

# Stats News & Views

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

June, 2017

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## Main Events

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government endorsed the preparation of the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) at the recently concluded Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government held in Grenada in July 2017.

The RSDS will play a strategic role in strengthening statistics and improving its availability for evidence-based decision-making and will constitute a shared foundation upon

## CARICOM Heads Endorse Preparation of Regional Statistics Strategy

which statistical capacity in the Region will be developed.

The RSDS will also cater to the additional demands that will be made in statistical offices to fulfil obligations related to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019, the United Nations 2030 Development Agenda and the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS) Accelerated Modalities for Action (SAMOA) Pathway. In fact, the RSDS is a key component of the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean which was approved by Heads of Government at its 37th Meeting back in 2016 as a mechanism for the strengthening of national statistical offices and systems across the Region, given the increased demands for statistics in the implementation of the above mentioned frameworks.

Fundamentally, an RSDS is a master-plan for regional statistical development, geared to respond to



*Dr. The Right Hon. Keith Mitchell  
Prime Minister of Grenada*

specific regional policy objectives consistent with a regional coordinating approach to enable the production of statistics at the national and regional levels. It constitutes a guide to good practice in regional statistics cooperation, grounded in national and regional priorities. The RSDS should be in alignment with National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) where these exist.

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### RSDS Preparation Endorsed .....

The CARICOM RSDS seeks to build on the initiatives and frameworks already established to improve the range and quality of statistics. It takes into consideration key statistical challenges and evolving demands for statistics in the Region. It is anticipated that the RSDS will serve as a roadmap for other key interventions required for the strategic strengthening of national statistical systems.

Endorsement of the preparation of the Regional Strategy for Statistics at the 38<sup>th</sup> Conference of Heads of Government came under the Chairmanship of Dr. the Rt. Hon. Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada. In the CARICOM Quasi-Cabinet, Prime Minister Mitchell is the lead Head of Government with responsibility for Science and Technology. He made the announcement of the endorsement by Heads of Government of the preparation of the Regional Strategy for Statistics at the Press Conference at the conclusion of the Meeting as follows:

“Another big win for this Meeting was the endorsement of the approval of the Regional Plan for Statistics. We believe that the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics will embody a huge basket of activities and will respond to the statistical needs of the CARICOM Region, the Development Agenda, and support our research and policy imperatives. The preparation of the Regional Strategy for Statistics will be funded by PARIS21, and to date, the assessment has been completed...there is a general agreement that we will need to engage aggressively and strategically with our development partners for support in a wide range of issues to future-proof our Region. This will be coordinated and spearheaded by the CARICOM Secretariat”, the Prime Minister said, **CARICOM Secretariat. (July, 2017).** <http://today.caricom.org/2017/07/10/regional-statistics-strategy-preparation-gets-nod-from-caricom-heads>.

In his address at the Opening Ceremony of the 38<sup>th</sup> Conference of Heads of Government, Prime Minister Mitchell pointed out that the need to produce timely, quality statistics remained critical.

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“Our decision-making and the pursuit of policy at the national and regional levels cannot be ad-hoc; it must be evidence-based,” he said.

The CARICOM Chairman said that the Community should aim for key achievements including a comprehensive quantitative assessment of trade performance under the CSME, and the strengthening of the Statistics Division of the CARICOM Secretariat, “to better equip our Region to carry out the heavy lifting required in respect of evolving demands.”

Improvements in the availability of statistics for evidence-based decision-making, sustainable development of Member States, and the empowerment of citizens to hold governments accountable, are among the highlights of the Plan.

The Conference Communiqué said that the Heads of Government reiterated their commitment to the Regional Strategy for Statistics Development in light of the growing demand for data on social, economic and environmental indicators and endorsed a strategy to guide good practices in statistical co-operation within CARICOM.

### Support from PARIS21

Given the support for statistics at the highest level of the Community, the CARICOM Secretariat prepared and submitted a proposal to the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21) for support in the development of a CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics which was subsequently approved.

### What is the CARICOM RSDS?

The RSDS is a planning process to strategically support the modernisation and transformation of the CARICOM Regional Statistics System that is aligned to national and regional priorities.

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The purpose of the RSDS is to produce an efficient Regional Statistical System to respond to the statistical needs of a regional development agenda. The following outcomes are foreseen:

- Coordinated national and regional statistical programmes (e.g. data collection activities, capacity development);
- Harmonised conceptual frameworks and methods;
- Strengthened national and regional statistical systems; and
- Regional/national institutions serving as statistical centres of excellence in the Region.

