

**CARIBBEAN**

**COMMUNITY**

**SECRETARIAT**

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

**RESTRICTED**

**SCCS/2003/28/29**

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

**3 November 2003**

**GUYANA 'S COUNTRY REPORT**

**Attached for the attention of the Meeting is Paper entitle Guyana's Country Report.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**THE BUREAU OF STATISTICS -GUYANA**  
**ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTED TO THE TWENTY -EIGHT MEETING OF THE**  
**STANDING COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS**

**Turks & Caicos**

**3<sup>RD</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> November 2003**

**Overview**

*This review reports on the work programme of the Bureau of Statistics (Bureau) since the conclusion of the Twenty-seventh Meeting held in St Georges, Grenada, in November 2002 and covers the period November 2002 to October 2003. The Bureau's ability to perform was severely tested given an environment characterized by lower budgetary allocations, and a significant period of general uncertainty associated with crime, and continued migration of key staff. Despite these jeopardies, the Bureau maintained its focus on its mandate, and recorded some progress with supervisory and management training for junior and middle management staff at both local and overseas destinations. The coming year is filled with challenges as the Bureau, like many other sister agencies, faces an environment likely to be characterized by policies to combat international recessionary trend. The good news is that the Bureau will benefit from significant resources under both a current World Bank Project as well as an IDB project scheduled to commence in January 2004. The UNDP is also expected to continue to continue its Institutional Support Funding.*

***The Operational and Financial Environment***

The operational and financial environment of the Bureau during the review period was characterized by delays, lower budgetary allocations, and the crime situation. The latter situation which eventually abated around July of this year had contributed to increase uncertainty at all levels of the economy, spawning delays in responses to routine surveys as well as the National Population and Housing Census.

***Review of Operational and Financial Activities***

At the commencement of 2003, the Bureau, as part of the budget preparation team, successfully undertook its traditional role of compiling the National Economic Aggregates projected for the year which were included as part of the budget preparation in March 2003. In addition, the Bureau remained one of the key agencies involved in discussions with visiting International Monetary Fund (IMF) teams and other international financial Institutions.

Approved budgetary allocations for the Bureau's Current and Capital Programmes were expectedly lower than that of the mid '90s, consequent on Government's emphasis on achieving budgetary balance in the place of lower projected revenue collection. The greater was reduction

felt in the Capital Programme, reflecting Capital Funding for just one (1) of the five (5) activities proposed. This caused the Bureau to forget purchases of equipment and building construction. This reduction also affected the conducting of the National Population and Housing Census, particularly the finalization of outstanding payments due for 2002, which were not completed in time for the closure of the accounts for 2002. Consequently, the Bureau was forced to change its projections and defer the building extension once again.

### ***The Management Environment***

During 2003, the Bureau continued to operate under the aegis of a Board of Directors, with the Honourable Minister of Finance as the Chairman. The Bureau commenced 2003 with seventy-four (74) employees, out of an approved establishment of one hundred and twenty four (124). However, during the year 2003, the Bureau filled four (04) vacant positions, and employed eighteen (18) temporary staff members who were assigned to Demography Department as coders/ editors for the Census. These coders/editors were employed to prepare the questionnaires for scanning. The permanent staff appointment were severely offset by a loss of ten (10) permanent staff of whom seven (7) resigned and migrated, while (3) staff members died between May and July of this year.

These resignations were reflective of the ongoing brain drain that affects the country as a whole, and was particularly debilitating to the Bureau this year. The critical resignations this year were statisticians from the Survey and National Accounts Departments, and the Senior Statistician from the Demography Department -all of whom migrated. The latter was awarded a Joint Japanese/World Bank award and is pursuing a Master's Programme in Population Studies at the University of Liverpool.

These resignations have come at a time when the National Population and Housing Census is at its peak. All of these officers were critical to the project. The Senior Statistician of the Demography Department was directly working with the Deputy Chief Census Officer. However since most of the preliminary work and enumeration were almost completed, another officer was able to continue with little problem. In face of increased demands for information and technical guidance from local and foreign agencies and institutions, as well as the public at large, management had to adapt and re-organize the remaining resources quickly. One definite approach for the future has to be a higher incidence of on-the-job training, in place of the current emphasis on formal training for the levels of Statistician and above.

Training during 2003 continued to be a priority during the review period with programmes in management and supervision for both junior and middle management staff being emphasized. One member from the Survey Division was given the opportunity to obtain training in Environment Statistics in Germany. Overseas training continued when one statistician from the National Accounts, Trade & Prices Division was given the opportunity to attend a workshop on Tourism Satellite Accounting in Trinidad & Tobago from March 24<sup>th</sup> -26<sup>th</sup>. This was sponsored by the World Trade Organization, ECLAC and the Canadian Tourism Commission and was followed by another recent workshop in Barbados from October 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup>. During the month of August, the senior statistician from the Demography Division attended the International Statistical Institute 54th Congress in Berlin.

