

# Stats News & Views

Facts, Figures and Updates from the Statistics Section of the Caribbean Community Secretariat

December 2017

Volume 15, Issue 2

## Main Events

### Endorsement of the preparation of the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) by CARICOM Heads of Government in 2017– Status

As reported in our last issue, the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government endorsed the preparation of the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS)** at the **Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government** which was held in **Grenada in July 2017**.

The RSDS seeks to build on the initiatives and frameworks already established, to improve the range and quality of statistics produced and disseminated in the CARICOM Regional Statistical System (RSS), as a **foundation for evidenced-based decision-making across the Community**.

It takes into consideration key statistical challenges and evolving demands for statistics such as **National Development Plans and Priorities, the Strategic Plan of the Community** and at the global level, the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**. Since the endorsement of the preparation of the regional plan the following key activities have been conducted to advance its development:-

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- Work continued by the Consultant **funded by the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the Twenty-First Century (PARIS21)** on the *Assessment Report*;
- An *e-meeting* was convened by the Secretariat in September 2017 with National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to discuss the *initial draft Assessment Report and the Preliminary Recommendations* as prepared by the Consultant;
- A *Strategic Planning Workshop*, funded by PARIS21, was conducted during the *Twenty-First Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS)* on 17 & 18 October in Cayman Islands- this served to *validate the findings and to commence the development of the Strategic Framework for the RSS*;

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## Main Events

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### Preparation of the RSDS: Status

- The *Assessment Report, Recommendations and elements of the Strategic Framework* out of the Strategic Planning Workshop were presented to the 42<sup>nd</sup> SCCS;
- Post the SCCS the *initial Draft Strategic Framework for the RSS* was prepared based on the consultations, findings, recommendations and have been distributed to NSOs for feedback.

Among the issues raised in the assessment inclusive of recommendations were the following:

#### Outdated Statistics Legislation:

The need to *revise Statistics Legislation across the region as a key pillar for the modernisation and transformation* of the statistical authorities takes into consideration the significant changes in the environment that currently exist, as compared to the period when these authorities were established, many decades ago in most cases. These changes include the ever-increasing range of data that are to be collected, the mode of collection, sources of data and major advances in technology.

It was noted however that work was already in progress in this area across the region with the development of a *CARICOM Model Bill by Statisticians of the Region—the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) and the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS)*. The Model Bill was funded through the **Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Regional Public Goods Project** which was executed by the CARICOM Secretariat in 2011.

#### The Governance Structure of NSOs—Establishing a Body Corporate:

The institutional arrangements under which the NSOs operate throughout the region vary. Three (3) types of arrangements exist, these are: a Unit/Office of a Government Department; a Department/Office

of a Ministry and a semi-autonomous/autonomous bureau/institute governed by a Board. The rationale for greater autonomy is to allow for an enhanced corporate culture and to enable the institute to more effectively with the aid of its Board, improve its processes to achieve greater efficiency and professional independence of the statistics produced. Some countries have moved in the direction of greater autonomy for its NSO, with Jamaica becoming a statutory authority since 1984. It represents a model relative to its data production.

The transformation of the NSO in its hierarchical positioning within the civil service to having some degree of autonomy should assist in the response to an ever-changing environment in which increasing demand for timely statistics is fundamental as well as confidence by the public in the same.

#### Physical Infrastructure of NSOs:

The Assessment highlighted marked improvements in some of the NSOs in the last 5 to 7 years with respect to physical accommodation, but there was one instance of problems with accommodation that severely impacted the work of the NSO in that country. Those NSOs that have benefitted from improved accommodation, now consider the physical facilities adequate to perform the required tasks. It turned out that the move to better accommodation has boosted staff morale.

### Strategic Planning Workshop

The **Strategic Planning Workshop** on the RSDS was held on **October 17 and 18, 2017** in **Cayman Islands** just prior to the Forty-second Meeting of the SCCS that was held in that country. The workshop which **was facilitated by the Consultant funded by PARIS21**, presented an opportunity to undertake a further review of the Assessment and the Recommendations.

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### Preparation of the RSDS: Status

A SWOT Analysis was undertaken and the Consultant also presented on the Roadmap for the RSDS relative to its continued development and implementation. The PARIS21-funded workshop also focused on the preliminary identification of key Strategic Areas for the RSDS with corresponding Actions and Core Values. Standards and Harmonisation; included in the suggestions for the **Strategic Areas** were as follows:-

- Governance and Institutional Arrangements;
- Sustainable Statistical Capacity Development;
- Integrated Statistical Systems for Production and Dissemination of Statistics;
- Advocacy and Communications;
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- IT Infrastructure and systems.

