

REPORT

TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS

**34th MEETING,
Gros Islet, St. Lucia
26-28 October 2009**



SURINAME

General Bureau of Statistics of Suriname (GBS)

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INTRODUCTION

There are many producers of data and statistics in Suriname's National Statistical System¹, hence it is explicitly stated that this report relates predominantly to the work of our Bureau and mainly covers the period October 2008 – September 2009, as far as the review is concerned. A "p" after some data indicates the provisional nature of that data!

As of December 2002 a new Statistics Act is in place, in March 2003 the Bureau of Statistics obtained semi-autonomous status as a Government Foundation and since June 2004 the GBS subscribed to the GDDS of the IMF. **In April 2008 Suriname was elected a member of the UN Statistical Commission to join Jamaica as of January in representing the CARICOM (and Latin America).** Clearly, we are taking small but noticeable steps towards improvement. **In February 2009, Suriname was elected as one of the three vice-chairs of the Bureau of the Statistical Commission.**

Per 01 October 2008 the ABS had a total staff of 97 (63 female), and per 30 September 2009 this was 104 (68 female).

¹ The most important ones are: GBS, Civil Registration Office, Central Bank, Foundation for Tourism, National Planning Office, Ministry of Health (Planning Unit and NHIS), Bureau for Public Health, Ministry of Finance (Economic Affairs), Ministry of Education (Research & Planning Section), Ministry of Labour (statistics Section), Ministry of Agriculture (Statistics Section), Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing (Planning Section), Ministry of Justice and Police (Information & Education Section of the Police Force), Suriname Debt management Office, Ministry of Home Affairs (Bureau for Gender Affairs).

WORK PROGRAMME

The period under consideration was dominated by:

- a- Continuing and finalizing the PROCESSING of the Household Budget Survey 2007/2008 and disseminating the results**
- b- CARTAC Interventions in the fields of National Accounts**
- c- Producing as much as possible regular statistics in a timely matter**
- d- Expanding scope and coverage of the statistical activities of the GBS**

ECONOMY FINANCE AND INVESTMENT STATISTICS

National Accounts: GDP in constant and current prices and other Macro Economic Aggregates compiled; available and disseminated up to 2008(p) since July 2009. The Section succeeded revising GDP estimates for 2005-2007, but alas the compilation of the first Quarterly GDP estimates was not completed again. However, it should be noted that after suspension since the mid nineties, in December 2008 the GBS resumed the production of Expenditure on GDP. For the classification of value added ISIC Rev. 3 is used (as recommended by SNA 93), but only at the highest level of aggregation. The complete move to SNA 93 is still hampered by insufficient source data, but it is expected that the output from and follow-up to the Establishment Census (in July 2009 a special survey in 9 out of 10 Districts was fielded to collect additional information beneficial to completing the move towards SNA 1993/2008 and towards rebasing the constant series to 2007) may alleviate some of the problems. No Satellite accounts are being produced or are envisaged in the short run by the GBS. National Accounts is the main beneficiary of a CARTAC intervention (so far 5 National Accounts and 1 XMPI missions), initiated in November 2007.

It is also worth noting that together with our colleague from the National Planning Office, at their request we instated a commission Input/Output table for Suriname (comprising: GBS, Planning Office, Ministry of Finance and Central Bank). Results are expected in December 2009.

Trade Statistics: Imports, Exports and Re-exports by various points of view, (e.g. SITC; Country/Region of Origin and Destination) compiled up to 1995 (according to our old system) and as of 1996, up to June 2009 data available in the new format. There are still some problems with the data. The problems are the familiar ones: Customs not filling out the special measures (liters, pairs, number etc.) so we end up with kilos of shoes or cars or even beer! The Statistics Sub Directorate of the Bureau, supported by Scientific Research and Planning, reported some progress in modalities to release more detailed trade information whilst preserving confidentiality of traders, as we are legally obliged to do this! In August 2009 a publication with annual and Quarterly data (2004-2008), was released.

The GBS is only responsible for Merchandise Trade Statistics and Trade in Services is the responsibility of Central Bank. However, because of the previously mentioned CARTAC intervention, the GBS and Central Bank work closer together to deliver the required results.

