

Welcome Remarks Halim Brizan, Director of Statistics Grenada CARICOM Third High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics

Good morning everyone. It is indeed an honour and privilege for me to offer very brief welcoming remarks at this very important Third CARICOM high-level Advocacy forum on statistics.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is with a sense of deep joy that I welcome you to our beautiful shores and more specifically to this very important forum. I want to say a special welcome to our Prime Minister who as some of you may know has been a strong advocate for statistics and has been championing the cause for statistics at the level of the CARICOM Heads of Government. Prime Minister we are very elated to have you here with us today and we look forward to your keynote address. A special welcome to our Deputy Permanent Secretary your presence demonstrates your support for statistics, and that you understand its value and see the urgent need for its improvement.

I would also like to welcome in a special way Dr. Philomen Harrison and her team from the CARICOM Secretariat who have worked tirelessly in the planning of this event. I want to at this time recognise the contributions of our development partners who have graciously sponsored the hosting of this event, The IDB, PARIS21 and the EU through the European

Development Fund Support Services Unit in Grenada. Your support in this regard is highly commendable. Fellow Directors of Statistics and Chief Statisticians, as well as other senior government officials from CARICOM member states who have travelled here to be a part of this important event, I also welcome in a special. I also like to welcome all Permanent Secretaries and senior government officials, members of the private sector and other specially invited guest.

Your presence here today speaks volumes. It is not often we see such great turn out at a statistics event which is definitely a positive sign for the development of statistics in Grenada. It our desire to see improvements in statistics but we must also all recognise that we all have an important role to play, wherever we are or whoever we are in advocating and offering strong support for statistics development in whatever way we can. You are all key stakeholders within our National Statistical system.

There is no doubt that a lot of work has been done in developing statistics in the region. However, we are nowhere close to where we should be. The increasing demands in statistics as a result of the global, regional and local agenda has created significant challenges for us data producers given that we have to satisfy this demand with the same or dwindling resources.

There is considerable merit in us coming together to generate ideas and plan the most effective path for the region given these challenges we face.

As it is often said when creative minds come together, they can make the impossible possible and the ordinary extraordinary. Yesterday's side event our highly successful High Level Seminar demonstrated that this is true. Despite our very packed agenda we were able to discuss some of the major issues confronting statisticians in the region and were able to come up with concrete recommendation which we are happy to present to you after this opening ceremony.