statistics, on a more sustained basis. This programme, “CARICOM Programme to Strengthen Capacity in the Compilation of Social Gender and Environment Statistics and Indicators in the CARICOM Region”, as its main objective, seeks *‘to institutionalize the production of Social and Gender Statistics in the National Statistical Systems in order to inform policy formulation, that can improve the conditions of men and women’*. It is important to stress that the activities of this programme are complementary to efforts by other agencies in the area of social statistics. Further, the programme will encourage maximum collaboration and cooperation between the various implementing agencies, in order to maximize the benefits to the sub-region. Recently, the current programme was formally endorsed by the Twenty Seventh (27th) meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) held in Grenada in November 2002.

2. Goals of the current programme

2.1 Overview

The present programme aims to draw on the strengths and achievements of the countries in the region through Internet connectivity, and study tours, as well as the conduct of a regional training workshop. Other workshops on topical issues, but which do not form a formal part of the current programme, are also included, and efforts will be made to garner the necessary funding support for the conduct of these workshops as well. Further, the programme seeks to enhance the development of capacities especially among the more needy member states, by making available the services of an experienced social statistician on a one-to-one basis, with these countries. As

described above, the present project will complement other on-going capacity building activities in the region. To this end, it is envisaged that the project will result in the following activities and outputs discussed below.

2.2 Foundation Activities: immediate preparations and the compilation of indicators

Foundation activities are currently being carried out and should be concluded by the end of March 2003. As a first step, the Secretariat is attempting to complete an inventory of the prevailing situation in the various member states. The list of statistics and indicators developed by the Advisory Committee and endorsed by the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians was revised and updated based on discussions, mainly centred on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), at the third Advisory Committee meeting held in Grenada in November 2002. This amended list was circulated to member states via a spreadsheet, requesting information relating to the current availability of the indicators. The list of statistics and indicators was also circulated to notable persons operating in the field of social and gender statistics at the regional and national levels, in order to obtain suggestions to improve the list. The response to the inventory by Member States was very high, however there was not the same level of response to obtain feedback on the list of statistics and indicators.

The information collected from these efforts will help in assessing the existing capacities of member states with respect to the production of the statistics and indicators. Familiarity with this situation will *inter alia* help to decide which countries are most in need of on-the-spot assistance, which will be provided by the CARICOM Secretariat as far as is possible. Also, the inventory will greatly assist in identifying priority areas of statistics which may then be addressed through the hosting of workshops.

Having thoroughly assessed the situation by means of the inventory, efforts will then be made to conclude the format for the reporting of the statistics and indicators to CARICOM. Guidelines and standards for the reporting of the indicators will also be prepared and circulated for member states to use. Member states will also be informed of the standardized computer software which will be adopted for use by all member states, when reporting the data. Member states will be encouraged to commence the reporting of the latest available data going back five (5) years, and hopefully will be able to provide 2002 and/or data from the Year 2000 Round of Population and Housing Census by October 2003.

2.3. Establishing National Committees

In all member states, it is recognized that a considerable amount of social data continues to be collected by government departments other than the National Statistical Offices (NSO). For example, in most countries, the Ministry of Education collects and compiles all statistics relating to education. These are then shared with the NSOs, who in turn publish and use them as inputs into other secondary indicators. The programme recognizes the need to continue the sharing of these data and will attempt to enhance this process. Hence, in line with the existing statistical act, the programme will promote the establishment of National Committees or **Social Indicators Committees**. It is anticipated that this more formalized arrangement will strengthen the need to

produce more accurate and timely indicators since it will enhance ownership of the process. The committees, coordinated by the NSOs, will meet regularly and will be empowered to actually compile the indicators in the requisite format agreed.

It is expected that together with the NSOs, all social sector partners, both government and non-government will serve on these committees. The appropriate international agencies will also be encouraged to participate. It is being proposed to test the procedures in a pilot member state as follows: as soon as the potential members have been identified, the first meeting of the committee should be called. CARICOM can assist by drafting an agenda for the meeting, and by making a brief presentation at the inaugural meeting focusing on the usefulness of the various indicators for policy enhancement. The various activities and tasks of the committee can be identified at the meeting, and these can be allocated and timetabled. The committee may be empowered to produce the very indicators which the regional office is promoting, based on endorsement by the recent Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) meeting held in Grenada.

