

Stats News & Views

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

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Main Events

CARICOM Heads of Government Endorse Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS)



CARICOM Heads at the Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, Montego Bay, Jamaica

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The Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) endorsed the Strategic Framework for the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) at the Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government (HGC) of CARICOM held in Montego Bay, Jamaica on 4-6 July 2018.

According to the Conference Communiqué, in endorsing the CARICOM RSDS, Heads of Government recognised the strategic role of strengthening and improving the availability of statistics for evidence-based decision-making. Member States and the CARICOM Secretariat were also encouraged to allocate the necessary human resources needed at both the national and regional levels to implement the strategy successfully.

The HGC also endorsed the follow-up actions that would enable the implementation, resourcing and monitoring of the CARICOM RSDS.

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The CARICOM RSDS was produced by the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) with funding support from the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).



Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness greets Prime Minister of Grenada, Dr. the Rt. Honourable Keith Mitchell

The Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the HGC was chaired by the Prime Minister of Jamaica, the Most Honourable Andrew Holness.



Highlights of the CARICOM RSDS 2019-2030 Strategic Framework

The overarching theme for the CARICOM RSDS is “*Building Resilience of the Caribbean Community*”.

In the context of this framework, it is important to define the composition of the **CARICOM Statistical System (CSS)** which comprises the National Statistical Offices, other Producers of Statistics in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of Member States and Associate Members and the

Regional Statistics Programme (RSP) of the CARICOM Secretariat.

VISION

A CARICOM Statistical System (CSS) that is recognised for professional excellence and is the premier source of high-quality, harmonised statistics on the Community.

MISSION

To provide CARICOM and the Global Community with high quality, harmonised, national and regional statistics for evidence-based decision-making, research, the empowerment of the people and for the achievement of sustainable economic growth and development.

ULTIMATE OUTCOME

An efficient CARICOM Statistical System (CSS), that is responsive to the national, regional and global development agenda, enabling a resilient Community with sustained economic growth and development.

There are **five (5) Strategic Priorities**

- **Standards and Harmonisation:-** To Advance the production of High Quality, Comparable national and intra-regional statistics;
- **Governance:-** To Enable an effective and modern Governance Structure and Institutional Arrangements;
- **Integrated Statistical Systems:-** To Establish a Cohesive and Coherent architecture in the production, processing and dissemination of statistics;
- **Innovation:-** To Enable and facilitate the development and sharing of innovative methods, tools and technologies in the production and dissemination processes in the CSS;
- **Advocacy and Communication:-** To Raise the profile and the value of statistics to effect change and to empower institutions and individuals to use statistics effectively in decision-making.

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The **four (4) Strategic Drivers/Enablers** are:-

- IT Infrastructure;
- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Sustainable Capacity Building; and
- Gender Mainstreaming.

There are **Seven (7) Core Values** as follows:

Professional Independence: We commit to producing and disseminating official statistics that respect and adhere to professional independence through the preconditions of scientific principles, competence and impartiality of the staff of the CSS.

We also commit to ensuring that the use and benefit of official statistics are dependent on their credibility and on the confidence that users would have in these statistics and will make every effort to ensure that official statistics are free from political and other biases.

Transparency: We commit to make available to all staff and users, statistical standards, policies and compilation practices that are clear, understandable and accessible. We will ensure equity in availability of official statistics to all categories of users.

Integrity: We strive to produce results that reflect observed phenomena in an impartial manner and present data and analyses honestly and openly. We practice truthfulness and honesty and are accountable for our actions. We ensure that official statistics provide objective criteria to make individual, private and public decisions

Confidentiality: We guarantee absolutely, the privacy of data providers:- households, individuals, enterprises, administrations and other respondents. We firmly commit to the confidentiality of the information they provide and the use of this information only for statistical purposes.

In cases in which data points might allow for uniquely identifying individuals, we commit to using anonymisation techniques to ensure full confidentiality.

Quality: We commit to ensuring a high level of quality in the production and dissemination of official statistics in the CSS. We emphasise the pivotal role for the CARICOM Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF)

and the CARICOM Code of Good Statistical Practices (CGSP) that can serve to systematically and consistently assess, compare and improve the quality of the statistics produced across the CSS, through improvement in the institutional environment, statistical processes and outputs.

