

CARIBBEAN

COMMUNITY

SECRETARIAT

**THIRTY FIRST MEETING
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS**

RESTRICTED

SCCS/2006/31/18

**Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
6-8 November 2006**

8 November 2006

**ST.KITTS AND NEVIS
STATISTICS DEPARTMENT**

PROGRESS REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD

NOVEMBER 2005 – OCTOBER 2006

PROGRESS REPORT OF STATISTICS DEPARTMENT
St. Kitts & Nevis
November 2005-October 2006

INTRODUCTION

This report reviews the work program of the Statistical Department during the period November 2005 to October 2006. The Department remains constrained by its size, physical space and financial resources. The Department falls under the Ministry of Finance Sustainable Development, Information and Technology.

STAFFING AND STRUCTURE

There are fifteen (15) positions within the Statistical Department. At present there are 12 persons employed in the Department. Of these, 10 are appointed to established positions while two have not been appointed to any position. The organization allows for one Director of Statistics, eight Statistical Clerks, two Statistical Officers, four Statisticians. The Statistician, who was chiefly responsible for the social and gender Statistics as well as Publications left at short notice in June of 2005. We were unable to recruit another graduate Statistician, however in March of this year we were able to recruit a new staff member who has been assigned to assist with the backlog of publications, social statistics, data processing and IT in general. We still have several vacancies for Statisticians but it has been proving quite a difficult task to recruit statisticians.

During this year we also lost the officer responsible for prices and general statistics. In September we finally obtained a statistical clerk to replace the one who had left. However the time lag in recruiting persons means that there is quite a bit of backlog in work that should have been completed already. We still have a number of Statistician posts vacant but to date we still have not been able to obtain and retain a statistician despite the request that the person must not necessarily have studied statistics. As it stands, we still have one Statistician assigned to both Balance of Payments and National Accounts. This is not a desirable situation but our efforts in recruiting new persons have not borne fruits and we are quite aware of the havoc that would arise if for some reason the officer has to leave or find alternate employment.

Meetings/Training/Workshops and Seminars

During the period under review, several officers were able to attend several meetings and workshops. In June of this year one officer benefited from the CARICOM organized Workshop on Demographic Analysis in Trinidad, July 3rd to August 11th. From all reports it was a rewarding experience and it was felt that

all workers should be exposed to such training despite the intensity of the training. The training obtained was beneficial to the officer and the unit in general. However, it was recommended that the time of the workshop be increased.

There is still an urgent need for training opportunities for staff at all levels. One of the new recruits was given the opportunity through CARTAC to do an attachment with the St. Lucia office. This proved quite beneficial and once again I will like to express my sincere thanks to CARTAC and Mr. Edwin St. Catherine for valuable inputs. One staff member also benefited from the training funded by UNICEF on Dev Info. Dev Info appears to be a very useful tool and we hope to build on the experience gained from the training.

There is still an urgent need for training in National Accounts and Trade in Services Statistics, during the last two weeks a Consultant assigned to work with the department in relation to trade in Services worked along with the Statistician responsible for National accounts and Statistics. This again is not a desirable situation since trade in services would be yet another dimension added to the officers workload, notwithstanding there is a direct relationship in all three areas. The visit however proved quite beneficial and it was the start of building the capacity to compile TIS statistics.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Plans are being made to undertake a new Household Income and expenditure survey along with a Survey of Living Conditions Survey starting in November 2006. The joint survey is a component under the Poverty Assessment Project. Meanwhile we continue to collect monthly prices and calculate the index based on the 2001 base year.

NATIONAL ACCOUNTS and Balance of Payments

These continue to be compiled on schedule with some assistance from the Central Bank. Basic tables are compiled on GDP activity in current and constant prices, expenditure on the GDP in current prices and National Accounts Aggregates. Quarterly estimates are also now being prepared. Last year it was indicated that with some financial support from CARTAC, we were able to obtain the services of Ms. Marshal to assist in the preparation of the SUT which forms a component of the SNA93. The process has been slow and we have still not been able to get the Supply and Use tables. However, we have been assured that by the end of this year we should have them. We continue to use the redesigned national accounts questionnaire, which requires a more detailed breakdown of

line items. A comprehensive Business Register was prepared in 2002; there has been some revision since that time.

TOURISM

In April of 2004 Statistics Department began processing the tourism data. To date, 2004 has been completely keyed into the Mist System and 2005 and 2006 data are currently being keyed. The flow of information continues to be chaotic and untimely. We have looked into the idea of linking with the National Security immigration system but the process is proving to be quite lengthy.

EXTERNAL TRADE

At present, external trade statistics are available up to August 2006. The 2005 trade data as well as the first two quarters have been sent to CARICOM. We were able to satisfy all queries for trade data during the review period. As the volume of merchandise trade continues to increase, a problem of capacity of the existing machines to store the data has become a serious issue. The process has been slowed over the past year because of the constant malfunctioning of the existing computers. Though a request has been made for several replacements this has not materialized. Meanwhile the unit continues to keypunch the trade data using Eurotrace. We have not had any feed back from the TRIPS program that was introduced at CUSTOMS, thus we are still not certain that it can interface successfully with EUROTRACE if and when all areas of customs become fully computerized.

Some progress has been made regarding the use of the Windows version of Eurotrace, however, the program has some limitations, related to the data entry module, thus it is not fully operational within the department. It appears that the program would be better utilized in the importing or exporting of data.

DEMOGRAPHY & OTHER SOCIAL AND GENDER STATISTICS

The Unit continued to collect and compile demographic information. (This is published in a Demography Digest every two years. This digest carries information on mortality, population growth, fertility rates, deaths, births etc. Data on marriages and divorce are also contained within this publication.)

Collecting demographic data remains problematic, mainly because of the systems that are in place to store and record data. There is an urgent need for proper systems of recording, storing and retrieval of information in the departments responsible for collecting data on births, deaths, marriages and divorces.

The Department will be building on the training received on DEV INFO to strengthen the statistical offices capability to collect, compile, analyze, and disseminate reliable timely and relevant social and gender statistics on a sustained basis. The exercise will require a large amount of data, some of which may be unavailable, and therefore points more than ever for the need for better and more expansive data collection systems to be put in place and an investment of resources if we are to effectively monitor development indicators

With regards to environmental statistics, data is collected on an ongoing basis and disseminated in some of our publications. There is no dedicated publication for environmental statistics. A draft national Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared and is currently under review. Once this is approved an environmental compendium would be prepared as part of the output of the plan.

POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS

All the tables have been prepared for St. Kitts and the data is provided upon request. A number of tables have also been prepared for Nevis, the process is still ongoing. Data for the Federation is now available on request and it is hoped that a publication with the entire Federal data will be available shortly.

PUBLICATIONS

- The Statistical Review 2005.
- The Demography Digest
- Statistics in Brief

It must be pointed out, that despite the fact that a lot of the data have not been published in a hard format, most of the data we collect are quite current. This is often distributed via diskettes or via the Internet to persons requesting the information.

In general the department continues to do the best it can, focusing on improving those areas that are a part of our core programme as well as exploring and venturing into non traditional areas that are necessary, such as IT Statistics, if we are to keep abreast with the changes in our environment.

*Statistics Department
November 2006*