2.4 Training in the compilation of social and gender statistics

As part of the programme, a regional workshop on social statistics will be held for all member states. The gender dimension will be a pervading theme of the workshop. It is envisaged that the workshop will be spread over a period of five (5) working days. It is hoped, also, even though not a part of the current formal programme, that it may be possible to conduct four more specific five-day workshops (see annex to this plan).

The specific objectives of the workshops are to:

- (i) Familiarize statisticians and users of statistics with the steps and requirements for developing social and gender statistics at country, regional and international levels;
- (ii) introduce participants to ways of specifying gender issues and defining relevant statistics and indicators;
- (iii) provide guidance on assessing the availability and quality of data;
- (iv) review methods of compiling, analysing and presenting statistics on Education, Population, Health, Housing and Crime for a wide audience;
- (v) impart basic knowledge and skills in the application of information technology in data compilation, analysis and dissemination.
- (vi) obtain feedback on the progress of work relative to the compilation of statistics and indicators for the CARICOM programme

It is expected that this workshop will assist participants to produce the required statistics and indicators for the current programme, which were agreed by the Third CARICOM Advisory Group meeting and endorsed by the 27th SCCS meeting held in Grenada, in November 2002. Participants at the workshop will include mainly the producers of statistics (statisticians from

national statistics offices and personnel from relevant ministries and other agencies).

The programme will also seek to develop capacity through the promotion of study tours and exchange visits. It is envisaged that countries that have developed sound capacity in the various areas of focus, will host participants from the more needy states on study tours and exchange visits. In addition, the programme will seek to deploy experts from the various member states to the more needy ones, as the need arises. It was recognised in the formulation of the CARICOM programme that the development of social and gender statistics is at different levels among the countries of the region. Intra-regional study tours will therefore reinforce existing south/south networks and create opportunities for some of the staff from statistically less developed countries to learn from their peers best practices and share experience with others in the region.

In addition to the above efforts to strengthen capacities among member states, the programme will also provide direct and on-spot technical assistance to member states in compiling the statistics and indicators. The social statistician who has been recently recruited by the CARICOM Secretariat to coordinate the programme will provide this technical assistance.

2.5 The Preparation of User Manuals

In order to promote the knowledge and usefulness of the indicators, two sets of User Manuals will be compiled. One will be a very ‘user friendly’ manual, aimed more at the ordinary reader. The other will be more technical and will aim to meet the needs of the more ‘statistically conscious’ user. A meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held such that the details of the contents of these manuals can be discussed and agreed. At this meeting also, the various tasks involved in the preparation of the manual will be assigned and timetabled. It is expected that the manuals will accompany the publication of the statistics and indicators.

2.6 Regional Publications

At least two (2) regional publications will be prepared, one, which presents the actual data, and the other, which presents the appropriate meta-data. Preparation of the regional publications in the main will be the responsibility of CARICOM. However, there will be close consultations with the national statistical systems of the member countries during the process. The Advisory Committee will oversee the entire process. The task will involve, *inter alia*, the following:

- i. vigorously pursue the submission of the indicators from the various member states, within agreed deadlines.
- ii. Assess the standards of the data returned, against the established guidelines;
- iii. Discuss findings of the above assessment with member states with the objective of improving the data and indicators prior to publication;
- iv. Arrange indicators in agreed format for publication both as hard copies and via the Internet.