Accessibility: We practice the presentation of official statistics in a clear and understandable form, its dissemination in a suitable, timely and convenient method and its availability and accessibility in an equitable manner to all users.

User Orientation/ Customer Focus: We commit to building a culture in the statistical organisations of the CSS that is demand-driven, based on customer focus/user orientation. We practice continuous engagement with our customers/users and employees.

We undertake to use feedback from the customers and the employees of the CSS as a basis to review and develop the values of the CSS and to link these values, so developed to the brand of official statistics. We encourage the employees of the CSS to align their behavior with and to live the brand based on user orientation/customer focus and to reward them for the same.

HIGHLIGHTS OF ENABLERS/ STRATEGIC DRIVERS:

IT INFRASTRUCTURE

Harness the innovative and transformational power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a key ingredient in modernising and transforming the CSS;

Address the issue of data security in the context of statistical confidentiality and implement data protection/loss policies and the use of anonymisation techniques;

Ensure investment, on a sustained basis, in state-of-the-art IT tools for data collection, management and dissemination;

Enable the development and establishment of an appropriate IT infrastructural environment to facilitate advancement, development and operation of a Central Repository for CARICOM Statistics;

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Enable common and interoperable IT frameworks and platforms for effective data production, processing, warehousing, archiving, storage, inclusive of cloud computing and common and secure IT networks for data exchange, geo-referencing of statistics and the use of mobile equipment.

2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Exploit the opportunities of the 2030 Agenda for the modernisation and transformation of the CSS;

Mainstream the 2030 Agenda framework across the entire CSS to make available the production of indicators to monitor all 17 Goals and 169 targets and the corresponding monitoring of the SAMOA Pathway;

Specifically, with reference to the aforementioned,

- **Mainstream** statistics on environmental issues and concerns inclusive of Climate Change, Disasters/Natural Disasters and on Green Economies, and Promote statistics to inform Crime Prevention strategies and Citizen Security across the CSS inclusive of trafficking of humans, drugs trafficking, Gender-Based and Gang-related Violence;

Build and **strengthen** strategic partnerships, to optimise the use of scarce resources and to achieve efficiency gains in facilitating the production of the indicator framework that can guide, monitor and underscore the achievements of the 2030 Agenda framework/SAMOA Pathway.

SUSTAINABLE CAPACITY BUILDING

Undertake a gap analysis to determine the skills and competencies that are required to sustain the current and planned programmes and to identify the statistical capacity needs of countries;

Assess the institutional, organisational and technical readiness of national statistical systems to move to the next level of maturity with regards to modernisation, making use of available assessment tools;

Enable the development of a systematic programme of capacity-building for successful transformation of the CSS and which should have a clear and direct link to succession planning;

Enhance the capacity of the CSS to produce quality statistics on a sustainable basis;

Formally establish and make operational the **Centres of Excellence in Statistics**;

Develop and **advance** a system of training, capacity-building and knowledge base through the establishment of the virtual **CARICOM Institute for Statistical Training and Research (e-CISTAR)**, inclusive of an **Online Knowledge Base** and **accredited training courses** in collaboration with universities and existing statistical institutes to complement traditional technical training methods and by leveraging existing and establishing new e-learning platforms;

Explore opportunities for pooling skilled human resources for establishing a formal system of South-South cooperation/Attachment Programmes across the CSS.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Mainstream Gender Issues and Concerns in the development and implementation of the RSDS, ensuring that the production and dissemination of gender statistics is both integrated in different sections of the strategy, and a key objective in itself;

Advance the incorporation and systematising of a programme on Gender Statistics, including data production and dissemination mechanisms to monitor progress using CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators;

Ensure consistent sex disaggregation of SDG related data wherever possible and embed sex-disaggregated estimates into regular reporting cycles to the regional and international statistical systems.

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The December 2017 issue of this newsletter reported on the progress towards preparing the CARICOM RSDS. Following the finalization of the CARICOM RSDS Framework in April 2018, it was presented to the Forty-Second Meeting of the Community Council of Ministers (Council) in Guyana, May 2018.

This Council recommended that the CARICOM RSDS Strategic Framework be placed before CARICOM Heads of Government for endorsement at their Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting scheduled for July 2018.

As reported in the Press Release following the 39th HGC, this endorsement by Heads of Government completes the CARICOM RSDS Strategic Framework which was built on the results of the Diagnostic Assessment of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of CARICOM countries, done in 2011/13, funded by the IDB and on the more recent assessment funded by PARIS21 in 2016/17.

