

THIRTY-NINTH MEETING OF
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF
CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS (SCCS)

SCCS/2014/39/9

Georgetown, Guyana
27-29 October 2014

26 October 2014

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING
OF THE CARICOM ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS) FOR THE CONSIDERATION
OF THE THIRTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN
STATISTICIANS (SCCS)

B.1 CONSIDERATION OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE HIGH LEVEL ADVOCACY FORUM
ON STATISTICS INCLUDING THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the Main Issues and Major Recommendations and Conclusions of the Second High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics held in Grenada in May 2014(HLF) as presented by the CARICOM Secretariat and which included the following:

- (i) The importance of the data revolution in achieving sustainable development in the Region;
- (ii) Information Communication Technology (ICT) as the tool that must power the data revolution and Statistics and ICT should not be isolated from each other;
- (iii) The role of statistics in empowering the citizens of the Region;
- (iv) The need for Governments to invest in statistics;
- (v) Investment in a Regional Approach to Statistics;
- (vi) The need for coordination among statistical development partners.

Recommended that an Action Plan be prepared and submitted to the SCCS for endorsement;

Also noted that a small group (Grenada, Jamaica and Saint Lucia) would lead in the process of preparing the Action Plan for consideration by the AGS;

Also recommended that a document be prepared for the Prime Minister of Grenada for him to advocate for statistics at the highest level of the Community.

B.2 THE POST 2015 AGENDA – IMPLICATIONS FOR CARICOM STATISTICS

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the progress at the international level on the Post 2015 Development Agenda including:

- (i) The documents that have been disseminated on the Goals, Targets and Indicators;
- (ii) The establishment of a Friends of the Chair group (which comprises The Bahamas, Jamaica and Suriname from CARICOM) in this area by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC);
- (iii) The feedback received by Jamaica relative to the Round Table discussions on 'Designing Indicators for the SDGs ' meeting this country attended hosted by SDSN and UNSD on this issue;
- (iv) The [Pilot/] Questionnaires that have been sent to countries for completion.

Recommended that a statement should be drafted for endorsement at the SCCS as it relates to a proposal to identify a core list of indicators for production by the CARICOM SIDS out of the extended list of indicators being developed for the Post 2015 Agenda;

Also noted that Suriname and the Secretariat will prepare a draft of this statement for consideration by the AGS.

B.3 ADVANCEMENT OF THE REGIONAL STATISTICAL WORK PROGRAMME (RSWP)

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the feedback given by members of the AGS on progress with implementation of the RSWP which included the reports on the domains of the RSWP that were receiving attention by countries;

Also noted the advancement of the work being put in place by the Secretariat on the RSWP Implementation Guide;

Recommended that those countries that commenced substantive implementation of the RSWP contribute inputs on the approaches being used in practice for inclusion in the RSWP Implementation Guide;

Also recommended that there be a reporting format for countries to report on the progress made on the RSWP implementation;

Further recommended the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework for the RSWP which could be based on work already put in place by the Member State of Barbados in the past;

Recommended that relative to the work to be put in place under the RSWP on the Classifications theme, that the current Classifications sub-group be upgraded to a Technical Working Group (TWG).

B.4 ADVANCING THE WORK ON THE HIGH FREQUENCY INDICATORS (HFIs)

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Recommended that the revised list of HFIs be submitted to the SCCS for endorsement;

Also recommended that a time lag for the dissemination of the HFI be included in the template;

Further recommended that countries should be surveyed relative to current practices with respect to the time lags for dissemination of the HFI indicators that they produced.

B.5 SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION IN STATISTICS - DEVELOPMENT OF A CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE/A PERMANENT ATTACHMENT PROGRAMME

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the collaborative efforts between the Technical Action Services Unit (TASU) and the Regional Statistics Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat as it relates to the preparatory work on South-South Cooperation in Statistics - the Development of Centres of Excellence/Permanent Attachment Programme;

Also noted the key objective of this mechanism which was the provision of technical assistance/capacity building;

Recommended that given the small size of Member States/Associate Members and in the interest of sustainability of capacity building efforts that there is need for Centres of Excellence to be developed in countries and regionally/sub-regionally;

Noted that there were discussions with the CARICOM Secretariat, Department of Foreign Affairs Trade and Development on funding possibilities for the development of Centres of Excellence in the Region;

Also recommended that there should be an actual assessment of those countries/offices desirous of providing assistance re: South-South Cooperation;

Further recommended that the paper be presented at the upcoming SCCS.

B.6 CODE OF GOOD STATISTICAL PRACTICES – REVIEW OF RESULTS OF REPORTING COUNTRIES

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the presentation made on the 2013 Code of Good Statistical Practices self assessment questionnaire as compared to the results in 2010.

Also noted the presentation on the Tool for Assessment of Statistical Capacity (TASC) of the IDB;

Recognized that both the CARICOM Code and the TASC are rooted in the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;

Also recognized that TASC deals with statistical capacity while the code is a document for Good Statistical Practices, thus addressing principles and practices on the operational/ethical aspects of NSOs;

Further recognized that a snapshot of countries' status is required periodically;

Recommended that a peer review be undertaken as an initial mechanism that can audit the results of the self-assessment;

Also Recommended that this survey should be conducted every three years and therefore that the next assessment will be undertaken in 2016, along with the recommended peer review.

