

CARIBBEAN

COMMUNITY

SECRETARIAT

**THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING OF
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF
CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS**

SCCS/2009/34/25

**Gros Islet, Saint Lucia
26-28 October 2009**

25 October 2009

**REPORT OF THE FOURTH AND FIFTH MEETINGS OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON
STATISTICS .**

INTRODUCTION

The Advisory Group on Statistics met for their fourth and fifth meetings in Trinidad and Tobago – July 21 to 25 2009 and Saint Lucia – 22 to 24 October 2009, respectively.

The main objective of the meetings was inter alia, to discuss two (2) Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Funded Projects – Developing a Common Framework for Statistics Production and the Production of a Common Framework for Measuring Literacy in the CARICOM Region. The meeting held in July 2009 provided the foundation for the discussions of these areas while the one which preceded this SCCS meeting provided an update on the matters arising out of the fourth meeting as well as advanced statistical development through reviewing the High Level Meeting (HLM), Caribbean Statistics Day, the National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) and the SCCS Terms Of Reference (TORs) and Rules of Procedures. .

The main decisions and recommendations from these meetings are enclosed therein.

ACTION REQUIRED:

The **Meeting** is **invited** to:

- (i) **consider** the main decisions and discussions.



WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE STATISTICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY AND BEYOND
(THEME FOR THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS)

CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) SECRETARIAT

FIFTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS: MAIN DECISIONS

October 22-24, 2009
Gros Islet, SAINT LUCIA
Chairperson: Ms. Sonia Jackson,
Director-General, Statistical Institute of Jamaica

FIFTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS

INTRODUCTION

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened the Fifth Meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics (5th AGS) from 22-24 October 2009 in Gros Islet, Saint Lucia. Present at the meeting were Barbados, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

The objective of the meeting was follow up on those matters discussed at the Fourth Advisory Group (4th AGS) Meeting which was held in July 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago. The items were discussed, reviewed and decisions made to be taken to the 34th Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) Meeting that follows / followed immediately.

The opening remarks were delivered by Dr. Philomen Harrison, Project Director of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. Ms. Sonia Jackson, Director General of the Statistical Institute of Jamaica also made some brief opening remarks as Chairperson of the AGS.

Attachments to this document are as follows:

- Draft Agenda Attachment 1
- List of Delegates Attachment 2
- Terms of Reference of the AGS Attachment 3

**MAIN DECISIONS –ITEM 5 : MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE FOURTH ADVISORY GROUP ON
STATISTICS (4TH AGS) MEETING.**

THE MEETING:

Noted that the Procurement Plan for the Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) has been prepared, and the Inter-America Development Bank (IDB) has responded.

Agreed that the questionnaire will be finalised by the end of this year (2009).

Also agreed that the Terms of Reference for the Consultant on Component I of the project will be finalised by the end of November 2009.

Also noted that the consultant for component one (1) was not hired as yet.

Further agreed that under component two (2) .the TOR for the Legal Consultant will be prepared by Jamaica taking into consideration that TORs are provided by Belize and Trinidad and Tobago for perusal.

Agreed that much effort will be made to get the TOR for the legal Consultant out by the end of this year (2009).

Also agreed that Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago cooperate in preparing a framework for the development of data warehousing and to inform the TOR for recruiting the consultant.

Further noted that the amendments to the Implementation Plan for the Framework on the Literacy Survey was done and forwarded to the IDB.

Noted that the foregoing will be reported on in the Plan of Operations.

Also noted that the following items will be discussed as separate agenda items:

- i. the High Level Forum;
- ii. the Workshop on National Strategies for the Development of Statistics and Proposed Initiatives at the National level with the Partnership in Agreement for Statistics in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

Further noted that the application of the format used for the Demographic Analysis Workshops be used for other training will be discussed under ‘Any other business’.

Noted that a meeting was held for the CARICOM Workshop on Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics. This will be further discussed at the upcoming Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians Meeting (SCCS).

Recalled that Jamaica will prepare a paper on Regional Coordination, which will be tabled at the next AGS in 2010.

Also recalled that Belize will prepare a paper on a “Central Repository for data,- a focal point for data collection”.

Further recalled that a paper was to be prepared on the requirements necessary for the appointing of a Statistician in the Region.

MAIN DECISIONS – ITEM 6- UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL PUBLIC GOODS: INTER-AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB) FUNDED PROJECT ON COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR STATISTICS PRODUCTION. REVIEW OF WORK PUT IN PLACE.

THE MEETING :

Agreed that CARICOM will put together a final draft of the TOR for the RSWP consultant under Component one (I) and have it ready for submission for no objection to the IDB by mid November 2009.

Also agreed that the Procurement Plan will be submitted to the IDB for no objection by mid November 2009.

MAIN DECISIONS – 7: UPDATE ON THE REGIONAL PUBLIC GOODS: PLAN OF OPERATION ON COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF LITERACY IN CARICOM – REVIEW.

THE MEETING :

Noted that CARICOM obtained approval from the IDB.