The endorsement by Heads of Government has given CARICOM the green light to develop a comprehensive Implementation Plan for the CARICOM RSDS, a Resource Mobilisation Strategy, a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and a Communication and Advocacy Strategy.

The CARICOM Heads of Government also placed on record their appreciation to PARIS21 for its support to the Region.

Stakeholders Participation in the Development of the Strategic Framework of the CARICOM RSDS

The CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) document was developed collaboratively with Member States, Associate Members, the Regional Statistics Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat and other regional and international agencies and was endorsed by the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS).



Consultations were held with various stakeholders within and external to the CARICOM Statistical System (CSS) including the various directorates of the CARICOM Secretariat, other regional organisations, ministries departments and agencies of the National Statistics System.

The Assessment Survey Instrument was submitted to all fifteen (15) Member States and five (5) Associate Members.

Visits were made to six (6) Member States as follows, Barbados, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago. Remote Meetings were held with five (5) Member States - Antigua and Barbuda; The Bahamas; St. Vincent and the Grenadines; Suriname and one Associate Member, Cayman Islands.

The endorsement of the preparation of the CARICOM RSDS by the Thirty-Eighth Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government, July, 2017, preceded the endorsement of the actual Strategic Framework of the CARICOM RSDS.

The CARICOM RSDS and the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean

Prior to the endorsement of the CARICOM RSDS at the Thirty-Seventh Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM (HGC) in July, 2016, the Action Plan for Statistics in the Caribbean was endorsed. The Action Plan as prepared by the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS)/SCCS consisted of actions recommended to be taken by Governments under five (5) specific issues:-

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- i. Strengthening of the National Statistical Systems (NSS);
- ii. Upgrading of the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) base;
- iii. Promoting of careers in statistics - embedding it as a data science in the school curriculum;
- iv. Supporting a regional approach to the development of statistics; and
- v. Promoting the Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians (CAPS).

The Action Plan also included the preparation of a CARICOM RSDS as part of the regional approach to the development of Statistics in CARICOM as well as National Strategies for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) to strengthen the National Statistical System within countries.

The subsequent endorsement of the preparation of the CARICOM RSDS by the 38th HGC in 2017, was relative to its strategic role in strengthening statistics and improving its availability for evidence-based decision-making, insofar as it related to:-

- i) responsiveness to the statistical requirements of the regional development agenda of CARICOM;
- ii) assuring comparability of data across Member States;
- ii) strengthening links and convergence between the regional and national level priorities;
- iv) pooling statistical skills, expertise and resources in the region; and
- v) enabling the development of statistical tools and services at the regional level.

The CARICOM RSDS constitutes the shared foundation upon which the Region's statistical capacity will be developed. It is therefore critical that with its formulation, it is adopted at the highest political level of CARICOM, along with the commitment of resources for its implementation.

The follow-up actions requiring attention in the future include:-

- Elaboration of the Comprehensive Implementation Plan as an immediate next step.
- Preparation of a Resource Mobilisation Strategy for funding the RSDS Implementation to be supported by International Development Partners
- Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to monitor implementation
- Development and Implementation of a Communication and Advocacy Plan to profile the RSDS.
- Completion of a Mid-Term Review of the RSDS around 2024 to make any adjustments that are required for the remaining years.



The RSP hereby extends commendations to the SCCS and AGS including the extended AGS that participated in the development of this process. Likewise, the Consultant who conducted the Assessment and facilitated the Strategic Planning Workshop as well as the Staff Members from the CARICOM Secretariat and all regional and international agencies who helped in pulling the framework together.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



The COHSOD Approves CARICOM Core SDGs Indicators for the Region

The Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting held in Guyana, May 2018, approved the draft list of Core Indicators for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

This development came after the CARICOM Secretariat and the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) undertook initial activities focusing on the indicators required to achieve and to monitor the 17 Goals and 169 Targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015. These activities included:

- consideration of the “post-2015” development agenda and the implications for statistics at the regional SCCS Meetings from 2013 and continuing;
- the conduct of the Second High-Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics in May 2014 in which the theme focused on the “data revolution for statistics”
- the production of a statement by the SCCS on the identification of a core set of SDG Indicators manageable for production by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) as an initial starting point for implementing the SDGs which was also read into the records of United Nations Statistical Commission.