B.7 DATABASE OF EXPERTS IN STATISTICS – ADVANCING THE PROCESS

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the following:

- 1) The demonstration, by the staff of the Integrated Information Systems (IIS) of the CARICOM Secretariat of the Database of Consultants used for procurement of experts by the CARICOM Secretariat
- 2) The Guide/Manual for the Database of Consultants can be submitted by the Secretariat to the AGS for its consideration;
- 3) This database can be configured to better suit the needs of the AGS and the region;
- 4) The fields proposed by the AGS should be shared with the IIS staff member.

B.8 INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON PROGRAMME – AN UPDATE

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the Statements made by Jamaica and Suriname about the ICP results and on the establishment of the Friends of the Chair Group (FOC) to evaluate the ICP, as initiated by the Forty-Fifth (45th) Session of the UN Statistical Commission;

Also noted that to date, apart from setting up of the FOC group, to the best of the knowledge of Suriname who is a member of the FOC group, nothing has been done in this area;

Recommended that Barbados, the Representative for CARICOM in the UN Statistical Commission, formally submit the evaluation results of CARICOM as approved by the Thirty-Eighth (38th) Meeting of the SCCS and inquire about the progress with the Evaluation.

B.9 ADVANCING THE WORK ON THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS 2008 (2008 SNA)

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the reports presented by the members of the AGS on progress within their respective countries on the implementation of the 2008 SNA;

Recommended that Guidelines for advancing towards SNA 2008 should be developed and that best practices should be identified.

B.10 SUPPORT TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATISTICS BY THE TENTH EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT FUND (EDF) IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

B.10.1 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA) in CARICOM

Noted the elements of the Consultancy on National accounts being implemented by the CARICOM Secretariat and which recently commenced with a Briefing meeting at the Secretariat;

Also noted that the focus on the Consultancy is on improving the basic data for the compilation of key National Accounts tables and specifically enabling an independent estimate on Expenditure on the GDP at current prices.

B.10.2 Merchandise Trade Statistics

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted that the Eurotrace software works well on a single computer but does not work well in a multi-user environment;

Also noted that the documentation of Eurotrace software needed to be improved;

Recommended that the CARICOM Secretariat would discuss the problems experienced with the Eurotrace software with Eurostat;

Further noted that this Agenda item would be discussed in more detail at the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the SCCS;

B.10.3 Social/Gender Statistics

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the report by the CARICOM Secretariat on work put in place in Social Statistics under the Tenth EDF that focused on building statistical capacity through a training workshop and in country technical assistance;

Recommended that training manuals from workshops be distributed to all countries.

B.10.5 Trade In Services Statistics

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted that work in the area of Trade in Services is funded under two separate components of the Tenth EDF and that the second component which is aimed at providing training and technical assistance to countries has not yet started;

Recognised the difficulty in obtaining detailed data on Trade in Services;

Also noted the particular area of Cultural and Creative industries as an important contributor to Trade in Services and the feedback received by countries on initiatives in this area;

Recommended that countries provide the CARICOM Secretariat with information/reports on work put in place in the area of Cultural/Creative Industries;

Also recommended that the CARICOM Secretariat should share again with countries the proposed classification under the EBOPS for the collection of data on the Cultural/Creative Agencies which was developed post a workshop in this area that was held collaboratively with WTO, UNWTO, UNESCO, WIPO, UNSD and other regional and international agencies;

Further recommended that countries seek to improve its production estimates on Services as a key contribution of improving the data on Trade in Services;

Recommended that there is need for collaboration between the NSOs and the Central Banks in the production of statistics on trade in services.

B.10.6 Data Management

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the presentation made by the Secretariat on past support under the Ninth EDF on Data Management and the work proposed under the Tenth EDF;

Also noted that countries should develop the data management capabilities of their National Statistical Systems to deliver the required statistics for the Regional Statistical System.

SECTION C – OTHER ISSUES

C.1 UPDATE ON THE USE OF THE MODEL STATISTICS BILL BY COUNTRIES

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted the information provided by the countries and the CARICOM Secretariat on the use of the Model Statistics Bill.

C.2 PROGRESS REPORT ON THE COMMON FRAMEWORK FOR A LITERACY SURVEY

THE ADVISORY GROUP ON STATISTICS (AGS):

Noted that all project activities have been completed and that an evaluation of the Project will now be undertaken;

Commended the Director of the General Bureau of Statistics for supporting the Secretariat's efforts relative to the translation of the key documents into Surinamese Dutch;

Also noted the reports by countries relative to progress with implementing the Literacy Survey;

Further noted the tremendous difficulty with funding to support this exercise or with the conditions being suggested by partners relative to the provision of funding.

C.3 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The AGS reviewed:

- (i) SCCS STATEMENT REGARDING ACTIVITIES PERTAINING TO THE PRODUCTION OF A NEW SET OF GOALS, TARGETS AND INDICATORS FOR THE “BEYOND 2015 INITIATIVE”;
- (ii) SECOND HIGH LEVEL ADVOCACY FORUM ON STATISTICS - ELEMENTS TO INFORM AN ACTION PLAN.
