

**CARIBBEAN**

**COMMUNITY**

**SECRETARIAT**

**TWENTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE  
STANDING COMMITTEE OF  
CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS**

**RESTRICTED**

**SCCS/2003/28/11**

**Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands  
3 - 5 November 2003**

**30 October 2003**

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**REPORT ON UNITED NATIONS WORKSHOP ON INTERNATIONAL  
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CLASSIFICATIONS**

In September 2003, the CARICOM Secretariat was invited to participate in a United Nations Workshop on International Economic and Social Classifications as was informed in the Second Statistical Conference of the Americas last June in Chile. This Workshop was jointly organised by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the Statistics and Economic Projections Division of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and was held at the ECLAC Head Quarters in Santiago, Chile. Participants were principally from the National Statistical Institutes of the Latin American countries with representatives from the Secretaría de Integración Económica Centroamericana (SIECA), the Asociación Latinoamericana de Integración (ALADI) and the International Labour Organization/Organización Internacional del Trabajo.

2. The workshop focused on economic and social classifications and their uses in statistics:

- (i) Current implementation and use of national activity and product classifications and their relationship to the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC) in the ECLAC Region;
- (ii) Special user needs – adaptation of classifications in censuses and surveys;
- (iii) Future work on ISIC and CPC – revision plans and proposals for the 2007 ISIC and CPC revision;
- (iv) Measures to facilitate cooperation in the field of classifications, including coordination of work on regional/sub-regional cooperation in classifications.

3. The sessions were generally organised as open discussions following an introductory presentation, and presentations by participating countries were held throughout the week instead of one combined session. Among the items on the agenda were:

- (i) Introduction to the International Family of Classifications;
- (ii) An update on the ISIC and CPC 2002 update;
- (iii) Presentation of a concepts paper on the ISIC and CPC 2007 Revision;
- (iv) Presentation of the draft ISIC Structure prepared for 2007;
- (v) Presentation of the CPC Structure for 2007;
- (vi) Cooperation in the field of classifications in Latin America and the Caribbean;
- (vii) ISIC and CPC issues from the view point of ILO / past and future work on ISCO-88 and ICSE-93;
- (viii) Revision of the UN List of selected Industrial Products.

4. The Meeting discussed the scope of the ISIC and issues such as statistical units and treatment of ancillary activities, classification principles, principles for grouping and the product-activity links. Issues relating to the possible coding systems were also raised and discussed, whether to maintain the current alpha-numeric system or change to a completely numeric system which could possibly entail going to a 5-digit level. The Meeting examined the proposed new structure of the ISIC looking at each category in turn and the proposed changes and implications of these changes.

5. Similarly, the Meeting considered the scope and purpose of the CPC and the proposal for the aggregation structure, whether it should be *industry of origin-based* or *demand-based*. With respect to the UN list of industrial products, the Meeting was reminded that the UNSD maintained an international database of these commodities but that these lists were now outdated and needed updating. Countries were asked to submit to UNSD revised lists of their industrial products so that the Division could update its databases.

6. Reference was also made to two questionnaires which UNSD had sent to all statistical offices, with respect to the revision of the ISIC and CPC. One of these questionnaires, *2003 Questionnaire for the ISIC and CPC Revision* (Attachment I), was to be used during the discussions at the Workshop. Unfortunately, due to the language problem among other things, this questionnaire was not completed by any of the countries. Participants were then asked to try to complete the questionnaires and submit to UNSD by the end of September or mid October latest.

7. On the topic of cooperation in the field of classifications, ECLAC had proposed to create a web forum on its web site where countries of Latin America and the Caribbean can share and discuss issues related to classifications.

### **The Way Forward**

8. It is evident from the country presentations that in Latin America as in the Caribbean, there are some countries which are ahead of others, however, when taken as a whole, Latin America appears to be way ahead of the Caribbean with respect to the development and use of these classifications. As the Region moves towards establishing the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME), the need for harmonised statistics to monitor and evaluate the performance of the CSME becomes critical and underpinning this harmonisation is the use of common classifications.

9. It is, therefore recommended, that a contact person be designated within each Statistical Office to work in the area of classifications. Due to resource constraints, it is recognised that this will not be the only function of the post but it will serve the function as a contact point for classifications in the office. Also, Member States should, as a matter of urgency, implement the ISIC Rev. 3.1 at least at the 2-digit level to ensure international comparability, by latest 2007 when the revised version will go into effect.

10. More information on this Workshop, the questionnaire and the International Family of Classifications can be found on UNSD's web site at <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/class/intercop/training/chile/chile-2.htm>, <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/cr/registry/regri.asp?rid=1764>, and <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/class/> respectively.

### **Action Required**

11. **The Meeting is invited to:**

- (i) **note** ISIC Rev. 3.1 and CPC 1.1 are currently in effect and work is continuing on the ISIC and CPC 2007 revision;
- (ii) **consider** designating an officer within each office to work in the area of classifications and to serve as a contact person;
- (iii) **encourage** Member States to explore the possibility of using the CPC when collecting data on International Trade in Services;
- (iv) **urge** Member States to complete and submit the UNSD questionnaire on the ISIC and CPC revision as soon as possible; and
- (v) **request** UNSD to convene a workshop on classifications in the Region.

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