The workshop also addressed suggestions on what should be the *Mission and the Vision* of the CARICOM RSS.

Following this workshop, *the initial Draft Strategic Framework was consolidated* including:- Vision and Mission Statements; an Ultimate Outcome; five (5) Strategic Priorities with corresponding Goals, Strategies and Objectives and Enabling Priorities/ Drivers. An overarching theme has also been drafted for the RSDS.

The immediate next steps are: -

- the finalisation of the RSDS Strategic Framework based on feedback from Member States and Associate Members. Feedback would also be sought from International Organisations.
- presentation of the CARICOM RSDS to the July 2018 Conference of Heads of Government for endorsement.
- Estimating of the cost of implementing the RSDS is also to be undertaken and the Implementation Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework are to be developed.

It is hoped that the RSDS will be impactful **in enabling a resilient Caribbean Community with sustainable growth and development for all.**

### Caribbean Statisticians Annual Meetings

The Regional Statistics Programme of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened the following series of meetings at the **Marriott Hotel, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands in October 2017:-**

- **Forty-Second Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) – 23-25 October 2017;**
- **Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) – 26 October 2017; and**
- **Tenth Regional Statistical Research Seminar – 27 October 2017.**

These meetings were preceded by the **Twenty-First Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS)**, which presented its recommendations to the Forty-Second Meeting of the SCCS for consideration and adoption. The theme for the Forty- Second SCCS Meeting was **“Improving the Lives of People - Advancing the Action Plan for Statistics in CARICOM”**, which was the same theme as in 2016.

The findings of the assessment phase of the RSDS and the preparatory work put in place on the formulation of the RSDS document including its core elements were discussed at the Forty-Second Meeting of the SCCS.

In this respect, **the 42nd SCCS recommended that the RSDS framework document should include the work already in progress in the development of statistics e.g. the Common Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) the CARICOM Model Statistics Bill and the Code of Good Statistical Practices (CGSP).**

It was also recommended that there should be linkages of the RSDS with the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean as well as with the Recommendations on the Caribbean Conference on the Transformative Agenda for Official Statistics and

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## Main Events

(Continued from Page 3) *point for the monitoring of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and where appropriate, the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities for Action (SAMOA Pathway).*

### ...Annual Meetings

that a scorecard be incorporated as part of the Monitoring and Evaluation framework of the RSDS.

Additionally, the **Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean, endorsed by the Thirty-Seventh Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in Guyana in July 2016** and the common **Regional Statistical Work Programme approved by the Fifteenth Meeting of the Community Council of Ministers in Guyana in January 2005**, were reviewed to see the progress made with implementation of these key frameworks.

It was reported that countries had begun to put work in place to advance the implementation of the Action Plan including sensitisation of staff about the Action Plan, support to the training of staff, updating of statistics legislation, preparatory work/launch of the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), costing of the Action Plan, garnering of support from International Development Partners (IDPs) and acquisition of new staff/staff structure changes.

There were also discussions on the progress in the areas of Economic, Social/Gender, Environment and ICT Statistics, as well as on the **109 core SDG indicators identified by the CARICOM Technical Working Group as a starting**

The **Twenty-Seventh RCCC** focused on country-readiness for the conduct of the Population and Housing Census in the 2020 Round, with countries informing of the plans and preparations being put in place. The Secretariat presented a comprehensive CARICOM Regional Strategy for the 2020 Census Round and on the progress in the securing of funds for its execution. A review of the CARICOM Common Census Questionnaire was undertaken in May 2017. The Core Census questionnaire is seeking to address contemporary developmental issues that are of importance to CARICOM countries.

In this context, consideration was given, *inter alia*, to the requirements of the SDGs, the CSME establishment and obtaining baseline information on Persons with Disabilities.

Many countries intend to use **Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)** in the conduct of their census exercise in the 2020 Census Round.

