

## **High Level Forum Grenada**

### **Vote of Thanks by Halim Brizan, Director of Statistics**

It is a privilege and a great joy to stand here on behalf of the Central Statistical Office of Grenada and the Ministry of Finance and Energy, to deliver this vote of thanks at this Opening Ceremony for the second High Level Forum on Statistics in CARICOM.

I would first like to express utmost thanks to our Honourable Prime Minister for gracing us with his presence and delivering this inspiring keynote address. Prime Minister, your mere presence here speaks volumes. Your passion for statistics is quite evident in the way you delivered this keynote address. You have demonstrated your commitment to the development of statistics in Grenada and in the region. This certainly is advocacy for statistics at the highest level. As a statistician, who understands the plight of others in this field, your voice is a powerful one in the region for promoting the use of and investment in statistics among our heads of government. Your keynote address was certainly thought-provoking as it speaks to the issues of optimal investment in statistics (given our limited resources), the importance of ICT in revolutionising the National Statistical System and the importance of statistics as a policy instrument. It also speaks to being accountable in government and highlights the importance of accuracy, relevance and timeliness.

In his absence, I also express heartfelt thanks to the Minister for Economic Development, Planning, Trade and Cooperatives for his support towards the Hosting of this event and for also agreeing to participate in the panel discussions. We look forward to his presentation today.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance and Energy, who have rendered full support to the Hosting of this event in Grenada. The Permanent Secretary is currently out of state on government business but

expresses his warm wishes to the delegates. I will like to thank our Deputy Permanent Secretary for his cordial welcome remarks which set the stage for the meeting today and also for his astute chairmanship at this opening ceremony.

My most profound appreciation goes out to Dr. Philomen Harrison, Project Director of Regional Statistics, who has been a true champion of this important event, even in the midst of challenges. Dr. Harrison, I would like to thank you for your highly informative speech put forward on behalf of the Deputy Secretary General of CARICOM which enlightened us about the works of CARICOM in the development of statistics in the region along with the support given by our development partners, through the promotion of the regional statistics work programme. Gratitude is also extended to you and your staff at the Regional Statistics Office at the CARICOM Secretariat, and other offices at the Secretariat for your unwavering support in the Hosting of this event in Grenada. Your efforts made where this event is concerned, are outstanding and are certainly held in our highest regard. We also offer heartfelt thanks for your tireless support towards the development of statistics in Grenada and in the region as a whole.

Ms. El Iza Mohamedou, Deputy Secretariat Manager at OECD, PARIS21 Secretariat, our sincere appreciation is extended to you for your remarks here today. Your speech certainly put into perspective, the role of PARIS21 in the promotion of not just the development of statistics, but ultimately the sustainable development of our economies through promoting the integration of good statistics in the decision-making process. I also want to thank PARIS21 in a special way for co-sponsoring this event by funding countries' participation. Your support shows your commitment to the mandate of PARIS21. I also want to recognise the work that you have been doing in the region, in providing financial and technical support to National and regional Strategies for the development of statistics.

Sincerest thanks is extended to Mr. Crispin Gregoire, Chief for the Caribbean at the Regional Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP for your remarks here today which highlight the development work of UNDP and the importance of data in doing this work. The UNDP has been promoting the issue of multi-dimensional poverty measurement and we are happy to have sessions devoted to addressing this issue in panel discussions later today and in the session on multidimensional poverty on Wednesday of this week. I also want to thank UNDP in a special way for being a sponsor of this event and for also ensuring the participation of the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, the pioneers of research in the area of multi-dimensional poverty.

Mr. Ewout Sandker, Head of Cooperation, Delegation of the European Union (EU) to Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and for the Dutch Overseas Countries and Territories. I extend heartfelt thanks to you for your remarks this morning. I also thank EU in a special way for being one of the sponsors of this event. On this note, I must commend EU for its funding towards CARICOM's Regional Statistical work programme over the years through the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> EDF. Countries have benefitted tremendously from the training activities and are reaping the benefits of these investments. I would like to express my deepest gratitude for the financial support of our Local European Development Fund support services unit, in helping to cover part of the cost of refreshments for this event.

Mr. Mc Donald Thomas, Operations Officer at Caribbean Development Bank, we thank you immensely for your remarks on this occasion and thank the CDB for co-sponsoring this event. CDB, as we know, is a longstanding development partner of Grenada. In addition to the infrastructural projects and the support rendered by CDB to our ongoing Home-grown programme, the bank has been providing invaluable

assistance towards the Development of Statistics in Grenada and in the region, through capacity building in the national statistical offices to undertake living standard measurement surveys and to do poverty assessments. I must recognised this effort, since it is as a result of this support from CDB, that countries are in a better position to report on their poverty status and implement projects geared toward poverty alleviation.

I would like to express deepest gratitude to captain Keith Houghton for invoking God's presence over this meeting today.

It would be remiss of me if I did not recognise the faces behind the scenes. Sometimes we overlook this but if it were not for the hard work and dedication of these individuals we would not have been here today. I therefore want to express my deepest gratitude to Ms. Sylvie Walter from PARIS21 and the Finance personnel at the CARICOM secretariat who went beyond the call of duty to ensure that participants are well taken care of in Grenada.

A special thanks to Grenada Radisson Beach Resort, Island Catering and Grenada Trade Centre who have given discounts on their services.

Warm thanks goes out to the Presentation Brother's College Choir for Leading us in the singing of the National Anthem of Grenada and for serenading us with their harmonious voices within the cultural segment. We are very proud of you. Ladies and gentlemen this is not the last you will see of the PBC choir you will certainly be entertained by their cultural performance tonight at the Grenada Trade Centre.

Along with the PBC Choir, I would like to express our appreciation to Conception Dance Theatre and members of Touch of Grace Band for the entertainment to be provided at the cultural show and cocktail this evening.

I encourage all to attend to support and experience a bit of our local culture.

I express heartfelt thanks to the Marketing and National Importing Board and Grenada Steels Works Ltd. who have made a monetary contribution towards Grenada's Hosting of this event.

Appreciation is extended to Grenada Distillers Ltd, Grenada Breweries Ltd, Renwick and Thompson Co. Ltd and Bryden and Minors Ltd who all made contributions in kind. Your contribution at this time and in light of the tough economic situation is commendable and certainly reflects the spirit of shared sacrifice.

A Special thank you to the organisations who agreed to partake in our ICT fair at such short notice. In this regard, I would like to recognise the efforts of Columbus Entertainment, Digicel, Lime, the Nature Conservancy, and The Computer Store for their display here today.

Thank you to members of the media for providing coverage of this event and the Government Information Service for streaming this event live on the internet so that many of our colleagues who could not be here, can benefit from the presentations and discussions.

I would also like to thank other Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies who have assisted us in a great way. Special thanks to the department of Fisheries in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Land, Fisheries and the Environment, The Ministry of Health and Social Security, The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government Printery, the Market Access and Rural Enterprise Development Programme and various officers in the Ministry of Finance and Energy who would have contributed in one way or the other.

Ladies and gentlemen this event would not have been a reality had it not been for the support, hard work and dedication of my staff, the staff of

Central Statistical Office especially the planning committee for this event. I am indeed grateful for your support and assistance.

Once again, my deepest appreciation is extended to all who have contributed in some way to this event. I also take this opportunity to wish everyone a productive day today and a successful week. Thank you.