

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

SCCS/2004/29/7

Hamilton, Bermuda

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**DOCUMENTATION OF UNMET NEEDS ASSISTANCE REQUIRED TO SUPPORT
THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL/GENDER AND ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS**

1. Introduction

The establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) will have tremendous implications for the demand for timely, reliable and relevant statistics to guide the establishment phase, to facilitate the operation of both institutions as well as to monitor the effect of the provisions and the decisions. In addition, there are also social and environmental issues and problems facing the Region, such as HIV/AIDS, Crime and Security, and vulnerability of the Region to natural disasters that also require statistics to guide policy intervention increased intelligence and surveillance for problem solving. There is increasing recognition that statistical systems in the Region are not adequately equipped to respond to the ever-increasing demands for data in new and existing areas and particularly in the areas of Social/Gender and Environment Statistics. The national statistical systems require urgent financial support to strengthen capacity to produce on a sustainable basis, a wide range of statistical information.

In an effort to sustain the process of developing Social and Environment Statistics, the CARICOM Secretariat Statistics Sub-Programme documented what it perceives to be unmet needs that require funding in these areas. This paper highlights for the benefit of

this Meeting some activities in the area of social as well as environment statistics for which financial resources are requested for implementation. It is by no means a complete checklist of requirements and is subject to changing circumstances that influence developmental work to provide data for policy formulation and decision-making.

The context of the required support relate to efforts being made at the regional level to establish a structured Social and Environmental Statistics framework to provide critically-needed data to monitor existing and newly emerging regional policy concerns and the global concerns such as progress towards the goals and targets of the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDG). The strategy that has been adopted is based on optimising coordination and co-operation among the various national statistical producing agencies, users and other stakeholders at the national level in the process of strengthening capacity in the production of core Social and Environmental Statistics. Undoubtedly, the coordination of regional and international agencies in requesting data from Member States is required.

In pursuant of the need to establish the Social Statistics framework and to strengthen capacity on a sustained basis some priority areas for funding are summarised as follows:

CARICOM Programme in Social and Environmental Statistics

Continued support for the activities under the CARICOM Programme on Social/Gender and Environment Statistics to facilitate coordination at the national level among agencies. This activity will among other objectives strengthen the capacity of producers of social statistics and the accessibility of data from administrative sources. Training of agencies such as appropriate staff of the Ministries of Education, Health, Labour and the Police Departments that collect social statistics as an administrative function and staff of the national statistical offices will fill the gaps and deficiencies currently present in the social statistics framework. This will include the application of technical

assistance and regional/national training workshops. There is need for a workshop to advance the agenda of harmonising of social statistics which would include the need to establish regional classification systems.

This project has benefited from the UNSD, the UNDP and the World Bank (TFSCB) and we would like to express our appreciation to these agencies for their support.

Building Census Capacity

- (i) Capacity-building in the conduct, analysis and use of Census data to build capacity in these areas in national statistical offices and agencies in Member States on a continuous basis. It is expected that these activities will contribute immensely to the availability and accessibility of a wide range of demographic and social statistics and indicators which can facilitate the availability of data for analysis, population and demographic research, studies on child labour and the aging population and in the integration of data in policy formation;
- (ii) The preparation of training videos and similar electronic training modules can perhaps help sustain the capacity in enabling continuous training of personnel in offices that are faced with high staff-turnover. Focus in this training module will include: the preparation of the frame to conduct the Census, the mapping of the areas to be enumerated; the preparation of the Census questionnaire, the computer processing aspects of the Census data capture, data-editing, coding through to the facilitation of clean data sets; Census administration and training of trainers in Census Concepts and Methods for dissemination down the scale of data collection.

Inter-Censal Household Surveys

Related to a continuous Census Programme is also that of a continuous programme of building capabilities in the conduct of Household Surveys. A multi-purpose survey

design geared to build survey/sampling capabilities can utilise information from the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. The major outputs will be sampling/survey capability such as practical and theoretical training in designing samples, questionnaire design, quality control, methods of estimation; treatment of non-response; implementation of data dissemination techniques including seminars on the use of survey data; statistical information about the population and households in several areas including poverty, labour force, household expenditure surveys, studies on the informal sector **child labour**, the **aging population** and the social dimension of Information and Communication Technology, etc. Child labour and the aging population are two critical areas that require increased monitoring. Household surveys will provide and support the information available from the Censuses and administrative data sources.