Consumer Price Index: CPI compiled and disseminated up to August 2009. Up to July, the section succeeded in releasing the CPI-information (5 sheets) within at most 21 days after the end of the reference month. However, due to circumstances beyond our control the GBS was forced to close for a few days in August and September 2009 and hence we are running a little behind schedule. Indeed we only expect to be back on track as of the 3rd week of November 2009. Since 2006 we have been using both a press release as well as paid advertisements to disseminate the CPI as some newspapers repeatedly produced improper versions of our CPI press releases. Because of very high costs for advertising, the frequency of paid advertisements has been reduced from Monthly to Quarterly.

Enterprises Statistics: Besides the annual survey conducted for the benefit of National Accounts; Enterprises Statistics is engaged in compiling inter alia: Selected Indicators from Large Enterprises (SifLE, comprises: Turnover, Labour Cost and Number of employees in ISIC 2-9) The section has partial data available up to June 2009 (p).

For Statistics of Wages and Prices in the Construction Industry; (self-explanatory) data is available up to July 2009(p). In June 2009, a publication with data up to March 2009 was issued.

As regards Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), responsibility is shared by the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation (inclusive the semi-autonomous National Planning Office) and the Ministry of Finance. Government Debt information is efficiently provided to CARICOM, either directly by the SDMO or through the GBS, and in September 2009 information up to June 2009 has been provided to CARICOM.

POPULATION, DEMOGRAPHIC, SOCIAL AND LIVING CONDITIONS STATISTICS

Population and Demographic Statistics: Since the GBS has instated a permanent Census Office (since June 2005), a proper division of labour between Population Statistics and the Census Office resulted in a more efficient and effective operation of both units. Population Statistics is also crucial in assisting the Household Surveys section with producing inflation factors for the Household Survey estimates. The Section also took the lead in producing life tables for 2004-2007 for Suriname, and in 2008 ably assisted the director in making Population Projections up to 2024 for the Minister of Planning and Development Cooperation. In August 2009 a draft publication with data from 2000-2008 has been submitted, which was expected to be issued in September. Because of the problems alluded to in the CPI paragraph it is now expected that the publication will be available in November 2009.

Social and Living Conditions Statistics / Household Surveys (HHS) and Household Budget Surveys (HBS):

Apart from Population Censuses, Social and Living Conditions Statistics in Suriname are mainly obtained through Household Surveys, in general and Household Budget Surveys in particular. Regular household surveys take place continuously on a Quarterly basis, albeit the results are released mainly on an annual basis. This is done for reasons of attaining the target response rate of 75% and to achieve a sufficient number of unweighted cases to have accurate and reliable estimates. In September 2009 a publication was issued with data 2005-2008, but annual data normally is available in July of the next year. For the latest Household Budget Survey (HBS) 2007/2008, the field work was concluded in the first week of May 2008 and the last substantive report was issued in March 2009. (There were 3 Volumes). The final **overall response rate** obtained stands at **76.1%**, but this disguises a variation from **64.1% in Paramaribo, up to 92.8% in Coronie**. By collapsing Districts the variation was reduced to acceptable levels.

GENDER STATISTICS (falls within the mandate of Scientific Research and Planning / WOP)

As regards Gender Statistics the following holds. The first publication was issued in April 2002; it was then decided that it should be issued in odd years. The second publication for this topic, with most data up to 2004 (and some e.g. on election results, even up to 2005) was indeed released in early December 2005. The third publication was released in November 2007 and the fourth publication was scheduled for September 2009, but is delayed to December 2009.

OTHER AREAS IN SOCIAL/DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS

Traffic and Transport Statistics: Compiled statistics about International Passenger traffic (mainly Arrivals and Departures, each according to various relevant characteristics); Road, Air and Water traffic and transport; Infrastructure and Communication. This section also played a crucial role in the HBS. The last publication with data up to 2006 was issued in January 2008.

Social and Cultural Statistics: The Statistical Yearbook for 2007 with a variety of statistics ranging from Area and number of inhabitants to Government Finance was issued in November 2008. A draft publication: Statistical Yearbook 2008 is presently being finalized and will be issued, as usual, in November 2009 at the Annual Trade Fair of the Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND PLANNING (=WOP)

This Section is the “Methodology Watch Dog”, and is responsible for some cross-cutting statistics: Environment Statistics, gender Statistics and ICT Statistics. As regards the methodology alleviating the problem of (unintended) disclosure when disseminating information, given Suriname's small Economy and Society, WOP advised to opt for existing software. No choice has been made as yet. WOP also plays a leading role in the activities towards implementation of SNA 93, and collaborates with subject-matter sections in carrying out special studies. WOP spearheaded the half-yearly

publication: Basic Indicators, issued in December 2002 for the first time. In July 2009 the latest issues was released. This (intended semi-annual) publication contains information on Economic, Financial, Monetary and Social Indicators.

ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS

In November 2002, in collaboration with Conservation International Suriname: Selected Environmental Statistics was produced. This publication was scheduled for even years hence it should have come out in November 2004. Because of the paucity of environmental data it was cancelled for 2004 and all efforts were made to improve the data availability. In May 2006 (after a consultation 1-day Workshop was held 31 March 2006) the second issue of Selected Environmental Statistics was produced and disseminated. After the usual 1-day Workshop (conducted in May 2008), the third issue was released only in December 2008.

ICT-STATISTICS

It should be mentioned that ICT information is weak but improving. We had some questions on ICT in Census-6 (2003) but they were all left out for Census-7 (2004). We added an extra sheet (on ICT and publicity) to the PES 2004 Questionnaire. Processing and releasing information regarding ICT has only not been given priority until the beginning of this year. It should also be noted that in Suriname legal provisions for a Telecommunications Authority (TAS) were made since 1998. TAS became operational in late 2004 when competition was introduced in the Telecom market in Suriname. TAS has a young and energetic director whom we met in May this year and who only started to show her teeth since midyear 2009. It paid off because as of August this year we are receiving some interesting information through TAS, not enough, but quite an improvement. Actually, for the first time Suriname was able to include acceptable Telecommunications information in its MDG Progress Report.

CENSUS OFFICE:

Please see our: Report to The RCCC (17th Meeting, Gros Islet, St. Lucia, 29 October 2009), which will be available later.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND DATA DISSEMINATION

The Bureau issued: 12 book format publications in 2008. From January to September 2009, 8 book format publications were issued. Up to the month July, the CPI has been disseminated according to standards, within 3 weeks of the reference month.

The Bureau also had to deal with 1722 information requests in 2008 (up 36% compared with 2007, but 2007 was an exceptionally low year. The GBS dealt with 1631 information requests between January and July 2009. At this pace 2009 will be an exceptionally high year, but most likely many requests are fuelled by the general elections scheduled for May 2010. It turns out that requests for Demographic (inclusive information from the continuous Household Surveys) and Census data account for more than 25% of all requests so far in 2009.

CARICOM REPORTING FORMAT (ECONOMIC STATISTICS)

AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (TABLES)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	TRAINING/ TA APPLIED REQUIRED	USE OF TECHNOLOGY
National Accounts	NA sheets with macro economic aggregates 2004-2008 since July 2009 Expenditure on GDP 2003-2007 since December 2008	Annual, first estimates in July & final estimates in October via public relations Expenditure on GDP data since December 2008	Data collection: eg production, construction Recent base year (1990) Rebasing needed for year 2007 Quarterly GDP SUTs	Through CARTAC intervention work on GDP by Expenditure, SUTs and Quarterly GDP First mission; Febr-2008 ; Second mission May- 2008; Third mission; Oct. 2008; 4 th mission Febr 2009; 5 th Mission Oct. 2009 // Non-response to surveys	Follow-up hands on training, GDP by Expenditure, Quarterly GDP and SUTs	Computers with internet access
-Tourism Satellite Account	Long term planning	NA	Identification of data sources Inter-agency coordination (GBS & Tourism Foundation)	NA	Training and technical assistance Required	NA
Input/Output tables	Work initiated in November 2008, tables expected in December 2009	NA			Training provided by STUSECO	Use of Turbo-ABS and improvement of SURYA model of the Surinamese Economy
Quarterly GDP (see National Accounts)	In progress (Delayed from End 2009 to mid 2010)	NA	NA	Through CARTAC intervention work on Quarterly GDP Non-response	Training and technical assistance Required	Computers with internet access
Merchandise Trade -Trade Indices Annual/ Quarterly	In progress (already started in April 2008, no tables yet) Tables: - Trade Balance - Exports and Imports - Trade with Trade Blocks by (HS,SITC,BEC)	Quarterly/ half year or annual tables via public relations	Identify potential data sources	First mission XMPI consultant; April 12-18 Second mission Nov. 2008 was cancelled Drawing a sample for Services (tourism) Trained staff within Trade section Insufficient Inter-agency coordination	Follow-up hands on assistance from CARTAC (timing to be determined)	Computers with internet access

AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (TABLES)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	TRAINING/ TA APPLIED REQUIRED	USE OF TECHNOLOGY
CPI	- exchange rates - consumer price indices and inflation	Monthly via public relations to all Mass Media	For quite a while only the districts of Paramaribo, and Wanica are published. Nickerie is being surveyed but not published after the fire of the GBS building in 2003. With the HBS survey 2007/2008 coverage is expanded to include 3 more districts. The Interior is excluded because of logistical and cost considerations	-HBS(Oct.2007- April 2008) CPI usually disseminated within 3 weeks of the reference month	CARTAC CPI training in St. Lucia (June 2009)	Medium term plan to use hand helds for price /outlet observations
Enterprises Statistics	Turnover, Labour Cost and Number of employees, <u>Wages and Prices in the Construction Industry</u>	Annual data up to 2008 Quarterly data up to 2 nd Quarter 2009 Monthly – July 2009	Differential non-response, causing the estimates to become suspect	Non-response, causing the estimates to become suspect Census information used for register.	Also benefits from CARTAC national accounts intervention	Use of computers with internet access
Gender Statistics	Yes, Selected data up to August 2009	Yes, publication “Selected Gender Statistics” issued in November 2007, next publication scheduled for December 2009	Data from the interior missing, so geographic coverage not optimal	<u>Best practices</u> Output rhythm for odd years maintained <u>Challenges</u> Late response Format problems	Participated in CARICOM training in Antigua (July 2009) More Training required for progressing with “genderizing” statistics increasingly.	Use of computers with internet access

CARICOM REPORTING FORMAT (POPULATION, DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS)

AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (TABLES)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	TRAINING/ TA APPLIED REQUIRED	USE OF TECHNOLOGY
Population and Demographic Statistics	Population estimates up to mid-year 2008 Population projections up to 2024 Life tables up to 2007 Selected vital indicators and statistics up to 2007	Same as previous column, plus incidental data requests.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late availability of most vital statistics - Selected local practices at variance with international standards 		
Social and Living Conditions Statistics - Continuous HHS - Household Budget Survey 2007/2008	Publication 2005-2008 Three bi-lingual Volumes with at least 22 tables in each	NA Publication information, plus contribution to financial notes to the 2010 Budget 3 Volumes (Vol 1 all strata, Vol 2 under the median & at and above the median, Vol 3 results per stratum), plus additional info on request	Identification of data sources Inter-agency coordination (GBS & Tourism Foundation) No information available for the interior (logistical constraints)	NA Information produced for below the Median and for at and above the median. Disparities in non-response		NA Use of computers with internet access
Gender Statistics	Yes, Selected data up to August 2009	Yes, publication "Selected Gender Statistics" issued in November 2007, next publication scheduled for December 2009	Data from the interior missing, so geographic coverage not optimal	<u>Best practices</u> Output rhythm for odd years maintained <u>Challenges</u> Late response Format problems	Participated in CARICOM training in Antigua (July 2009) More Training required for progressing with "genderizing" statistics increasingly.	Use of computers with internet access

CARICOM REPORTING FORMAT (ENVIRONMENT AND ICT STATISTICS)

AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (TABLES)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	TRAINING/ TA APPLIED REQUIRED	USE OF TECHNOLOGY
Environment Statistics	Data and indicators on different environmental topics and sectors	Every two years, Last publication December 2008	Identify potential data sources Insufficient Inter-agency coordination	Publication of third environmental publication	GBS Participated in CARICOM training in Antigua (July 2009)	Use of computers with internet access
ICT Statistics	Data obtained on ICT establishments, Cyber café's, Internet uses, Fixed lines and mobile users	Same as previous column	Data are not always what they seem and sometimes the explanation of anomalies is strikingly simple.	Data obtained through the TAS; Data not covered by TAS mandate still problematic	The GBS participated in the first Training course on Information Society Measurement in the Caribbean., February 2009 Follow-up training is required.	Use of computers with internet access

CARICOM REPORTING FORMAT (PUBLIC RELATIONS AND DATA DISSEMINATION)

AREA OF STATISTICS	DATA PRODUCTION (TABLES)	DATA DISSEMINATED	DATA GAPS	BEST PRACTICES/ CHALLENGES	TRAINING/ TA APPLIED REQUIRED	USE OF TECHNOLOGY
Public Relations and Data Dissemination		12 publications in 2008 and 1722 info requests dealt with 8 publications so far in 2009 and 1631 info requests dealt with				