Also noted that funding for the project does not cover the actual survey.

Recalled that the project produces a common framework for the conduct of literacy surveys across the region.

Agreed that countries should begin to sensitise their Ministries of Education on the forthcoming project.

Also agreed that Trinidad and Tobago will do a presentation on literacy to his Ministry of Education.

MAIN DECISIONS - 8 – REVIEW OF THE HIGH-LEVEL ADVOCACY FORUM ON STATISTICS.

THE MEETING :

Acknowledged that there were both positives and negatives with respect to the High Level Forum on Statistics held in Trinidad and Tobago in July 2009.

Identified the positives as follows:

- i. The presence of the Secretary General of the CARICOM Secretariat
- ii. The presence of some Ministers and Permanent Secretaries.
- iii. Some media houses expressed interest working with Statistical Agencies.
- iv. Good attendance - from start to finish - at the workshop.

Also Acknowledged that there were some negatives, such as the way statistics is viewed at the Regional level.

Agreed that the report out of the HLM be examined and its recommendations and other highlights therein be summarised in a paper from the SCCS.

Recommended that measures should be put in place to keep statistics on the forefront as much as possible.

Recognised there is need to engage the media in as many statistical activities as possible.

Also recognised that countries should find creative ways in showcasing the work done in statistics.

Also agreed that an advanced release calendar should be done and adhered to.

Further agreed that countries should document what is done at the country and regional level, as well as what is done with the United Nations.

MAIN DECISIONS - 9 – CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY- REVIEW / FOLLOW-UP.

THE MEETING :

Noted that most countries as well as the CARICOM Secretariat celebrated Caribbean Statistics Day on 15th October 2009.

Also noted the type of activities which were done during the celebration.

Further noted that the celebrations were done for the entire week in some countries.

Recognised the need for early planning for this event.

Acknowledged that World Statistics Day will be celebrated on 20th October 2010.

Recommended that Caribbean Statistics Day be celebrated and World Statistics Day be recognised also in 2010.

Suggested that activities to commemorate these events should begin on Caribbean Statistics Day – 15th October - and conclude on World Statistics Day - 20th October 2010 and that best practices from the CARICOM region should be utilised.

**MAIN DECISIONS – 10- FOLLOW UP ON THE WORKSHOP ON NATIONAL
STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS AND PROPOSED INITIATIVES AT
THE NATIONAL LEVEL WITH PARTNERSHIP IN STATISTICS FOR DEVELOPMENT
IN THE 21ST CENTURY (PARIS21).**

THE MEETING :

Noted the involvement of PARIS21 in Suriname’s Advocacy Forum. There is still some follow-up to be done.

Also noted PARIS21’s involvement in Barbados’ Advocacy Workshop.

Further noted Trinidad and Tobago’s request for support from PARIS21 in the review of their proposed legislation.

Noted that financial support will be received by Jamaica from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); work will commence soon and the support of PARIS21 will be requested.

Agreed that continued collaboration between PARIS21 and countries in the region should be encouraged. This will be put to the SCCS.

MAIN DECISIONS - 11 – OTHER REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

THE MEETING :

Noted the involvement of countries in training and new surveys to be developed within the National Statistics System (NSS)

Also noted the strategies at the regional level e.g. statistics and research on HIV/AIDS statistics and the involvement of CARICOM, IDB and CTO in the development of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs).

Further noted the strategies at the international level such as the Trade In Services Workshop being held by the UNSD in Brazil.

Noted the concern that funds were not being provided for countries participation in this workshop.

Also noted the need for collaboration to develop a regional strategy for the industrial classification (ISIC).

**MAIN DECISIONS - 12 – REVIEW OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS
AS A FORUM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND HARMONISATION OF
STATISTICS- RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT.**

THE MEETING :

Noted the amendments made to the TOR for the SCCS.

Realised that in reckoning with the fundamental principles of statistics, the resolution, the RSWP and recent initiatives and technological development, the proposed amendments will be submitted to the legal department of the CARICOM Secretariat for review.

MAIN DECISIONS - 13 – SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

MAIN DECISIONS - 14 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

THE MEETING :-

Agreed that the format for the Demographic Workshop has proven to be successful and it is recommended that this be used for other areas.

Noted that a request was made to explore the possibility of seeking funding for participants for the upcoming Trade in Services workshop being held in Brazil.

Also agreed upon the following statement on the Release of Micro Data:

The Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) views with great concern the increasing requests made by various organizations for individual level data, otherwise called micro data.

The AGS also notes that emphasis is shifting from access to data sets to handing over of data sets.

The AGS further notes that access to all statistical data, whether micro data or tabular data, needs to be strictly in accordance with the statistics acts of member countries, reinforced by Principle 6 of the Fundamental Principles of Official statistics and should also aim at building capacity at the national level.

The AGS, mindful of the use and the demand for this data for research and analysis, encourages member countries to establish mechanisms to provide access under controlled conditions, such as micro data laboratories.

The AGS also encourages international organizations to support the establishment of these mechanisms in member countries.

