

**EXTRACT FROM THE
WORKING DOCUMENT OF THE FIFTEENTH
MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
OF MINISTERS
(HELD IN GEORGETOWN, GUYANA, 5TH JANUARY 2005)**

**ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL STATISTICAL
PROGRAMME IN SUPPORT OF THE CARICOM
SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME).**

5TH JANUARY 2005

**ITEM 11 - ESTABLISHMENT OF A REGIONAL STATISTICAL PROGRAMME
IN SUPPORT OF THE CARICOM SINGLE MARKET AND ECONOMY (CSME)**

Background

The call for Governments to invest resources in statistics was proposed in a Paper presented by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat to the Resumed Session of the Eighth Meeting of the Community Council held in Nassau, The Bahamas on 7 July 2001. It was pointed out at this Session that while traditionally the Statistics Sub-Programme of the Secretariat has focussed on the compilation of economic statistics including National Accounts, Merchandise Trade and Balance of Payments, more recently emphasis is being placed on the development of Social and Environmental Statistics to facilitate the production of reliable data sets in this area.

The presentation in Nassau also highlighted the thrust of the Secretariat's Work Programme that centered on the need to harmonise statistics in the Region given the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). In this regard, efforts were made to encourage Member States to document statistical methodologies, the processes of data collection and to identify a core set of economic, social, environment and statistics on information and communication technology to be produced by all Member States. These processes were to enable effective analysis and the acquisition of knowledge on the status of the Member States while ensuring comparability through the use of international and regionally acceptable methodological frameworks and standards.

The Community Council, in its decisions, noted the information required on the status and role of statistics in the Region and also noted the developmental work being executed in statistics. The Community Council also mandated the Caribbean Community Secretariat in collaboration with the Standing Committee of Caribbean

Statisticians (SCCS), to prepare in its Work Programme **a 3-year plan for the improvement of the quality and range of statistics available to the Region.**

Draft Regional Statistical Programme

The objective of the Draft Programme is to focus on the statistical needs to establish, monitor and evaluate the CSME and also to make available statistical information for decision-making, to keep pace with the changing socio-economic and environmental changes, as well as technological advances. The achievement of this objective requires actions at the national level to produce relevant statistics for the diagnosis and design of national policies. Similarly, actions at the regional level are also essential to facilitate the development of harmonised national statistical systems and to build regional databases comprising comparable data sets. In order to build these regional databases the **Statistics Legislations in Member States should be reviewed within the constraints of the confidentiality provisions, to allow for National Statistical Authorities to submit data at appropriate levels of detail to the Secretariat on a timely basis** to enrich the research and analytical programme at the regional level and as inputs into regional negotiations.

The **Attachment to this Working Document** provides suggested elements of the proposed work programme based on six themes: Economy, Finance, Investment; Population Demographics, Social and Living Conditions; Environment; Information Communication Technology; Public Relations, Data Dissemination and Statistical Coordination; and Modernization of National Statistical Systems. Programme areas, objectives, expected outputs and actions required to achieve the objectives are identified in Table 1. Table 2 allocates the actions over a three-year period while Table 3 identifies responsible agencies for statistical production or those that can provide technical support to the producing agencies.

Resolution on Regional Statistical Development

At the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the SCCS in Nassau, The Bahamas in October 2001, recognizing the demands being made on statistical agencies in the context of the establishment and the monitoring of the CSME, a Resolution was prepared seeking to strengthen the statistical systems in Member States to improve the coverage, reliability and quality of the traditional areas and to develop frameworks to measure for new and emerging issues. The Resolution prepared by the SCCS is at **pages 112 to 113 of this Working Document.**

ACTION REQUIRED

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL is invited to -

- (i) **urge** regional governments to give priority to investing in national statistical information systems in order to enable an appropriate level of resources to undertake the collection, compilation, analysis and dissemination of statistics to support the CSME;
- (ii) **endorse** the need to invest these resources in statistics on a sustained basis focusing particularly on the human and financial resource needs of national statistical offices;
- (iii) **also urge** Member States to update their statistics legislation to obtain the information required for national and regional decision-making including the mandatory submission of relevant detailed national statistics to the Secretariat;
- (iv) **also endorse** the need for the statistical systems in Member States to implement the regional statistical programme for establishing, monitoring and evaluating the CSME;

- (v) **recommend** the adoption of a Regional Statistical Programme incorporating a three-year programme of work as prepared by the Secretariat and the SCCS, subject to other issues considered necessary for inclusion;

- (vi) **also recommend** that national and regional statistical development strategies with financial proposals be prepared to enable the implementation of the Regional Statistical Work Programme; and

- (vii) **encourage** regional and international organizations to collaborate and integrate their resources to enable greater efficiency in the provision of technical assistance and funding of the programmes to be instituted in statistics in the Region.

RESOLUTION

Bearing in mind the essential and ever increasing need for official statistics in the area of economic, social/gender, environment and information and communication technology for policy formulation and informed decision-making, with an indisputable nexus to positive and sustainable development;

Recalling the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics as adopted in 1994 by the United Nations Statistical Commission, which include recognition of statistics as an indispensable pillar in the information of a democratic society;

Recalling too the principles outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as a new guide to human, social and economic development, the acceptance of indicators to measure that performance and the need for adequate legal and regulatory frameworks to achieve these goals;

Conscious of the prevailing international trade and economic reconfiguration being driven by a globalisation largely underpinned by advances in technology, in particular, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs);

Conscious too of the need to equip and strengthen systems for survival and prosperity in a new world economy through provision of adequate and timely empirical data and that governments themselves have set up statistical agencies, particularly, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to perform this function;

Particularly conscious of international trade processes at the global and hemispheric levels, especially the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the need of the Caribbean Community to participate meaningfully in these negotiations;

Mandated by the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community to create a CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and a Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) to fit the Region for advantage in the new environments and to provide the statistics to favorably achieve this fit;

Considering the urgency to stabilise economies of the Region that are facing economic downturn, and the central role of statistics in that stabilisation programme;

Guided by the Community's efforts at social transformation to pursue principles of new governance and to create the environment to nurture the ideal Caribbean person as contained in the provisions of the CARICOM Charter for Civil Society;

Further guided by the need to encourage regional and international organisations to collaborate and integrate their resources in the implementation of the statistical programmes in the Region and to aggressively pursue the appropriate human resource development in this regard;

Recognising the critical role that complete, accurate, reliable, timely and relevant statistics accessible to all, will play in successful implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), nationally, regionally and internationally, and as a corner stone of democracy;

Also recognising the mandate given by the Resumed Session of the Eighth Meeting of the Community Council to the Secretariat, to prepare in collaboration with the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS), to include in its Work Programme proposals a three year plan for the improvement of the quality and range of regional statistics, available to the Community and its public and private sectors;

The Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) resolves as follows:

These Governments of the Caribbean are urged to:

- (i) Give priority to the strengthening of national statistical systems, particularly NSOs to undertake the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistics;
- (ii) Provide the NSOs with the human, material, technical and financial resources and logistic support to produce the data required by users;
- (iii) Enact the necessary monitoring and evaluating legislative and regulatory instruments to facilitate the execution of the mandate of the NSOs;
- (iv) Establish an intensive sensitization programme to encourage participation and early response from all stakeholders-users, producers and suppliers-with respect to the production of relevant and timely statistics.
