

**CARIBBEAN**

**COMMUNITY**

**SECRETARIAT**

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

**RESTRICTED**

**SCCS/2003/28/7**

**Providenciales, Turks and Caicos Islands**

**3-5 November 2003**

**27 October 2003**

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**INVESTMENT IN STATISTICS AS A PRIORITY IN THE REGION:  
THE STATUS OF THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION**

**1. Presentation to the Community Council 2001 - from the Working Document of the Resumed Session of the Eighth Meeting of the Community Council**

The call for Governments to invest resources in statistics was made in a paper presented by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat to the Resumed Session of the Eighth Session of the Community Council held in Nassau, The Bahamas on 7 July 2001. It was pointed out at this session that while traditionally the statistics sub-programme of the Secretariat has focussed on the compilation of economic statistics including National Accounts, Merchandise Trade and Balance of Payments, more recently emphasis is being placed on the development of Social Statistics to facilitate the production of reliable data sets in this area.

2. The thrust of the Secretariat's Work Programme in the area of statistics emphasises the requirements for the harmonisation of statistics in the Region, particularly in the context of ongoing efforts to establish the CARICOM Single Market and the Economy (CSME). Steps were taken to encourage Member States to document statistical methodologies, the processes of data collection and compilation to produce a core set of economic statistics to enable the ability to effectively depict the socio-economic status of the Region while ensuring comparability through the use of international and/or regionally acceptable standards.

3. An analysis and discussion on the status of data collected and compiled at the Secretariat in areas such as trade, national accounts, balance of payments, external debt, social statistics and the environment were presented for discussion at the Meeting. The Community Council also heard about projects and activities that were executed to improve the statistical frameworks in Member States.

4. The Meeting of the Community Council was also informed of the gaps and deficiencies that exist in the statistical framework that necessitate a strategy to strengthen capabilities at the regional and national levels to ensure that there are resources to establish these frameworks and provide the core data.

5. The Community Council in its decisions noted the information required on the status and role of statistics in the Region and also noted the developmental work in statistics. The Community Council also mandated the Caribbean Community Secretariat in collaboration with the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS), to prepare in its Work Programme a 3-year plan for the improvement of the quality and range of statistics available to the Region.

## **2. Preparation and Refinement of the Resolution of the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh Meetings of the SCCS- from SCCS 2002/27/7**

6. Independently of the process described in (1), at the Twenty-Sixth Meeting of the SCCS in Nassau, The Bahamas in October 2001, reservations were expressed as to whether statistics is in fact a priority in the Region. While highlighting that Statistical Offices can attempt to utilise the scarce resources more efficiently, it was contended that these offices were under considerable pressures to fulfil the new and increasing demands for information. It was posited that there was an inordinate balance in the provision of resources, infrastructure and the environment provided for the operations of statistical offices.

7. The resolution prepared at the Twenty-Sixth Meeting was refined at the Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the SCCS. In seeking to advance the process based on the recent experience in 2001 with the Community Council by quantifying the status of the national statistical offices and the quantum of resources required to be invested, the decision was taken that the informal working group that produced and refined the resolution should design a format for the collection of the information from the statistical offices. There was no response to the request of the Secretariat for assistance with the design of the format, some of the elements of which were already contained in Paper SCCS 2002/27/7.

8. However, the Secretariat has designed a format which has been circulated to the national statistical offices to provide the information to quantify the investment needed in Statistics by Governments of the Region. (See Attachment to this Paper).

## **3. Advancement of the Process**

8. Subject to the receipt of responses by the Secretariat, it is anticipated that the information can be collated in time to identify the quantum of resources required for the improvement of Statistics in the Region for the next Meeting of the Community Council. The Secretariat will also be preparing for consideration at the Twenty-Eighth Meeting of the SCCS, elements of a Statistical Programme for the Region.

## **ACTION REQUIRED**

9. **The Meeting is invited to:**
- (i) **note** the approach of the Secretariat to the Community Council in 2001;
  - (ii) **also note** the refinement of the resolution out of the Twenty-Sixth and Twenty-Seventh SCCS Meetings; and
  - (iii) **support** the process of advancing the resolution to the Community Council.

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## **RESOLUTION**

**Bearing in mind** the essential and ever increasing need for official statistics in the area of economic, social/gender, environment and information and communication technology for policy formulation and informed decision-making, with an indisputable nexus to positive and sustainable development;

**Recalling** the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics as adopted in 1994 by the United Nations Statistical Commission, which include recognition of statistics as an indispensable pillar in the information of a democratic society;

**Recalling too** the principles outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals as a new guide to human, social and economic development, the acceptance of indicators to measure that performance and the need for adequate legal and regulatory frameworks to achieve these goals;

**Conscious** of the prevailing international trade and economic reconfiguration being driven by a globalisation largely underpinned by advances in technology, in particular, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs);

**Conscious too** of the need to equip and strengthen systems for survival and prosperity in a new world economy through provision of adequate and timely empirical data and that governments themselves have set up statistical agencies, particularly, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) to perform this function;

**Particularly conscious** of international trade processes at the global and hemispheric levels, especially the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and the need of the Caribbean Community to participate meaningfully in these negotiations;

**Mandated** by the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community to create a CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and a Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) to fit the Region for advantage in the new environments and to provide the statistics to favorably achieve this fit;

**Considering** the urgency to stabilise economies of the Region that are facing economic downturn, and the central role of statistics in that stabilisation programme;

**Guided** by the Community's efforts at social transformation to pursue principles of new governance and to create the environment to nurture the ideal Caribbean person as contained in the provisions of the CARICOM Charter for Civil Society;

**Further guided** by the need to encourage regional and international organisations to collaborate and integrate their resources in the implementation of the statistical programmes in the Region and to aggressively pursue the appropriate human resource development in this regard;

**Recognising** the critical role that complete, accurate, reliable, timely and relevant statistics accessible to all, will play in successful implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ), nationally, regionally and internationally, and as a corner stone of democracy;

**Further recognising** the recent mandate given by the Resumed Session of the Eighth Meeting of the Community Council to the Secretariat, to prepare in collaboration with the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS), to include in its Work Programme proposals a three year plan for the improvement of the quality and range of regional statistics, available to the Community and its public and private sectors;

The Twenty-Seventh Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) resolves as follows:

**These Governments of the Caribbean are urged to:**

- (i) Give priority to the strengthening of national statistical systems, particularly NSOs to undertake the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of statistics;
- (ii) Provide the NSOs with the human, material, technical and financial resources and logistic support to produce the data required by users;
- (iii) Enact the necessary monitoring and evaluating legislative and regulatory instruments to facilitate the execution of the mandate of the NSOs;
- (iv) Establish an intensive sensitization programme to encourage participation and early response from all stakeholders-users, producers and suppliers- with respect to the production of relevant and timely statistics.

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