

Terms of Reference

ESTABLISHING COMMITTEES TO PRODUCE SOCIAL INDICATORS ON A SUSTAINED BASIS, AND TO FACILITATE THE CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT OF ACHIEVEMENTS RELATED TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGs)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS), the main forum through which the Caribbean Community engages in discourse relating to the statistical development of the region, at its Twenty Seventh (27th) Meeting held in St. George's, Grenada, in November, 2002, endorsed the programme to "Strengthen Capacity in the Compilation of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics and Indicators in the CARICOM Region.

In the approach to formulating the programme, consideration was given to the fact that some of the data are the products of agencies outside of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) which necessitated the setting up of national level working groups in statistics/statistical coordinating committees to bring together all national statistical agencies, to improve the quality, relevance, timeliness and response from surveys and administrative sources of information and to feed into the programme at the national and regional levels.

The implementation plan for the programme therefore includes the establishment of Social Indicators and Millennium Development Goals (SIMDG) committees within each member state, in order to enhance the process of collecting, compiling and analyzing the agreed set of indicators, on an annual basis.

Social Indicators and MDGs Committees, when adequately staffed and reasonably resourced can provide an efficient vehicle for the production of Social Indicators and statistics on a timely and reliable basis. Such committees are also best placed to monitor developments with respect to set targets and goals. Hence, these committees are crucial in monitoring and assessing the achievements of targets and goals set by countries,

under the umbrella of the MDGs.

Justification for the establishment of the Committee -The Current Situation

- Currently, in all member states of the Caribbean Community, it is recognized that the production of social statistics is quite fragmented in the sense that the NSOs are not currently involved directly, in the collection of all social data, and the subsequent generation of social statistics and indicators.
- However, even though the NSOs may not be directly involved with some of the key social statistics, because they often have much greater statistical expertise than personnel working at the social sector ministries, close cooperation and collaboration between these social organizations and the statistical authorities, on statistical issues and policy related matters are essential, in order to enhance efficient policy formulation and implementation.
- The establishment of the above named committees will therefore bring together both the main producers of data as well as some of the main users. Therefore, all of the relevant stakeholders will be represented on the committees and this will greatly enhance the production of the social indicators in a timely fashion.
- The inclusion of users and producers of data on the committee, will also enhance the process of policy implementation. In particular, since the committee will be in a privileged position, it will also monitor the MDG indicators, which are already included in the set of social indicators which the committee will generate.
- The committee will therefore be in a strategic position to assist in the assessment of progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The full involvement of all stakeholders on the committees is therefore crucial.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this activity is to strengthen the capability of the NSOs of all member states of CARICOM to collect, compile, analyze and disseminate reliable and timely social and gender statistics and indicators on a sustained basis, which will guide policy decisions at the national, regional and international levels.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

In order to meet the above objectives, the members of the committee are required to undertake the following tasks:

1. Attend all committee meetings;
2. Establish standard definitions and methodologies to be used in calculating the selected indicators;
3. Collect the data necessary for their respective sector;
4. Construct the indicators relevant to their work;
5. Prepare narrative analyses which should accompany the published indicators;
6. Make and implement recommendations on how to standardize and improve the quality of data;
7. Expand the list of indicators, as the need arises, and promote data collection in order to improve the information on new areas of concern;
8. Meet regularly, preferably monthly in order to:
 - a) Arrange and allocate the necessary workload and set targets and deadlines for work to be completed;
 - b) Discuss the progress of the work to ensure that deadlines are met;
 - c) Exchange ideas on all aspects of all of the indicators in order to ensure a hybrid product and to maximize its usefulness.

9. Prepare indicators for public consumption;
10. Promote and disseminate the indicators;
11. Monitor the MDG indicators and assist in the preparation of the MDG reports;

4. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The following are the expected outputs of the SIMDG committee:

- 1) Improved data collection systems in the field of social/gender statistics;
- 2) Increased reliability of indicators published;
- 3) Expanded use of the indicators, and enhanced image of the field of Statistics;
- 4) Annual publication of a list of selected social and gender indicators, together with basic analyses of the indicators;
- 5) MDG indicators for MDG assessment reports;
- 6) Recommendations on priority actions to be taken based on the indicators;
- 7) Enhanced image of the National Statistical Organizations;
- 8) As a consequence of the above, enhanced access to more resources for statistical work.