

THIRTY- FIFTH MEETING OF
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF
CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS

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**REGIONAL INITIATIVE ON PROMOTING FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY AND A
REGIONAL POLICY FORMULATION ON AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS**

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents two initiatives that are likely to impact the production of Statistics in CARICOM and Agricultural Statistics in particular. However both initiatives incorporate or intend to incorporate a multi-dimensional approach that would impact other areas of statistics. These initiatives are (i) an Italian-funded United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) “**Promoting CARICOM/CARIFORUM Food Security**” Phase II and (ii) International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Latin American and Caribbean Development, the Statistical Conference of the Americas, Regional Policy Formulation on Agricultural and Rural Statistics. Not much would be said on the latter project since the relevant institution is present and can amplify on the issues.

The Secretariat has been making efforts to collect Agricultural Statistics from countries of CARICOM (SCCS/35/2010/4). In March 2010, CARICOM Member States agreed to develop a Regional Food and Nutrition Security Policy (RFNSP). This decision was in response to the Liliendaal Declaration on Agriculture and Food Security (July 2009) in which Member States reaffirmed their commitment to achieve Food and Nutrition security as one of the goals of the Community Agricultural Policy (Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, Article 56.1.b).

The draft policy document, produced by a Technical Working Group (TWG), was then submitted to Member States for final revision at a regional validation workshop held in Guyana in September 2010. Subsequently, it was presented for approval by CARICOM Ministers of Agriculture on the occasion of the Thirty-Fourth Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) (Agriculture), in October 2010, in Grenada.

2. PROMOTING CARICOM/CARIFORUM FOOD SECURITY PROJECT – PHASES I AND II

2.1 Overview of Project- Focus of Phase I

The fundamental goal of Phase I was improving the food security situation of the CARICOM/CARIFORUM States, individually and as a whole, by increasing the availability and access to adequate quantities of safe, quality-assured food to insecure and poor rural communities across the Region.

Some of the activities conducted/results achieved in Phase I included: (i) training of approx 1600 personnel in a range of technical production and marketing disciplines; (ii) improving the knowledge about the nature of food security and vulnerability; (iii) building much needed capacity across the CARIFORUM Region in a number of critical areas; (iv) conduct of Food Security Assessments were completed for Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, and Suriname as well as an Overview Paper on Food Security in the Caribbean; (v) work was undertaken on a regional Food Security Policy strategy; (vi) activities on community level Food Security and Nutrition were executed; (vii) trade facilitation to support improved Food Security and (viii) other activities such as regional workshops in the area of food quality and safety principles, technical training on packaging of Souvenir Food items, etc.

The need for an urgent and coherent response to the food security and public health and nutrition challenges facing CARICOM has prompted Member States to prepare a Regional Policy for Food and Nutrition Security (RPFNS).

The first phase of the project came to an end in 2007 and lasted for a period of four years and was part of a flagship initiative for halving the number of hungry people in the world in 2015.

2.2 Focus of Phase II

Phase II of the Project was launched on May 5 2009. This second phase of the Italian-funded FAO regional initiative was expected to cost US\$3.6 million, and sought to commence the process to fully realise the objective of improving incomes, trade opportunities and to create the policy environment that promotes the sustainable attainment of food security. The objective of the second phase of the project is aimed at increasing the capability of the agri-food producers to increase the volume and value of food output in CARIFORUM in order to improve overall food availability and the incomes of rural people. Justification of the project is grounded in the recent rapid rise in prices of basic foodstuff which has served to emphasise the risks associated with the high dependence of imported food. This has heightened awareness of the importance of food security and the vital role of domestic agriculture in supplying a nation's food needs.

In addition studies undertaken in Phase I, identified challenges faced by CARIFORUM in ensuring food security and in addressing broader welfare objectives arising from small size, vulnerability to natural disasters, a changing economic environment characterised by a lack of international competitiveness, a loss of preferential markets and a rules-based approach to agricultural policy.

The RPFNS recognises the need for rural producers and communities to be resilient against the effects of external economic shocks, food-related crises and in the face of climate change. Therefore, there is a strong interest in the CARICOM region to put in place systems to deal with these concerns to build capacities and provide mechanisms to reduce crises occurring and to manage the effects of these shocks and crisis.

Phase II of the project contains an activity on the establishment of Early Warning Systems for Disaster Preparedness and Management in support of Food and Nutrition Security in the CARICOM. It is scheduled to commence in November 2010 and to end in December 2011. This activity recognises the need for accurate data collection and analysis in a number of areas. Further information is provided in the project document entitled, “Sub-regional Project for the establishment of Early Warning Systems for Disaster Preparedness and Management in support of Food and Nutrition Security in the CARICOM sub-region”; the Final Draft Regional Policy for Food and Nutrition Security; and a recent policy brief which have been made available online at www.caricomstats.org.

3. INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (IFAD), LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN DEVELOPMENT, THE STATISTICAL CONFERENCE OF THE AMERICAS(SCA), REGIONAL POLICY FORMULATION ON AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL STATISTICS

With regard to the SCA initiative, the CARICOM Secretariat was contacted by the National Statistical Office of the Dominican Republic which shared this initiative with the Secretariat and subsequently with Member States. The main objective of this regional project is to contribute to the improvement of agricultural and rural statistics in Latin America and the Caribbean, to make them useful and relevant for policy making.

The information communicated about the project indicated that it will formulate a conceptual framework and multidimensional methodology that will take into account changes and modifications in production of agricultural processes and its economic, social and environmental implications in the rural areas.

It is intended to apply a working participative methodology, led by the national statistics offices that will take part in the future implementation of this regional project, plus the participation of ministries of agriculture and related agencies.

ACTION REQUIRED

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

- (i) **consider** the documentation provided and provide feedback in general as well as on the following issues -
 - (a) The proposal on the Early Warning Systems its implications for Statistics/Harmonisation;
 - (b) The approach that would be required to executing the project relative to the National Statistical Systems and the current resource constraints and activities that may pose challenges;
 - (c) Possible best practices that currently exists that may impact the project;
- (ii) **also consider** the IFAD Project being formulated by the SCA
