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DISCUSSION
PAPER

STATISTICS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
IN THE OECS

STATISTICS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE OECS

Discussion Paper

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. BACKGROUND.....	4
2. INTRODUCTION	5
3. THE STATUS QUO.....	5
3.A. OPERATIONS OF OECS STATISTICAL OFFICES	6
3.B. LEGAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING OECS STATISTICAL OFFICES	9
3.C. STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF OECS STATISTICAL OFFICES.....	9
3.D. EQUIPMENT STOCK IN OECS STATISTICAL OFFICES	13
3.E. SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE OECS STATISTICAL OFFICES	14
A. Economic Surveys.....	14
B. Social Surveys.....	18
C. Databases and Administrative Information	22
4. THE ANALYSIS.....	23
5. CONCLUSION.....	25

1. BACKGROUND

“Statistics can be defined as the science of collecting, organizing, and interpreting numerical facts which we call data. Data bombards us in everyday life. Most of us associate statistics with the bits of data that appear in news reports. Yet the usefulness of statistics goes far beyond those everyday bits of data which appear in news reports. We can no more escape data than we can avoid the use of words. Just as words on a page are meaningless to the illiterate or confusing to the partially educated, so data do not interpret themselves but must be read with understanding. The study of statistics is therefore essential to a sound education. We must learn how to read data, critically and with comprehension; we must learn how to produce data that provide clear answers to important question; and we must learn sound methods for drawing trustworthy conclusions based on data as well as acquire ability to effectively communicate valid conclusions. Statistics teaches you how to gather, organize, and analyze data, and then to infer the underlying reality from these data. It is a powerful intellectual method that is applied in many contexts and most disciplines.” [Brigham Young University: Importance of Statistical Training.]

The OECS region has been “pigeonholed” by International Organisations, Development Donor Partners, Investors and the like as a region deficient in the production, compilation and application of relevant, timely and reliable statistics. Consequently, the region is more often than not disadvantaged and unprepared to avail themselves of and partake successfully in negotiations and to seize potential opportunities. Additionally, the region’s capacity to strategize and monitor successful development initiatives is hamstrung by the lacking acknowledgment of the importance of statistics to development planning. The root cause of this inadequacy and failure is indisputably linked to the sub-region’s inability to move to a level where the production, compilation and utilization of relevant, timely and reliable statistics would guide and inform decision-making, policies and development planning. Compounding this is the prevailing culture which is not conducive to the dissemination of data.

A procedural and mindset change, vis-à-vis the warranted importance of statistics in guiding and informing policies and decisions, are necessary to bring about any deviation from the prevailing irregular significance presently characterising the operations and functions of central statistical offices. For statistics to play its important role as a public good, statistical systems must make a significant contribution to national development by implementing a strategy that will serve to bring together the most important indicators and data sets within a coherent framework.

This paper has been prepared with three main objectives in mind. The first objective is to identify the causes that have resulted in a serious lack of statistical data in the OECS; the second objective seeks to put to bed the sometimes vexatious argument of the relevance of economic statistics over social statistics; and the third objective is to identify a series of inter-related recommendations for producing statistical information that is accurate, timely and which can be used for evidenced based planning and decision-making. It attempts to evaluate and summarise, into a single document, the various studies and analyses that have been undertaken of the structure and functioning of central statistical offices in the OECS. Secondly, the paper itemises the various surveys conducted by central statistical offices, very often in collaboration with other government agencies and departments.

2. INTRODUCTION

Statistical information can no longer be about number crunching; it is about producing a “public good” (UNECLAC, LC/CAR/L.69 19 December 2005). Based on this premise, this discussion paper is divided into three parts: The first part summarises a number of surveys on the status of central statistical offices in the OECS, including reports that had been produced by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) and UNECLAC in 2005; the second part undertakes an evaluation of the results of the surveys and other reports and makes a case for a new vision for the planning, collection and reporting of statistical information in the OECS region. The third part provides recommendations for an *avant garde* change necessary for statistics to make a significant contribution to the overall national development effort.