3. Work Plan

Objectives and Activities	Responsible parties		Envisaged output
1. Preparatory Activities			
1.1. Prepare draft implementation plan	CARICOM	Dec. 2002	
1.2. Circulate revised list of indicators to selected persons and organizations for focused feedback e.g. (ECLAC), (OECS), (UWI), etc.	CARICOM	Dec. 2002	
1.3. Organize available metadata already collected	CARICOM	Jan. 2003	
1.4. Identify and document individual weaknesses within member states and decide how to treat data gaps	CARICOM	Jan. 2003	
1.5. Prepare report on the situation, highlighting immediate steps to be taken to assist the weaker member states	CARICOM	Jan. 2003	
2 Compiling the Indicators			
2.1 Design format for member states to report the indicators	CARICOM	Jan-Feb. 2003	
2.2 Document data standards to guide member states when compiling the indicators	CARICOM	Jan-Feb. 2003	
2.3 Specify software for member states to use in the electronic compilation of the Indicators, and the submission thereafter to CARICOM	CARICOM	Mar. 2003	
2.4 Distribute to member states the indicators in the format adopted, together with guidelines on data standards and information on software for electronic compilation and submission to CARICOM (indicate deadlines for return of compiled indicators)	CARICOM	Mar. 2003	
2.5 Identify and document data sources from available documents in the office and from inventory being carried out in December 2002	CARICOM	Feb. 2003	
2.6 Submission of data by national statistical offices to the CARICOM Secretariat	CARICOM/NSOs/SIMDGs	July-Nov2003	
2.7 Validate and check data for consistency, make queries where appropriate and decide how to treat data gaps	CARICOM	Apr-May 2003	
3 Establishing National Committees			
3.1 Prepare strategy paper to assist member states in establishing national Social Indicators Committees. Include potential list of organizations to serve on the committee and a draft agenda for first meeting	CARICOM	Feb-Mar. 2003	
3.2 Prepare presentation for delivery at first national committee meeting	CARICOM/UNSD/UNDP	Feb. 2003	Training and reference materials
3.3 Identify a pilot member state and test the process	CARICOM	Early Apr. 2003	
3.4 Amend the procedures based on experience in the pilot member state and schedule the establishment of committees in other member	CARICOM	Apr-May 2003	

states			
3.5 Continue to establish national committees	CARICOM	April-July 2003	
4 Training in the compilation of social and gender statistics			
4.1 Identify and arrange venue for a regional workshop on Social statistics with gender issues as pervading themes	CARICOM	Late Apr. 2003	
4.2 Recruit consultants/resource persons to assist with training	CARICOM	May 2003	
4.3 Prepare training materials and programmes	CARICOM	May 2003	
4.4 Compile relevant statistics for illustration in the workshops	CARICOM	May 2003	
4.5 Identify and invite participants for the workshops	CARICOM	May 2003	
4.6 Implement the regional workshop on Social statistics	CARICOM	July 2003	Up to 35 persons trained
4.6 Prepare report and output from the workshops for circulation	CARICOM	July 2003	Workshop reports
4.7 Identify subject areas and venues for attachments and arrange these for the more needy member states	CARICOM	May 2003	
4.8 Arrange Technical Assistance by CARICOM to more needy member states; this will be done after the establishment of the social indicators committees above	CARICOM	May 2003	
5 Preparation of User Manuals			
5.1 Discuss the design and preparation of the two User Manuals at the next Advisory Committee meeting	CARICOM/ADVISORY GROUP	May 2003	
5.2 Prepare a report on the design of the Manuals	CARICOM/ADVISORY GROUP	June 2003	
5.3 Develop draft manuals based on design	CARICOM/ADVISORY GROUP	Early 2004	
5.4 Review the draft manuals and finalize for publication	CARICOM/ADVISORY GROUP	Oct. 2003	
5.6 Arrange for the printing of the manuals	CARICOM/ADVISORY GROUP	Feb. 2004	
5.7 Disseminate the user manuals	CARICOM/ADVISORY GROUP	Apr. 2004	
6 Dissemination of Indicators			
6.1 Prepare outline of publications	CARICOM	Sept. 2003	
6.2 Design charts and tables for the publication	CARICOM	Sept-Oct. 2003	
6.3 Prepare draft of chapters and analysis of the tables and charts	CARICOM	Oct-Nov. 2003	
6.4 Conduct internal review and revise the draft report	CARICOM	Nov. 2003	
6.5 Convene an expert group meeting to review publication on social/gender statistics	CARICOM	Nov. 2003	
6.6 Revise and finalize document for publication	CARICOM	Dec. 2003	
6.7 Arrange for printing of document	CARICOM	Dec'03-Jan. 2004	Two regional publications
6.8 Launching of publication and distribution to national statistics offices and statistical units	CARICOM	Feb. 2004	
7 Project reporting, monitoring and			

<i>evaluation</i>			
7.1 Prepare quarterly reports on progress of project	CARICOM	Mar. 2003 Jun. 2003 Sep. 2003 Dec. 2003	Project progress report; and final assessment of the project and a plan for the continuation of enhanced statistical activities
7.2 Final project assessment	CARICOM	Feb. 2004	