The Secretariat also convened a regional training workshop in 2015 in Trinidad and Tobago to inform statisticians and policy-makers in Member States about the preliminary list of indicators proposed at the global level to monitor the SDGs and to review these indicators that were being developed at the global level.

In the first Quarter of 2016, the Secretariat convened two (2) e-Meetings to finalise the recommendations by Member States on the global indicators which were being considered at the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC).

In December 2016, the Secretariat collaborated with other international organisations (UN DESA, SIDS and UNECLAC) in convening a regional meeting, comprising of at least one (1) Permanent Secretary, other senior policy officials, Directors of Statistics and representatives from a number of regional and international organisations.

A **CARICOM Technical Working Group (TWG)** was also established by the SCCS to make recommendations on the core SDG Indicators based on the decisions of the SCCS. The First Meeting of this TWG on the Indicators for the Sustainable Development Goals (TWG-SDGs) was held in **Roseau, Dominica** from **24-26 April 2017**.

Consideration was given to indicators that were Tier 1 and Tier 2 indicators at the global level which were classified as follows:

Tier 1 - These indicators are conceptually clear, with established methodology and standards available and data are regularly produced by countries.

Tier 2 - These indicators are conceptually clear, with established methodology and standards available but data are not regularly produced by countries.

Not considered at the review were the following group of indicators:-

Tier 3 - Indicators which were those that had no established methodology and standards, or in which methodology/standards were being developed/tested for these indicators.

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Main Events

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At the time of the TWG Meeting there were 231 unique indicators. The review of the indicators led to the identification of a recommended core set of 109 unique indicators excluding 5 (five) that were repeated (114 indicators in total).

The Member State of Suriname recommended the addition of 16 indicators to the set of 109 unique indicators

After reviewing the draft list of 109 unique indicators, the 34th Meeting of the COHSOD approved these indicators and the 16 indicators identified by Suriname bringing the list to a total of **125 unique indicators**.

Second Meeting of the TWG-SDG

The Second Meeting of the CARICOM Technical Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (TWG-SDG) was convened remotely on the 12th June 2018.

The objective of this second meeting was to continue the momentum to assist in the development of the core set of SDG indicators in the CARICOM Region after its approval by the 34th Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD). During this meeting, the draft work plan to enable the production of the SDGs was discussed as follows:

- Establish a priority list of activities to be implemented by Member States by the 31st July 2018;
- Validate/Revise the data availability of the 125 indicators to be produced by countries by 29th June 2018;
- Commence preparatory work in support of the production and dissemination of high quality SDGs indicators.

The Meeting Report is being prepared for follow-up with countries.

Third Meeting of the Technical Working Group on Environment Statistics



The Third Meeting of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Environment Statistics was held remotely on the 19th April 2018. The main objective of the TWG-Environment is to support the development of Environment Statistics in the CARICOM Region. At this Third Meeting, some of the areas examined included:

- Overview of the TWG Work Plan 2017-2019;
- Review of the CARICOM core set of indicators for Environment;
- Recommendations for future publication;
- Recommendations to enable the production and dissemination of Environment Statistics in Member States and Associate States;
- Review of the SDG Environment Indicators; and
- Inter-Agency Collaboration.

At the end of the meeting, some of the decisions and recommendations on the above areas were as follows:

The Meeting:

- **Noted** that Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, Montserrat and St. Vincent and the Grenadines were producing environment compendiums;
- **Also noted** that the representatives from Jamaica and Montserrat volunteered to develop guidelines for the production and dissemination of Environment Statistics;

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Past Events

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- **Further noted** the report of upcoming projects in the area of Environment Statistics which may provide funding for training, attachments and south-south cooperation;
- **Recommended** the inclusion of SDGs Environment indicators in future publications of the CARICOM Environment in Figures;
- **Agreed** that countries should conduct assessment of the possible sources of data for the Recommended Core SDGs Environment Indicators;
- **Encouraged** countries to engage with stakeholders in a more formal manner so that they can commence data collection for the SDGs Environment Indicators.

Fifth Meeting of the Technical Working Group on National Accounts, Trade in Services Statistics and Classifications

The Fifth Meeting of the CARICOM Technical Working Group (TWG) on National Accounts/Short Term Indicators and International Trade in Services/Investment Statistics was convened remotely on the 25th May 2018.

