



PRESS RELEASE

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High Level Advocacy Forum headlines week of statistics activities in Grenada

(*CARICOM Secretariat, Turkeyen, Greater Georgetown, Guyana*) The quest to place statistics frontally before the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) continues later this month with a high level engagement of stakeholders in St. George's, Grenada.

The High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics, planned for 26 May, is the second such event to be coordinated by the CARICOM Secretariat with support from its international development partners. The first forum was held in 2009 in Trinidad and Tobago. That engagement focused on constructing a highly effective statistical base to monitor and inform policies to mitigate the effects of the global financial and economic crisis on the Region.

One of the outcomes of that engagement was the establishment of the Caribbean Association of Professional Statisticians (CAPS) last year in St. Kitts and Nevis. It is anticipated that the establishment of the CAPS will positively impact the harmonization process within the Region and that its Membership Directory could be a catalyst for the construction of a Database of Regional Experts.

This year, the organisers are seeking high-level commitment by CARICOM governments to strengthen national statistical systems so that timely, high-quality and relevant statistics could be developed and made available for decision-making and citizen empowerment. The thrust is being made against the acknowledgement that the availability of statistics will lead

Page 1 of 2

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to good governance, accountability and improved standards of living of the peoples of the Community.

Specifically, the Forum will look towards the strengthening of the Region's statistical bases to provide early warning signals on economic, social and environmental challenges; encourage Member States to invest in statistics and make use of the data produced; and enable the production of a CARICOM Strategy for the Development of Statistics (CSDS) that can promote implementation of the common Regional Statistical Work Programme (RSWP) at the country level.

The Forum will attract top level government representatives of CARICOM Member States and Associate Members, Directors of Statistics, and Chief Statisticians of National Statistical Offices. There will be panel discussions at the day-long event that will focus on topics such as setting policy context and government investment in statistics; the status of statistics, challenges, achievements and best practices; how the data revolution is impacting on the development of statistics in CARICOM; and charting the way forward for the Region.

The High Level Forum is among several other statistics-related events occurring in Grenada during the last week in May. The others are a Caribbean Population and Housing Census Symposium on 27 May, a Regional Statistics Seminar on 28 May, the first meeting of the CAPS the following day, and a meeting of the Advisory Group on Statistics which will be convened on 30 May.

An Information Technology Fair focusing on Statistics will be held 26-28 May.