## Phases of the CARICOM RSDS

### Phase I Comprehensive assessment of the Regional Statistical System (RSS)

This phase involves a comprehensive review and assessment of the current state of readiness of the RSS to provide the data requirements to fulfil the objectives of the Regional Development Agenda, the implementation of the Action Plan which was agreed upon at the highest political level of CARICOM and for monitoring the Region's progress with respect to global initiatives such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway.

### Phase II RSDS formulation

This phase would cover the following areas:

- Drafting the Vision and Strategies of the RSDS;
- Deciding on the regional strategy; and
- Drafting and adopting the action plan in the context of available resources.

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### Phase III Dissemination and advocacy

Under this phase, the following areas will be covered:

- RSDS Implementation; and
- Monitoring and Evaluation of the implementation of the RSDS.

## Validation Workshop- Results of Phase I

The Regional Statistics Programme in collaboration with PARIS21 convened a Validation Workshop in June, 2017 following the completion of the preliminary report on Phase 1 of the RSDS Preparation. The report was presented by the Consultant, Mr. Dave Clement, a former Director of Statistics of the Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago. The Meeting was informed, among other things, of the following opportunities available in relation to producing an efficient regional statistical system:

- The Adoption of Sustainable Development Goals by regional governments requires monitoring of 17 Goals and 169 targets and approximately 240 indicators- leading to opportunities to lobby Governments of Member States for the strengthening of the Regional Statistical System and systems of data collection, production and dissemination.
- The CARICOM Statistics Action Plan that was endorsed at the 37<sup>th</sup> Conference of Heads of Government in July 2016 provides an opportunity to advocate for greater Infrastructure, Human and Financial resources to be allocated to regional and national statistical systems.
- The trend towards modernisation of statistics legislation presents an opportunity to harmonise statistics legislation in accordance with the CARICOM Statistics Model Bill and to address weaknesses of the existing outdated legislation where these occur.



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## Main Events

### CARICOM Statisticians Focus on the Indicator Framework for the 2030 Development Agenda

The Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) and its subsidiary group, the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS), have been proactive in placing on the agenda of its regional meetings the global indicators to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) dating back to the **38th Meeting of the SCCS, 2013 in St Kitts and Nevis**.

The **Second High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics (Second HLF)** convened in **May 2014**, had as its underlying theme, the **Data Revolution for Statistics**, that was highlighted by the United Nations High Level Panel of Eminent Persons in the framework for the post-2015 Development Agenda. The Data Revolution for Statistics underscored the need to produce statistics for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. The Second HLF gave rise to a key Advocate for Statistics, the Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. The Rt. Hon. Keith C Mitchell. Emanating from the recommendations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> HLF was *The Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean* that was endorsed by Heads of Government at its 37<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government in July 2016.

The SCCS at its **Thirty-Ninth (39<sup>th</sup>) Meeting, held in Georgetown, Guyana in October 2014**, endorsed a statement which, *inter alia*, recommended the identification of a *core set of SDGs Indicators for CARICOM countries* as a starting point, given the large number of global indicators that were proposed and the fact that countries were Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with limited resources to produce the 200+ global indicators. This **core set of indicators** was also to include the **Caribbean Specific MDGs (CSMDGs)** that the region had identified in 2008, some of which were reflected in the indicators/characteristics of the SDGs, such as, disaggregation of the indicators by sex, the indicators on Non-Communicable Diseases, and the indicators on Early Childhood Development.

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Arising out of the deliberations of the Fortieth Meeting of the SCCS, held in Barbados during **26-28 October 2015**, was a recommendation to establish a **Technical Working Group (TWG)** to focus on the development of the core set of indicators for the SDGs. The 40<sup>th</sup> SCCS also recommended that the development of the core set of indicators for the SDGs should be linked to *National Development Plans* and endorsed the need for reconciliation of the SDG indicators with those required for the SAMOA Pathway. The Meeting also endorsed the need for a baseline study to be undertaken to identify sources of data and to obtain baseline values for the initial minimum core set of indicators to be produced. It was also agreed that in-country assessments should be conducted to obtain information on statistical capacity constraints in the context of the indicators to be produced for the 2030 Agenda.

Meanwhile, the CARICOM Secretariat was mandated by the **Fifty-Third Special Meeting of the Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) - Environment and Sustainable Development (February, 2015)** to provide support to Member States relative to the inter-governmental negotiations that were to take place prior to the High-level Summit on the SDGs in September 2015. This support took the form of a Briefing Meeting of the UN Permanent Missions of Member States and technical inputs upon request during the inter-governmental negotiations on the SDGs.