Regional Technical Working Groups

Support for the operations of *regional technical working groups* in the areas such as Poverty, Labour, Health, Education, Classifications/Coding Systems and Crime/Violence to develop core statistics and to achieve harmonisation of these statistics across Member States. Operation of technical working groups will facilitate harmonisation of statistics across the Region, facilitate greater interaction among statisticians leading to improvement in the quality and range of Social/Gender Statistics, and the promotion of greater use, analysis and research activities. It will engender the interaction of statisticians/users across Member States.

Technical Assistance in Environmental Statistics

Funding support for the development of Environment Statistics in priority areas such as sustainable tourism development, natural disasters, environmental health, energy, land use, etc. Strengthening of statistical systems in Member States to collect and compile Environment Statistics through support of the CARICOM Programme in this area is about to be implemented similar to the Social/Gender Component. Funding will be

required for assistance with the overall programme development, in-country technical assistance to organise inter-agency cooperation among the various stakeholders operating in the area of the environment, conceptual, measurement and other technical issues in the collection of environment data, recruitment of consultants with knowledge in this area to build capacity in Member States. Financial/technical assistance in the convening of one regional workshop is also recommended during the implementation phase of this component.

Other Areas in Social Statistics

Support for other critical areas in Social/Gender Statistics such as the establishment of a Health Information System. Evaluation of the Health Information Systems in Member States with specific focus on the Civil Registration/Vital Statistics System and the implementation of more efficient systems arising out of the evaluations to provide a timely and high quality information in the area of vital and health statistics. Emphasis should be on the strengthening of data provisioning from administrative sources. The area of mortality statistics should be given particular attention as a very weak area noted in the UNSD/CARICOM Project of 2000-2002. It is recommended that collaboration on this activity should be with PAHO as well as the Caribbean Epidemiology Centre (CAREC) as key organisations concerned with health information systems development and use. In this context, dialogue has started with these organisations involving also our Human and Social Development directorate. This activity should also be linked to the operation of the technical working group in the area of Health, recommended earlier in this document. In- country/technical assistance with accompanying exchange visits among Member States and to international agencies, as deemed necessary should be included in this activity.

Statistics on International Migration and the Free Movement of Persons

With the establishment of the CSME, one of the provisions relate to the Free Movement of Persons. Monitoring and assessing the impact of the policy on the Free Movement of Persons require a common statistical approach to be applied across all Member States to enable the collection, compilation and dissemination of data. This approach should provide data that are comparable, accessible and relevant in guiding policy nationally and regionally. The Immigration Departments are critical agencies in this process and data on International Migration will also be a vital source of information since persons may move temporarily or for indefinite periods to provide services.

Implementation of Methodologies to Integrate Social, Economic and Environmental Statistics

Relative to the integration of economic, social and environment statistics and the collection, dissemination and use of statistics there is need to build capabilities throughout the Region in the following:

- (i) Analysis of statistical data to incorporate techniques in demography, satellite accounting techniques and **Social Accounting Matrices (SAMs)** in areas such as labour, health and the environment, social accounting matrices such as in poverty and the environment;
- (ii) Strengthening capabilities in **Information Communication Technology (ICT)** as it applies to development of databases and the dissemination of data electronically, the development of web-based dissemination techniques; computerisation of data processing processes has also been identified as an area requiring funding including the Police Department and Education Ministries;
- (iii) User-producer seminars to encourage the use of statistical information and build capabilities in statistical data interpretation;

- (iv) A comprehensive approach to building capacity to collect data from **administrative sources** that is more intensive than what is included in the CARICOM Programme;
- (v) Training in the area of **management of statistical offices** is also being recommended as critical to the effective use of scarce resources and focussing and visioning these organisations to fulfill the demand for accurate, timely and relevant information for policy formation and decision-making.

ACTION REQUIRED

The **Meeting** is invited to –

- : **consider** the areas identified as priorities relative to the improvement of the quality of social and environmental statistics in the Region.