3. THE STATUS QUO¹

In December 2005, UNECLAC conducted a survey of statistical offices in the all the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) member countries as well as Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the Turks & Caicos Islands. The purpose of this survey was to provide a snapshot of the framework, legal and institutional, existing in these countries. The survey was also designed to provide information on staff qualifications and training, available equipment, an inventory of data series collected and published and an insight into the level of technology in use in statistical agencies. For purposes of this discussion paper, only some tables will be reproduced and that too, only for the OECS States.

In addition to the UNECLAC Survey, the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) also embarked on a Statistical Capacity Building Indicators (SCBI) Survey² in the Member States³ in 2005. The purpose of this survey was (a) to develop a set of qualitative and quantitative indicators to assist in

1 The primary data for this section was derived, in the main, from THE STATISTICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES, UNECLAC, LC/CAR/L.69, 19 December 2005 and Findings of the ECCB Statistical Capacity Building Indicators (SCBI) Survey which was also undertaken in 2005.

2 The survey was undertaken within the framework of the *partnership in Statistics for development in the 21st Century* (PARIS21). This Partnership was launched to act as a catalyst for promoting a culture of evidence-based policy making and monitoring in all countries, especially in developing countries. Additional information may be obtained from www.paris21.org/

3 Member states of the Eastern Caribbean Currency Union (ECCU). The British Virgin Islands is not a member of the ECCU.

the identification of capacity gaps and; (b) to monitor the progress of Member States’ initiatives in building their statistical capacities.

3.a. Operations of OECS Statistical Offices

The findings of the ECCB survey revealed vast disparities in the budgetary expenditure on statistical functions (ranging from EC \$21,000 to EC \$1.8 million), size of the office (ranging from 5 to 35 staff members), number of PCs/Laptop in use (ranging from 8 to 30) and number of staff with individual work email address (ranging from 0 to 35). The overall ratings of Statistical Offices based on the qualitative Statistical Capacity Indicators (SCBI) were all the more telling. The ECCB report on the results of the SCBI survey revealed the following:

“Based on the responses from the countries and applying the PARIS21 four-scale assessment level rating, Dominica received 3.68 average on the four-scale assessment level, indicating that its statistical system is moderately to highly developed. Montserrat and St Vincent and the Grenadines averaged 3.56 and 3.51 respectively, indicating moderately developed systems. St. Lucia (3.29), Anguilla (3.21) and Antigua and Barbuda (3.13) have slightly moderately developed systems. Grenada and St. Kitts received 2.73 and 2.60 respectively, indicating developing to moderately developed systems.”⁴

Listed below are the results of the SCBI in tabular format:

Table 1:
Overall Rating of Statistical Offices based on the qualitative Statistical Capacity Indicators

Country	Statistical Capacity Indicator
Dominica	3.68
Montserrat	3.56
St Vincent & The Grenadines	3.51
St Lucia	3.29
Anguilla	3.21
Antigua & Barbuda	3.13
Grenada	2.73
St Kitts & Nevis	2.60

Source: ECCB, 2005.

Of the central statistical offices surveyed in the UNECLAC study, Anguilla, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, the Netherlands Antilles, Saint Lucia, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, operate as Central Statistical Organizations (CSOs) with the sole responsibility and authority for the collection and dissemination of data. The Antigua and Barbuda and St. Kitts and Nevis agencies do not operate as CSOs. In addition, the offices in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Kitts/Nevis, and Saint Lucia are operated as departments within a ministry. In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the central statistical office functions as a unit within a government

⁴ ECCB. Summary of the Statistical Capacity Building Survey Conducted in the ECCB Member States

department. In most cases the head of the statistics agency reported to an official at the level of Permanent Secretary.⁵ No information was available for the British Virgin Islands.