The Regional Statistics Programme of the Secretariat also convened a regional training workshop in 2015 to enable the engagement of Member States in the development of the SDG Indicator Framework and to review the preliminary list of indicators proposed at the global level. Activities on the SDG Indicators that were undertaken in 2016 included the convening of two e-Meetings to review these indicators. The first e-meeting was convened in January 2016 to refine the recommendations by Member States on the global indicators, using the updated global list of SDG Indicators of August 11, 2016.

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### Statisticians Focus on SDGs...

A second e-meeting was convened in February 2016 which served to complete the work of the January e-meeting.

The outputs of these workshop/e-meetings were sent to countries including those representing CARICOM on the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG-SDG) and meetings at the global level that were coordinated by the United Nations Statistics Division. The outputs would also have assisted in the deliberations on this topic by CARICOM Member States at the United Nations Statistics Commission.

At the end of 2016, the CARICOM Secretariat with the support of UNECLAC and the Small Island Developing States Unit of the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs commenced work on identifying the core set of SDG indicators relative to the decision of the SCCS.

**The next steps that were envisaged at the level of the CARICOM Secretariat in this area of statistics included the following:**

- Continued monitoring of the **development/refinement of the SDG indicators** at the global level including through the CARICOM representative (s) in the Expert Group;
- Facilitating the review of **the draft core set of indicators for CARICOM SIDS**;
- Facilitating the preparation of the Programme of Work, prepare/review the Terms of Reference for the CARICOM Technical Working Group (TWG) on the SDGs;
- Preparing/contributing to a paper on the work put in place on the SDG indicators to present to a **Meeting of the COTED**;

- Pursuing the work to be put in place **on the preparation of the baseline study** as per the decision of the 40th SCCS in Barbados;
- **Facilitating the identification of the capacity-building required** and preparation of proposals for enabling the receipt of funding for the compilation of these indicators.
- Monitoring and enabling the provision of support to the implementation of **the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean**.

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### Preparations Commence for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Census

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat convened a workshop to make recommendations on a common set of questions for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses as part of the regionally-coordinated approach to the conduct of Censuses in CARICOM. The focus of the Workshop was on the review of the Common Census Questions arising out of the 2010 Census Round. The Workshop was held during the period 15-19 May 2017 at the Baobab Tower in Bridgetown, Barbados. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and PARIS21 were among the agencies that supported the attendance of participants at this workshop.

Building on the activity, Common Framework for Population Census in CARICOM which was jointly funded by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Regional Public Goods (RPG) Facility and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Workshop engaged countries to forge consensus on a common core set of questions and to harmonise the corresponding metadata for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses.

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## Main Events

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### Preparations Commence for 2020 Census...

The Workshop sought to facilitate a structured and harmonised approach to the 2020 Round of Censuses while recognising the changes that may influence the need to collect baseline data on new frameworks that have emerged which include the Community Strategic Plan 2015-2019, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting Framework, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SAMOA Pathway.

Statisticians of the Region were therefore challenged to consider these frameworks relative to the traditional list of topics that are incorporated in the Census.

Countries reviewed key thematic areas including, Migration, Disability, Education, Economic Activity, Crime/Violence and Housing in making recommendations on the common set of questions. The opportunity was also taken to review the latest revision of the United Nations Principles and Recommendations for Population Housing Censuses - Revision 3 and the best-practices on key aspects of census-taking including the following:

- Census Organisation and Management;
- Preparation of Census Administrative Report;
- Census Mapping /GIS;
- Census Data Collection Using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI);
- Census Data Processing in the context of CAPI;
- Promoting the Use of Census Data;
- Census Data Dissemination;
- Conduct and use of Post Enumeration Survey; and
- Census Data Analysis.

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### CARICOM Technical Working Group on the SDG Indicators Established

Statisticians of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) established a new Technical Working Group on the SDG Indicators at a meeting convened in Roseau, Dominica in April 2017. The background to the establishment of the TWG on the SDGs was the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the SCCS which recommended the establishment of a Technical Working Group to review the global list of indicators and make recommendations on the core set of indicators that should be produced as an initial starting point by CARICOM Member States/ Associate Members. The meeting was funded by the European Union under the Tenth European Development Fund.