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## ..... Annual Meetings

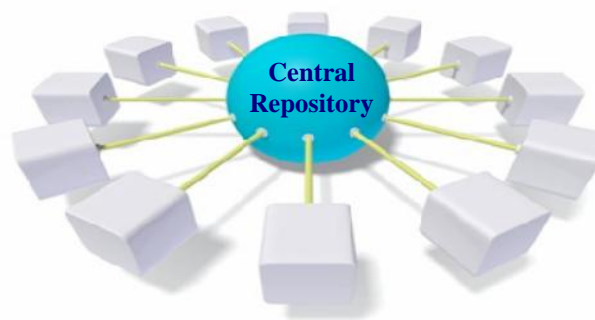
The Tenth Regional Statistical Research Seminar considered papers on a range of topics, including on the issue of disasters and data safety/protection given the hurricanes that caused havoc in some Member States/Associate Members during 2017. The Cayman Islands presented highlights of the results of its 2015 Household Budget Survey and on the revision of the 2016 CPI basket. There was also a presentation by Dr. Godfrey St Bernard of UWI, SALISES on *Development Policy Challenges, National Statistics and State of Readiness in Belize and Trinidad and Tobago: A Critical Review in Response to Contemporary Sustainable Development Agendas*. The aim of these seminars are to develop a statistical development agenda that would allow for better understanding of the data; enable methodological research in specific areas of statistics; and facilitate the process of data dissemination to users.

Some key issues pertaining to the meetings above are contained in this newsletter.

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## Establishment of a Central Repository for Statistics

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat through the Regional Statistics Programme (RSP) has been collecting statistical data from Member States and Associate Members of CARICOM on a number of statistical areas such as Merchandise Trade, Population, National Accounts and other economic, social, environment and ICT statistics. These datasets are located in electronic databases in the RSP which has responsibility for utilising them to compile intraregional statistics on the Community. Detailed data sets are generally received in the area of Trade and Population Census while for many of the other datasets; the data submitted are in an aggregate form such as tabulations and indicators.



Following discussions at meetings of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) on the establishment of a central repository for the statistical data from Member countries, some steps were taken by the Secretariat, with support from various International Development Partners (IDPs), to develop frameworks governing the submission of data, warehousing/ storage of the data and policies relating to the dissemination of the data to final users. These frameworks have been piloted to some extent and are in need of adjustments prior to full implementation.

At this stage, consideration of the design of the Central Repository (some elements of which already exist both at the level of detailed data and more aggregate statistics) is being undertaken. A key issue is the fact that **the Central Repository can serve a dual purpose—the first being as a central point for the availability of data on the Community and secondly as a back-up for critical and easily retrievable statistics, indicators and data sets.**

The latter point is related to the recent natural disasters in the Region, which have caused the Secretariat to bring to the fore the issue of the possible destruction and loss of countries' datasets during these events. The suggestions to avoid such data loss included the issue of the establishment of a central repository which apart from disseminating intra-regional statistics could serve as a "back-up" for the countries' data, making it available to them in case of loss at the national level.

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## Main Events

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### ... Central Repository for Statistics

Given the Secretariat's mandate to collect and store information from the Member States, the central repository can ideally be housed within the RSP and can be more formally articulated, configured and developed. This does not preclude the issue of cloud computing and other mechanisms relative to storage of the data since the primary purpose of the repository is as a single point for dissemination of data on the Community. However, at the National level the NSO can be the repository for the statistics in the national statistical systems.

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### Common Census Framework 2.0 - 2020 Population Census Strategy

The Common Census Framework approach used in the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census proved a very useful one relative to the support provided to the Region under the traditional regionally-coordinated census strategy. The current strategy—**Common Census Framework 2.0**—seeks to reinforce the successes in the 2010 Round in enabling the production of regional public goods that can realise a robust 2020 population census strategy and outcomes in CARICOM.



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Under this proposal for the regionally-coordinated strategy for the 2020 Round of Census, the following key elements or components are being outlined in the Common Census Framework 2.0 :-

### Coordination and Monitoring

The Coordinating Mechanism will be the same as what has been established throughout the years which is the **Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC)** comprising National Census Officers and/or their deputies of Member States, Associate Members and Observer countries and representatives from regional and international organisations. The RCCC will report as is customary to **the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS)** which in turn reports to the various Councils of the Community including the Council of Human and Social Development (COHSOD) and the Community Council of Ministers. The CARICOM Secretariat will be the secretariat of the RCCC as is the case with the SCCS. **The Regional Census Strategy will be presented to the Community Council of Ministers in the near future.**

### Mapping/GIS

Census Mapping/GIS Support - This should include a **Needs Assessment, technical assistance, training and South-South co-operation in the preparation of Enumeration District maps, in GIS capabilities and in the use/availability of satellite imagery.** It is anticipated that funding would be made available to recruit a consultant to provide support to Member States as was the case in 2010.

