

CARIBBEAN

COMMUNITY

SECRETARIAT

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

RESTRICTED

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**Hamilton, Bermuda
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COUNTRY REPORT

(Submitted by Grenada)

Introduction

The year 2004 will conclude as one of the most challenge for our statistical office. For the first eight months, activities were centered on completing a few major tasks, one of which is the 2001 Census of Population and Housing. The completion of these tasks suffered from inadequate human and financial resources, and lack of training in the use of computer statistical packages to collect, compile and analyze data. Nevertheless, the office was able to respond to the data needs of the Government for planning and policy purposes, and assisted in monitoring the effectiveness of its macroeconomic programmes and policies.

Review of Activities

Population and Housing Census 2001

Data cleaning and data validation completed with the assistance of the Bureau of Census. Core tables available for distribution.

National Accounts & Balance of Payments (BOP)

Final accounts completed for GDP in constant and current prices by industry for 2002. Surveys sent out for 2003, notwithstanding the devastation to businesses by Hurricane Ivan. Final BOP accounts completed for 2002 and estimates available for 2003 with projections for 2004-2007

Trade

Imports and exports data available in detail for 2003 and first quarter of 2004. Estimates available for second quarter. Estimates for the third quarter and the whole year are under review.

Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The CPI is available for September 2004. September CPI posed tremendous challenge as the aftermath of the hurricane gave rise to higher prices for items not available in the prescribed CPI outlets due to the damage caused by the Hurricane itself followed by the “looting” of stocks. With the economy gradually regaining normality, prices are beginning to revert to pre-hurricane levels.

Price Control & Consumer Affairs

Our office has the responsibility of implementing the Supplies Control Act of 1959 which covers 40 items for which prices are regulated. With the rapid rise in prices due to shortages after the hurricane, price control was made a priority issue by the Government. An additional fifteen Inspectors were recruited to help monitor prices and to assist in processing consumer complaints.

Social & Demographic Statistics

This year great effort was made to increase the collaboration with the satellite statistical offices in the line Ministries. CSO provided leadership in establishing the Millennium Development Goals Committee. Only two meetings were held. The Ministry's of Health and Education are both working on a publication. Data for 2003 are available

Projects

Our office executed the following components of the Caribbean Labour Market Information System Project (CLIMS):

- Revise and upgrade the Labour Force Questionnaire
- Compute Productivity Index
- Established Labour Market Information Library
- Formulate a Labor Market Informarion Plan via consultation with stake Holders

Assisted in the design and execution of an unemployment survey of persons displaced after the hurricane

Provided support to the OECS Assessment Team in completing the macroeconomic assessment of the damages caused by hurricane Ivan

Assisted the Ministry of Finance in preparing for a Donor's Conference on November 19, 2004 where Grenada will seek financial assistance to rebuild the country. Damage is estimated at twice GDP.

Challenges faced by the CSO in producing accurate and reliable statistics

Hurricane Ivan wrecked havoc on the economy, destroying the entire agricultural sector, 95 % of the housing stock, 90 % of the utility's and communication's infrastructure. This was followed by rampant looting of businesses and establishments triggering the implementation of limited working hours for security reasons. Additionally, the house of every CSO employee had its roof blown off, plummeting them into instant distress. In this kind of environment, firms if operational were found at times unable to supply data to CSO via the usual channels, and the entire CSO staff if at work not focused.

Response

CSO office was not damaged and this allowed us the privilege of accommodating other Government Departments. With all in-house information secured, the main establishments were visited to examine and collect information on the extent of damage to property and data bases. Data had to be manually extracted from source and manually compiled and processed.

In the area of trade, in absence of a fully operational ASYCUDA system at Customs, CSO relied on Relief Agencies and NERO to provide data on imports. Compilation of imports data for 2004 would pose a challenge as building materials and other basic items are imported without the quantities and values properly recorded and accessibly. In the face of rising prices outside of the CPI basket and recognizing that they were many substitutions taking place, it was challenging to compute the CPI and the corresponding analysis to reflect reality.

In the area of social statistics, the demand for data is increasing. CSO would have to execute more household base sample surveys as the Government would put as top priority measuring progress and evaluating the well being of its people. CSO does not have adequate trained staff to respond to the need for more household surveys.

Tentative Work Plan for 2005

In brief, CSO activities would evolve around expanding the national accounts to include input/output accounts. More household based surveys would be undertaken. CSO would seek to maintain producing up-to-date statistics in the other areas. It must be noted that with the newly formed Agency for Reconstruction and Development, under the Office of the Prime Minister, there would be more demand for data from CSO and the current structure of CSO may change causing a corresponding change in the 2005 work programme. Notwithstanding these uncertainties, there is a need for urgent training of CSO staff in survey design and management, SPSS and other statistical packages, national accounts, and measuring the informal sector.