The TWG Meeting was updated on regional and national activities pertaining to the SDGs. The National Development Plans and Priorities of countries and key regional and international frameworks were reviewed in so far that these could inform the recommendations on the core set of SDG indicators.

Based on the draft preliminary core set of SDG indicators identified for the Region in December 2016, the meeting did an in-depth review of approximately **150 Tier 1 and 2 indicators**. Prior to the commencement of the review, the meeting established **the criteria** to be used to review the indicators.

#### Criteria to determine core SDGs

The Indicators were reviewed based on four (4) major criteria and justifications were also presented relative to the choice of each indicator. The four criteria addressed the strategic priorities of the Region, diverse population groups in terms of leaving no one behind, reconciling the SDG indicators with the SAMOA Pathway and comparability at the regional and international levels.

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### CARICOM TWG-SDGs Established...

The criteria were:

1. The indicators should be linked to the national and regional [Community Strategic Plan] planning programmes and priorities for development and provide a robust measure of progress as it relates to development for CARICOM countries.
2. The ability of the indicator to measure the SDGs in the context of the diverse population groups in CARICOM [leaving no one behind] was a key issue.
3. The core indicators must reflect the unique vulnerabilities of CARICOM SIDS.
4. The indicators should allow for comparability at the national, regional and international levels.

The review of the indicators led to the identification of a recommended core set of indicators. Approximately **109 indicators (114 including 5 repeats)** were recommended as immediate core indicators to be produced in phase one while **36 indicators** were recommended to be produced in a second phase.

The TWG Meeting also identified challenges and constraints that would impact the production of the SDG Indicators including:

- Lack of financial resources required to undertake new surveys to produce data for new and emerging SDG indicators;
- Competition for existing resources – severe financial constraints experienced under Structural Adjustment Programme where these exist;

- Lack of institutional capacity/lack of skilled staff in line ministries/high staff turnover – Need to strengthen capacity in line ministries;
- Lack of computer hardware and software. Shortage of trained staff in the critical area of Information Technology (IT).

It was reported at the TWG Meeting that while some countries were undertaking the SDG process at the country level without the involvement of the National Statistical Office or in a fragmented manner, there were instances of best practices such as the identification of a Permanent Secretary who was assigned to undertake the effective coordination of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in the case of one country.

In a second reported case, there was a Cabinet-approved implementation approach in which a secretariat was established to facilitate and coordinate the entire SDGs; an Interim Planning Team was also established; national data consultations were conducted including a data validation exercise that served to identify the data gaps relative to the 17 SDGs and also to commence the process of data collection; and the setting up of a working group for the 2030 Agenda, supported by a national SDG core group.

The TWG Meeting also reviewed the Terms of Reference relative to the functioning of the CARICOM TWG-SDGs.

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## Past Events

### Convening of Meetings of Existing Technical Working Groups (TWGs)

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat with funding received from the European Union under the Tenth European Development Fund (EDF) convened a series of Technical Working Group meetings in the areas of Merchandise Trade, National Accounts/International Trade in Services, Classifications and Environment Statistics.

#### *Merchandise Trade TWG*

The Fourth Meeting of the Technical Working Group for Merchandise Trade Statistics took place on 13-14 February 2017 in Barbados.

The objective of this Fourth Meeting was to develop solutions to mitigate and overcome the challenges affecting the production of Merchandise Trade data in countries. During this meeting, the discussions focused, among other areas, on the following key aspects:

- developing a mechanism to enable effective utilisation and maintenance for the New Eurotrace software and its related modules – including Mirror Statistics and the Trade Indices Module;
- reviewing and identifying challenges/ best practices in the application of the internationally recommended International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions 2010 (IMTS 2010) and identifying a priority list of recommendations/encouragements at the regional level.

#### *National Accounts/International Trade in Services and Classifications TWG*

The Fourth Meeting of the Technical Working Group for National Accounts/International Trade in Services and the First Meeting of the Technical Working Group -Classifications were held during the period 13 -17 February 2017 in Barbados.



*Members of the Technical Working Group (TWG) National Accounts/International Trade in Services Statistics and Classifications.*

These TWGs arose out of the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS) held in Barbados in October 2015, where there was a proposal to recommence meetings of the TWG – National Accounts/International Trade in Services, and to convene a meeting of the upgraded Classification TWG which was formerly a Sub-Group. The purpose of this face-to-face meeting was to engage in technical discussions, exchange of best practices and focused training in support of advancing regional adaptations of such outputs as the integrated economic questionnaires and the development of a Regional Industrial Classification Framework. Some of the key recommendations and conclusions arising out of this meeting included the following:-

#### **National Accounts/Trade in Services TWG:**

- The Integrated Questionnaires should be referred to as Model Questionnaires;
- There is a need to explore and possibly develop a questionnaire for the Creative Sector;
- The questionnaires, when completed, should be used as a guide to Member States in evaluating their own questionnaires in the medium term, with the possibility of being fully adopted in the long run.