### Data Processing

Census Data Processing - to provide support to census data processing including the planning/design framework, data capture framework, and data editing including the production of toolkits. Manuals and

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## Main Events

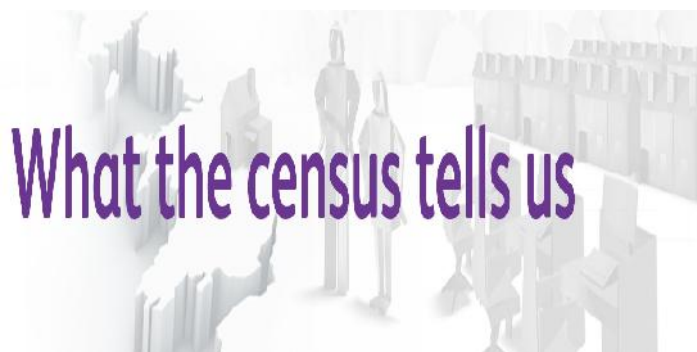
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### ... 2020 Population Census Strategy

guidelines from the previous census round can be made available where the corresponding data capture approach is being used. It is intended to take into consideration **a paperless census approach** and to recruit a consultant to provide support in this area.

#### Census Data Analysis and Dissemination

Census Data Analysis and Dissemination – to focus on **strengthening the capabilities of countries to produce analytical census reports, to assist the Secretariat in the production of regional special topic publications such as Gender, Youth and the Elderly, to assist countries in organising their census databases for dissemination** and support to the regional census e-portal and to strengthen capabilities in the utilisation of Redatam and CensusInfo.



#### Census Management/ Organisation

Census Management/Organisation – to enable the availability of the requisite management skills for the planning and conduct of the census training, South- South Cooperation and assistance through the Secretariat will be made available to support the **development of a project management framework for census taking in countries.**

### Technical Working Group Functioning

Support to a Technical Working Group to review the Census Topics- Common Core questionnaire and methodologies. The questionnaire was reviewed at a workshop in May 2017.

#### Communication and Advocacy

Communication and Advocacy – will provide direct support to countries to target different groups, such as, schools, households and businesses. As highlighted below, advocacy will be sought at the political levels of the Community to ensure support for the census operations.



#### Participation in RCCC/SCCS Forum

Enabling the participation of Member States/ Associate Members to participate in meetings of the RCCC and SCCS relative to discussions/ endorsement of the 2020 Census recommendations.

Discussions have already commenced with International Development Partners relative to support to the 2020 Regional Census Strategy, financial and otherwise.



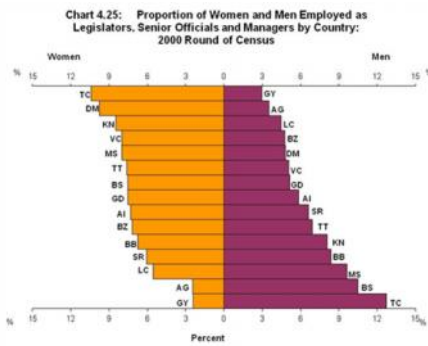
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## Past Events

### Community Launches Labour Market Database

In September 2017, four (4) electronic platforms which were developed under the Tenth European Development Fund (10<sup>th</sup> EDF) were launched, including the Regional Labour Market Information System (LMIS). The LMIS is a regional electronic database that will capture labour market information related to areas such as the labour force, social security, occupational health and safety, industrial relations and the CSME Free Movement Regimes.



As agreed at a Regional Consultation on the LMIS Design (October 2015) the regional LMIS uses the 'OECD.Stat' IT Platform. The use of this platform by the Community was facilitated through a MoU with the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

Capacity-building is an important component of the LMIS consultancy under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF and therefore training missions were conducted in participating Member States on the use of Labour Market Information for Policy and Planning and on the '.Stat' platform.

The benefits of the Regional LMIS to the Community include: improved management of the CSME Free Movement Regimes; availability of data to inform policy related to the labour market and education; and support in monitoring Member States' progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth.

The Secretariat will continue to work with Member States for the timely and consistent entry of data into the Regional LMIS.

### Examining Cloud for Development in the Caribbean

During December 2017, an e-meeting was convened between Mr. Michael Lokshin, World Bank representative and staff of the Regional Statistics Programme, CARICOM Secretariat, to learn more about the *Cloud for Development (C4D) initiative, a World Bank-led project, that provides a technological and legal framework for Data Storage, Data Analytics and Data Sharing*. It is based on the partnership of the World Bank, Private Cloud Providers, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and other International Institutions.

It was indicated that the Cloud for Development project (C4D) is aimed at addressing the immediate challenges facing NSOs in developing countries. In this respect, it was highlighted that many NSOs face problems of supporting reliable and secure infrastructure to store, analyze and disseminate data that can lead to many unfortunate consequences including potential loss of data during periods of natural disasters.