In September, the Government of Guyana and the IDB held a workshop on the proposed Social Statistics and Policy Analysis programme. This was attended by two statisticians. A statistician from the Prices Section attended a one week workshop in Debt Management at the Ministry of Finance. Meetings to discuss technical issues

relating to trade statistics and customs regulations, which were held on 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> November in Georgetown for Statisticians, Trade Experts & Customs Officials, were attended by a statistician from the Trade Section. Training in scanning technology for the finalization of the Housing & Population Census was conducted by Mr. Ola Hagfall and Mr. Dennis Osterberg of Statistics Sweden. Thus, in addition to the five staff members who were trained last year, two more were exposed to data verification, scanning and analysis.

### **WORK PROGRAMME -2003**

The Bureau's work programme is profiled into the following:

Generation of macro-economic indicators

Generation of social-sector indicators

Conduct of surveys and field activities to support (1) and (2)

Representation on Select Committees

Development of new technical capacity

Completing the National Population and Housing Census

All activities throughout the period concentrated on the strengthening of traditional indicators generated by the Bureau. The traditional indicators were generated under the two (2) broad groupings namely: -Economic and Social Indicators -which were supported by surveys. Economic indicators generated this year, include National Income, Trade, Balance of Payments and Consumer Prices Index while the Social Indicators included births, deaths, migration, quarterly estimates of the population and studies on children. Survey efforts during the review period, were focused on assisting line ministries and other agencies in questionnaire design and the execution of field activity .The Bureau has worked closely with the consultant from UNDP in the execution of its work programme.

### **THE NATIONAL ACCOUNTS DIVISION (NAD)**

The NAD continued to expand its coverage of the Physical Production and Services Sectors during the year. This division in addition to providing statistical input into the 2003 National Budget produced quarterly state of the economy reports for use by the Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Guyana, international donor institutions, and the wider civil society. The increasing interest of the media in economic matters generated a higher degree of interaction. However, further work on the development of Supply and Use Tables and Integrated Sectoral Accounts were forced to be suspended due to the necessary assignment of all staff to Census Activities.

### **CONSUMER PRICES**

The CPI unit also expanded its range of data collection. The unit continued to produce monthly Georgetown CPI with a lag of ten working days from the completion of each reporting period. The monthly All-Urban CPI is now produced with a one-month lag. However, the work on the compilation of the rural CPI is ongoing and its completion will facilitate the re-commencement of the All-Guyana Index. The collection of prices is presently supported by the utilization of temporary staff in the rural areas. This is an area that has prevented some problems of monitoring for quality and coverage and is being actively revised. Information is submitted to the Guyana Information News Agency (GINA) on a monthly basis where it is published in the national newspapers and reported in other media outlets.

## **EXTERNAL TRADE DIVISION (ETD)**

During the review period, clearing of the backlog of customs entries for the years 1998 and 1999 continued apace. However, the ASYCUDA database was increasingly used by the Trade Division to provide preliminary trade statistics. Monthly imports by economic classification are now being tabulated with a lag of two weeks, and international agencies, along with the local private sector are making greater use of the ASYCUDA database. The upsurge in the use is an acknowledgement of the Bureau's and Customs Administration's success in improving the quality of trade data, whilst providing a source of revenue for the Bureau. The Bureau although affected by computer downtime, resulting from voltage fluctuations, continued nevertheless to assess the quality and coverage of the trade data through direct access to the Single Administrative Documents. The Bureau has now been able to deliver to CARICOM and other regional and international agencies adjusted data for 1998 through to 2001, and unadjusted data for year 2002.

The Bureau was invited to work closely with the Trade Policy Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Trade & International Economic Cooperation. The Chief Statistician has been invited to assist its new staff in various aspects of trade interpretation and analysis.

## **SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC UNIT**

The work of the socio-demographic unit can be divided into Census related activities, and other Vital Statistics. The performances of these areas are profiled below.

### **Population & Housing Census 2002**

The census committee continued to work in earnest from January 2003. This aspect is dealt with in the report to the Regional Census Committee Meeting.

During the year the Demography & Survey Divisions concentrated on the finalization of the Census. This included the conclusion of enumeration in regions one (1) and seven (7), coding and editing and scanning. Two missions from Statistics Sweden with the help of IDB visited Guyana in an effort to train and provide technical assistance in Scanning of the questionnaires. These two missions were completed in 28<sup>th</sup> April - 9<sup>th</sup> May and 9<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> June. Report of which was done by Mr. Olga Hagfall and Mr Dennis Osterberg.