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## Past Events

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### Classification TWG:

- Regional priorities should be used as a guide for identifying which industries should be looked at more carefully in terms of a Regional Industrial Classification Framework;
- It was proposed that the Regional Industrial Classification System should be incorporated into the International Standard Industrial Classification System of All Economic Activities, Rev.4 (ISIC Rev.4) up to Level 4 of this industrial classification, and that the Regional Statistics Programme (RSP) link any further country break-out.

### Environment TWG

The Second Meeting of the Technical Working Group for Environment Statistics took place on 20-21 March 2017 in Antigua and Barbuda.

The goal of this second meeting was to continue to strengthen the capacity of the participants in the collection and dissemination of environment statistics.

The key results achieved from this TWG adopted by world leaders in September 2011, was an updated Terms of Reference and Work Plan that clearly focused on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; recommendations on documented approaches and data sources for filling the gaps in the existing data collected through the Common Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) and an assessment of the Core Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and indicators as identified.

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## EU Supports Statistical Capacity Building in Social Gender and Environment Statistics in CARICOM



*A few of the participants at capacity building session in St. Vincent and the Grenadines*

The CARICOM Secretariat conducted in-country technical assistance in selected countries under the **European Union Tenth European Development Fund (Tenth EDF)**. The purpose of this Technical Assistance was to build capacity and address data gaps in selected areas of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics. Countries were selected based on the existing data gaps at the regional level and included Barbados, Dominica, Montserrat and St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

Under Social/Gender statistics, the areas of focus were Health/HIV, Crime, Education, Power and Decision-making including the SDGs indicators in these areas and disaggregation of the indicators by sex. The areas of focus for Environment Statistics were Energy and Minerals, Land Use, Coastal and Marine Resources, Waste, Water, Biodiversity, Forest and Air emissions. Visits were made to the relevant line ministries and the National Statistical Offices (NSO's) in the respective countries.

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(Continued from Page 9) **Future Events**

## EU Supports Statistical Capacity Building ...

## Forthcoming Activities -August to December 2017

The Technical Assistance activities took place over a period of three days in each country for each of the broad areas of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics. Days 1 and 2 were dedicated to visits to the line ministries/agencies to collect data and on the final day, a workshop was held to discuss the main issues in data compilation.

The outcome of these activities was the filling of data gaps to the extent possible to provide statistics for effective decision making. Additionally, Member countries' capacity to collect data was enhanced and information were presented on the SDGS and the Samoa Pathway.

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*Puzzle by Anmol Rawat (ANMOL)*

### MIND TEASER!

As you can notice in the picture that ten coins have been arranged to form a triangle pointing upwards. What you have to do is move three coins and make that triangle point downwards. Can you do it in just 3 moves?



See link below for solution after trying.

<https://gpuzzles.com/mind-teasers/logic-picture-problem/>

## Publications

### Forthcoming publications:

- National Accounts Digest; 2010—2015 Vol. 2
- National Accounts Digest; 2010—2016 Vol. I
- CARICOM'S TRADE, A Quick Reference to Some Summary Data, 2011 – 2016
- CARICOM'S Trade in Services 2012—2016 (Fourth Regional Publication)
- CARICOM Environment in Figures, 2014 (Fourth Regional Publication)
- Women and Men in the Caribbean Community 2004—2015 (Third Regional Publication)
- Crime Statistics Publication

- Regional Workshop on Disability Statistics -6-8 September 2017, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- RSDS Remote Consultation (20th September 2017).
- Activities to Commemorate Ninth Caribbean Statistics Day across the Region -15th October 2017 (to be observed on Friday 13 October 2017).
- RSDS Validation Workshop – 17-18 October 2017, Cayman Islands
- Twenty-First Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics - 19-21 October 2017, Cayman Islands.
- Forty-Second Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) - 23-25 October 2017, Cayman Islands,
- Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) - 26 October 2017, Cayman Islands
- The Tenth Regional Statistical Research Seminar(10th RSS) -27 October 2017, Cayman Islands.
- Tentative—TWG-SDG Meeting-September (tbd)

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