There were many reasons shared for this lack of appropriate infrastructure including high costs of supporting local secure server environment, high skill requirements for staff and limited access to analytical and high power computational tool among others. It was posited that C4D provides the solution to these infrastructural issues by providing secure and reliable data storage on the cloud for NSOs. In spite of its many advantages, it was noted that several NSOs have concerns regarding the legal implications especially in terms of data privacy as it relates to storing data outside the country of origin.

In addition to data storage, it was related that the C4D framework also offers a set of analytical tools for data collection and analysis including Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI), GIS tools and others.

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## Past Events

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### ... Cloud for Development in the Caribbean

Thirdly, the C4D framework offers tools and infrastructure for data sharing, access to global data sources such as data cataloging, data anonymisation and others.

The question of cost to Member States to sustain the Cloud is also a major issue given the financial and economic challenges being experienced by countries of the region. It is anticipated that a regional cloud for statistics would be able to achieve economies of scale to render the cost affordable.

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### Training in CAPI Data Collection Using World Bank Survey Solutions



*Mr. Slava Scherbak, World Bank trainer (back extreme left), along with training participants*

Staff members from the Regional Statistics Programme RSP), CARICOM Secretariat and the Guyana Bureau of Statistics (BOS) received training in Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) data collection using Survey Solutions during the period 18-21 December 2018.

The World Bank provided the trainer for the session which was organised by the CARICOM Secretariat.

Survey Solutions is a free CAPI software for data collection and survey management developed by the World Bank and made available to the public. It combines the interviewing component with a powerful survey management system. The training covered the following components:

- **Designer** - web-based tool to develop the questionnaires, allows collaboration of multiple users.
- **Tester** - application available from Google Play Store for testing the behaviour of the questionnaire on a tablet.
- **Synchronization point** - data server for access by all users to exchange information and coordinate the survey.
- **Interviewer** - user and a corresponding component, which is responsible for conducting the interview and collecting data.
- **Supervisor** - user and a corresponding component, which distributes the workload between the interviewers, and assures quality of the incoming data.
- **Headquarter** - user and a corresponding component, which conducts global, survey-level actions: manages users accounts, makes interview assignments, exports the data, etc, and performs the highest level of quality control.
- **Other roles:** administrator, observer.

The feedback from the participants involved in the training was mainly positive regarding the software given the many benefits it provides to NSOs in terms of their survey and census data collection activities. The benefits especially highlighted were :-

- It is a free software;
- It has a relatively simple and flexible interface for questionnaire development and testing;
- It allows for multiple levels of checks to ensure good data quality;
- It incorporates many features to allow effective survey management based on the best practices of data collection;

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## Future Events

### Training in CAPI ...

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- The Survey server is password protected allowing only the survey administrators to have control over who can access the server; and
- The Survey solutions website offers many self-support options including instructional videos on You-tube.

It was noted that there are several CARICOM countries that have been using the Survey Solutions software in their survey data collection. The RSP is therefore exploring the option of building Centres of Excellence in this software at the CARICOM Secretariat and in at least two (2) Member States.

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## European Union Continues to Support Statistical Capacity Building

The Eleventh European Development Fund (11<sup>th</sup> EDF) is set to commence during 2018. The Regional Statistics Programme (RSP) will be preparing its Work Plan and Budget for activities geared at strengthening Statistics in CARICOM under this Grant Agreement.

The draft overarching goal of this support is “**Strengthened Statistics in CARICOM in support of the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**”.

### Forthcoming Publications

- National Accounts Digest; 2010—2016 Vol. I
- National Accounts (Analytical Publication) 2009-2015 Vol. II
- CARICOM’S TRADE, A Quick Reference to Some Summary Data, 2011 – 2016
- Crime Statistics: CARICOM Members States & Associate Members

This support is expected to cater to enhanced capacity in a number of areas including the production of statistics in new and existing areas such as Economic Statistics, High Frequency Indicators, Social and Gender Statistics, ICT Statistics, Environment and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Indicators.

In addition, the work plan will make provision for support towards the development of key frameworks such as *the Action Plan for Statistics; the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS); the Transformative Agenda as well as updates inclusive of partial support to an e-Learning Platform on Statistics.*

The **2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses** will also receive partial support in the areas of capacity-building.

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### Future Meetings– January—June 2018

- Remote Technical Working Group Meeting on National Accounts/Trade in Services and TWG Classifications
- Remote Technical Working Group Meeting on Merchandise Trade Statistics
- Remote Technical Working Group Meeting on Environment Statistics
- Validation Workshop on RSDS
- Workshop on Gender/ Environment and Agriculture Statistics
- Census Management Workshop
- Twenty-Second Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS)

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