The Bureau continues to be constrained by physical space, which limits recruitment and the attainment of the Bureau's mandate. In addition, the Population & Housing Census activity has aggravated this constraint. The Bureau continues to share its present main location with the Ministry of Housing and to manage the Census activities from a secondary location.

### **Vital Statistics**

The production of migration statistics has declined, and the Bureau and the Ministry of Tourism is moving to rectify this problem. The Ministry of Tourism at present is collecting data on visitors' arrivals.

## **INFORMATION SYSTEMS DEPARTMENT**

The Information Systems Department lies at the heart of the Bureau's ability to produce and disseminate its output. Continuous demand is made from other departments in the Bureau, the public, ministries, and corporations etc. on the department to provide speedy information from various available databases.

The department is now headed by a Consultant employed through the World Bank Project. In addition, a statistician was employed during the year. This unit will be at its full staff capacity level with expected recruitment of another personnel under the World Bank project and a UNV through UNDP

Although the Bureau was unable to install a Local Area Network at its Headquarters, a small network system was installed at our Annex, which houses the Census Data Section.

## **REPRESENTATION AT MEETINGS, COMMITTEES ETC**

The growing recognition of the Bureau's role and work has resulted in increasing requests for the Bureau's participation on committees. The Chief Statistician *is* a member of macro-economic committee established by the Minister of Finance. Although he resigned from the position of Chairman of the Board of the Guyana Revenue Authority, (which encompasses both the Internal Revenue and Customs Divisions) he has continued as a member of the board. He or a designated officer is also co-chairman of the inter -departmental Balance of Payment Committee as well as the Labour Market Information System Committee. The Bureau also co-ordinates the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics, although activities this year have scaled down, in addition to serving on the National Standards Committee and the Inter-Agency Committee on Trade in Services chaired by the Ministry of Trade & Tourism, among others. The Bureau has been appointed the chairman of the CARICOM' s Social Indicator & Millennium Development Goals Committee. The counterpart and alternate attended a three day retreat hosted UNICEF to review the Government of Guyana and UNICEF's project. The Bureau was also represented at the meeting to develop the National AIDS Account for Guyana hosted by the Ministry of Health. Statisticians also attended workshops organized by PAHO to discuss Solid Waste Management.

## **INTENDED WORK PROGRAMME 2004**

Year 2004 will present peculiar challenges, as the Bureau will be expected to complete the Preliminary Population & Housing Census Count and its report by year-end 2003. Although most of the senior staff, apart from their main responsibilities will be fully involved in projects funded by external agencies, the other traditional areas of work have to continue, and herein will be the challenge. In meeting this challenge, the Bureau is relying on its small stock of qualified staff, continued institutional strengthening through training and rationalization of work processes to take advantage of the computer resources at the disposal of the Bureau. Implementation of an employee productivity evaluation scheme during the year is expected to focus the energies of the work force on this aspect of their duties. There will also be higher demands on the Administrative Unit to manage and coordinate the increased human, financial and material resources under the foreign funded projects. This will require establishment of Programme Execution Unit at the Bureau.

### ***National Accounts and Prices Estimates***

The National Accounts, External Trade and Prices Unit within the forecast environment will continue to play an important part in the generation of statistical data. The work programme of the NAD for 2003 has been summarized as follows:

To coordinate the data flows and reporting requirements for National Accounts through the facility of the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics

To make Guyana's National Accounts consistent with the procedures outlined in the 1993 System of National Accounts

To develop a manual for the compilation of National Accounts and of quarterly GDP To access training for staff in forecasting techniques

To execute a nationwide Household, Income & Expenditure Survey, based on the new population frame from the Census.

To continue working towards the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts and expanding its coverage in the estimation of GDP

The Department also hopes to hold a seminar for users and providers of data so as to accomplish greater cooperation with the providers of data.

The publication of a National Accounts pamphlet is also another avenue the department will use, to increase awareness of the compilation of data in the department and its uses, thereby encouraging greater cooperation.

To complete the re-basing to year 2000 of the constant price series

Executing the 2004 Annual Economic Survey, on a wider coverage, utilizing the updated frame of, economic enterprises from the Census 2002

Targeting a response rate of at least 60% for both the manufacturing and service sectors

Developing a system for coverage of service data and designing and executing monthly reporting systems.

To improve the efficiency of the price collection system on which the Consumer Price Index is based

To improve the accuracy and timeliness of the monthly CPI production process

To update the Rural CPI

Generation of A Rural and All Guyana Consumer Price Index on a quarterly basis

Production of a new series of Integrated Economic Accounts with the National Accounts Consultant

Further development of the Quarterly GDP series

Preparation of Metadata to precede involvement *in* the GDSS

To continue the production of a revised Quarterly Statistical Bulletin

### ***Trade***

Accelerate work particularly on the Import *unit* valuations, to facilitate the generation and -publication of Trade Indices.