The purpose of this Meeting was to continue the advancement of developmental work following the face-to-face meeting of February 2017. The Meeting included a review of model economic questionnaires developed, a proposed review of the Regional Statistical Business Registers (SBR) Manual and methodology for the advancement of a Regional Industry Classification System.

Some of the conclusions and decisions arising out of this meeting include the following:

The Meeting:

Noted that in general, Member States still

continue to conduct sample surveys on establishments to acquire the needed data for the compilation of National Accounts but have also been increasingly reliant on administrative data such as VAT data to supplement the survey data especially in cases of poor survey response rates;

Agreed that, irrespective of the increasing reliability on administrative data, the use of the model economic questionnaire designed by the TWG still represented a best practice, since the administrative data is limited by the fact that it does not shed any light on the cost structure of the establishment under review;

Recognised the challenge of developing a Regional Standard Industrial Classification (ISIC) beyond the 4-digit level, bearing in mind that each Member State has different national priorities with respect to each industry under examination;

Also agreed that while some countries may have detailed industry classifications, the critical objective was to develop a classification system that reflected regional priorities. A proposed follow-up step would then be to develop correspondence tables that would link national classifications to any regional classification to be developed;

Also noted that, within the services or cultural industry, the international system failed to capture Region specific products e.g. Soca/Reggae music and carnival services such as costume making. Additionally, the regional system would allow more in-depth examination of emerging areas such as Information and Communication which is no longer lumped together with Transportation and Storage. It would also allow for comparison across Member States of sectors which are critical to the Region;

Also recognised that the process of developing the Regional Industry Classification System would involve consistent implementation and review to ensure that the critical industries, at the appropriate level of detail, are being reflected.



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Future Events

IDB Continues to Support Regional Statistics through Statistical Capacity Project for CARICOM Countries

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat through funding provided by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) will be executing two (2) Projects to support Statistical Capacity in CARICOM Countries in the upcoming months.

The first project is to provide support to the CARICOM Regionally Coordinated Census Strategy titled Common Census Framework 2.0. The objective of this project is to build and reinforce the common census framework in the CARICOM Region to enable the production of regional public goods that can achieve a robust 2020 population census strategy and outcomes.

It was revealed during a review of the activities carried out during the 2010 Round of the Population and Housing under the Common Census Framework 1.0 that there were three key areas where support will be needed for the 2020 Round: (i) replacement of costly, time-consuming paper questionnaires with electronic tools to collect and process data; (ii) improvement in the preparation of census maps using satellite imagery and other modern GIS techniques; and (iii) improvement in the planning and conduct of census operations. Therefore, the funding provided by IDB will be used to finance three (3) components in the three (3) areas previously mentioned.

The general objective of the second project is to strengthen the capacities of the countries of the Caribbean Region to produce statistical information in the three specific sectors of gender, environment, agriculture and rural development based on data from administrative registers. The specific objectives are : (i) to establish the technical capacities to produce statistics from administrative data in the countries of the Caribbean Region. (ii) to promote coordination at

the national level among institutional actors in the production and use of registers in the production of statistics; and (iii) to strengthen sub-regional collaboration to promote the use of administrative registers in statistical production.

The project will comprise of the following components:

Component I – Identification of Key Administrative Registers – This component will identify the key active administrative registers related to the 3 sectors: gender, environment and agriculture and rural development.

Component II –Capacity Building to Integrate Statistics based on Administrative Registers. The documented results of the workshops and assessment produced in Component I will be as inputs into capacity building activities.

Future Meetings - July - December 2018

- **Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) - Electronic Collection for the 2020 Census Round in the Caribbean and Workshop on Census Management**
- **Technical Working Group Meeting on Merchandise Trade - Remote**
- **Workshop on Gender/Environment and Agriculture Statistics**
- **Caribbean Statistics Day (week of activities)**
- **Twenty-Third Meeting of the CARICOM Advisory Group on Statistics (AGS)**
- **Forty-Third Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS)**
- **Twenty-Ninth Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC)**
- **Eleventh Regional Statistical Research Seminar**

Forthcoming Publications

- **National Accounts Digest; 2010—2017 Vol. I**
- **Snapshot of CARICOM's Trade Series, 2011 – 2016**
- **Crime Statistics: CARICOM Members States and Associate Member States**

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