

**MESSAGE BY DR. PHILOMEN HARRISON,
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ON THE OCCASION OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY,
15 OCTOBER 2009**

On the occasion of the observance of the First Caribbean Statistics Day, on **October 15 2009**, I take this opportunity to express appreciation to all of the Directors of Statistics and Chief Statisticians for their efforts to build effective statistical systems in their respective countries.

The theme for our First Caribbean Statistics Day is, **Better Statistics, Better Management, Better Development Outcomes** and it strikes at the heart of our raison d'être in statistics which is to make available high-quality statistics that can enable among other things good governance, research and analysis that can redound to the benefit of all the people of the Community as reflected in improved quality of life for all. While this is our first observance of Caribbean Statistics Day across the Region, the Barbados Statistical Services for many years now have been observing a Statistics Week.

Over the years the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) has been the main mechanism through which statisticians of the Region have sought to equalize and harmonise the pattern of statistical development across the Region. It has been the vehicle through which heads of statistical offices, faced with limited resources have been able to share their experiences and best practices, facilitate South-South co-operation and establish relationships with international and regional organizations that led to the endorsement of key statistical capacity-building projects such as the joint United Nations Statistics

Division/CARICOM Project on Strengthening Capacity in the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics; the Caribbean Integration Support Programme funded by the European Commission under the Ninth European Development Fund and the Multi-Programme of training in Demographic Analysis funded by the Caribbean Development Bank.

The Region has also seen the development of statistical advisory group(s) as sub-groups of the SCCS that have targeted the development of specific areas of statistics such as Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics, the rolling out of a Regional Statistical Work Programme, Statistical Research Seminars and the insertion of PARIS21 within the regional statistical activities which led to the High-Level Advocacy Forum and other advocacy events.

The Advisory Group on Statistics now has before it the task of enabling the implementation of the Regional Statistical Work Programme as well as consideration of any needed reform of the SCCS as a forum for statistical development.

Evidently we have come a long way but there is much work left to be done if our statistical offices and systems can produce the statistics at the requisite quality to provide an enabling development for the management of our development process and fulfill the true meaning of the theme for our first commemoration of statistics in the Region. I want to close by thanking my colleagues of CARICOM for their encouragement and to acknowledge the commitment of the staff of the Regional Statistics sub-programme for their support.