Quarterly & annual publication of National Trade Statistics

Develop ranges of acceptability for *unit* valuations at commodity level

Issue of first publication in Trade Analysis

Assisting staff at The Ministry of Trade in using the ASYCUDA database for generation for their own reports.

### ***Survey***

In partnership with UNDP and CARICOM, the Bureau of Statistics, will continue to provide assistance to the Government of Guyana to devise a set of indicators to measure progress in the implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies, and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals. These indicators will be devised in a particular manner and line officers, Government Ministries as well as members of Civil Society will be trained to compile and analyze them. There will be a focus on the standardization of concepts, definitions and measurements as well as the design of systems with high integrity for application by the wider Public Sector. The

Visitor Exit Survey will continue as a matter of form. The official policy stance on tourism justifies the urgent need for this survey that will provide the raw data and an analytical base for Policy Planners involved in accelerating the growth of the Tourism Sector.

Beginning May 2004, the Bureau's intention is to conduct a World Bank funded Income & Expenditure Survey, in addition to a small Labour Force Survey Module. This funding is scheduled to run for a period of one (1) year.

### ***Census 2002/3***

Surveys are not completed if errors found are not corrected. In order to complete this process, a Post Census Survey would be conducted at the end of the verification exercise. Stakeholders are entitled to reports, either through briefs or by documentation. It is intended that the Bureau will host a Post Census Briefing for all Stake Holders.

### ***Demography***

Emphasis will be in strengthening the quality of data from the General Register Office and Ministry of Health through a series of workshops that would enable the relevant Divisional Registrar to complete the Births and Deaths registration forms accurately in the ten Administrative Regions. Current indicators on national infant and child mortality make this initiative a priority. Similar workshops will be conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to facilitate the accurate completion of Education. Questionnaires in schools that have not submitted completed forms. Further activities of studies of woman and children are planned in conjunction with UNICEF. This unit will also be responsible for the preparation of the Census 2002 report. The usual post-census activity of coding, verifying, scanning and analyses will be undertaken. It is around these core activities that the work programme is expected to evolve with additional data flows being generated from the Socio-Demographic unit to complement the real sector data.

### ***Institutional Strengthening & Staff Training***

Central to the work plans for 2004 is the anticipated strengthening of the institutional framework through the provision of both equipment and human resources under the World Bank Institutional Support Project, which became effective from May 2003. The work programme is hinged around the provision of equipment to enhance the Information Systems capabilities of the Bureau, and this equipment is expected by January 2004. This project will be enhanced by the Inter-American Development Bank's Social Sector programme for Guyana which is hinged on strengthening Capacity building with technical assistance in GIS technology and survey activities.

As indicated above, this equipment will be the inputs to a Local Area Network to manage the data demands and output from all the section of the Bureau.

From the human resource perspective, the programme will be built around the skills and input of a Senior Data Processing Specialist, and a Junior Specialist who will be recruited and trained under the guidance of the former over the next two years. The recruitment of two specialists in National Accounts for focused short term periods is also included under the World Bank Project to compliment the work programme in the National Accounts Department.

In addition to the human resource support to be sourced under the World Bank Project, the Bureau will also attempt to obtain the services of three (3) UNVs in the area of National Accounts, Demography and Survey. Like many other agencies, the Bureau has suffered from the "brain drain", over the past three (3) years, losing its Heads of Department in three (3) areas above to migration. The sourcing of UNVs for a minimum two (2) years period is intended to serve as a buffer and guarantee against the possibility of further local staff losses to migration as the Bureau attempts to re-group institutionally.

Wherever possible, the Bureau will be pursuing relevant training opportunities for staff. Training activities are intended to be beneficial to both the individuals and the organization. There is also high expectation of technical support programme at the Bureau to further boost the institutional capabilities of the Bureau and facilitate on-the-job training.

In support of the strategy of the career succession, the Bureau and the Board is set to reopen discussions with Statistics Sweden to assist in Institutional Strengthening in the New Year.

In addition, under the Public Sector Technical Assistance Credit (PSTAC) funded by the World Bank, the Bureau expects to benefit from the additional employment of qualified personnel in National Accounts, Demography, Sampling and Information Technology, who will impact on the job skills to current staff as part of their development for eventual senior managerial appointments.

The Bureau is pleased to present this report to the 28th Meeting of SCCS.

Submitted By  
Lennox Benjamin Chief Statistician  
Bureau of Statistics -Guyana