Table 2:
Organisational Structure of OECS Statistical Offices

Country	Parent Organisation	Reporting Lines
Anguilla	Ministry of Economic Development, Investment, Commerce & Tourism	Permanent Secretary
Antigua and Barbuda ⁶	Ministry of Finance & the Economy	Financial Secretary
BVI	Development Planning Unit, Chief Minister's Office	Permanent Secretary
Dominica	Ministry of Finance & Planning	Financial Secretary
Grenada	Ministry of Finance	Permanent Secretary
Montserrat	Development Unit, Ministry of Finance & Economic Development	Permanent Secretary
St. Kitts and Nevis	Ministry of Sustainable Development	Permanent Secretary
Saint Lucia	Finance, International Financial Services & Economic Affairs	Permanent Secretary
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Ministry of Finance & Planning	Director of Planning

Source: Modified from UNECLAC 2005

Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines reported that other agencies were engaged in the collection and dissemination of data. Given the OECS Secretariat's own experience, it is safe to say that this is also true in all the other Member States. The agencies involved mostly included the ministries of agriculture, education, health, and labour, of these, only the Antigua and Barbuda office reported that they had any input into the functioning of the other agencies on the island involved in the compilation of statistics. The statistics office reportedly provided "guidelines re: best practices and the implementation of universal/conventional statistical standards, schemes, formats for data collection, compilation, analyses, and dissemination". This is surprising, particularly if the statistics offices in these countries relied on those other agencies for input into data series which they compiled.

In terms of the preparation of and the expenditure of approved budgets Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Saint Lucia are responsible for the preparation of their annual budgets. All of the offices, with the exception of the one in Antigua and Barbuda are free to spend the approved

⁵ The United Nations makes the recommendation in their handbook, "The Organization of a Statistical Agency" (Series: F, No.88) that having direct access at the ministerial, or higher, level provides the head of the statistical agencies with greater leverage with regards to the acquisition of resources and the implementation of programmes and provides a certain level of autonomy.

⁶ There was a recommendation, made by the Governor of the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) to the Prime Minister, that the title of the Officer-in-Charge of the Antigua Office be changed to Director of Statistics and that the incumbent should report directly to the Minister with responsibility for Statistics. This, it is felt, would give the Statistics Office more visibility.

budget without further approval.

Table 3:
Budgetary Expenditure on Statistical Functions in EC\$ 000s

Country	Current Expenditure	Capital Expenditure	Personal Emoluments	Donor Expenditure
Anguilla	21.00		252.00	
Antigua and Barbuda				
Dominica				
Grenada	223.98	1,250.00	560.24	
Montserrat				
St Kitts and Nevis	33.00	40.00	44.40	
St Lucia	1,800.00		1,100.00	1,800.00
St. Vincent and the Grenadines				

Source: ECCB Statistical Capacity Building Indicators Survey (SCBI), 2005.

The UNECLAC survey asked the respondents to identify problems they encountered during data collection. The responses received are worth repeating here:

- Better assurances to suppliers of information on the **Confidentiality** of data;
- More public awareness programmes on the need and usage of reliable data;
- Speedy release of data after collection;
- More public access to analysed data;

- More interaction between data collectors and data suppliers;
- More staff for data collection, compilation, and analyses;
- More user friendly products;
- Use of electronic media/technology for data collection and dissemination;
- Better interpretation of numerical data for public consumption⁷;
- Better enforcement of existing penalties; and
- More focus on policy applications of data and statistics.

⁷ Given the reluctance of statistical agencies to prosecute offenders of the statistical laws, the call for better enforcement of existing penalties is an interesting one.

3.b. Legal Framework Guiding OECS Statistical Offices

Table 4:
Statistical Acts in Effect in OECS States⁸

Country	Availability of Act/Law	Name of Act/Law	Year Enacted	Year of Revision
Anguilla	YES	Statistics Act	1969	2000
Antigua and Barbuda	YES	General Statistics Act	1975	
BVI	YES	The Virgin Islands Statistical Act	2005	
Dominica	YES	Census and Statistics Act	1959	1986
Grenada	YES	Statistics Ordinance	1960	1991
Montserrat	YES	Statistics Ordinance	1973	
St. Kitts and Nevis	YES	Statistical Act	1971	
Saint Lucia	YES	Statistics Act	1973	
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	YES	Census and Statistics Act	1983	

Statistics offices in OECS Member States are all governed by statistics acts which give them wide-ranging powers of collection, compilation and dissemination of data. These offices can therefore decide what data sets to collect and the importance they place on their collection. They do not, however, have any provisions which currently allow them ready access to resources that would permit them to carry out this mandate. As a result, most offices suffer from severe staff shortages. The functions of all the Central Statistical Offices in the OECS are governed by old laws⁹ which are very similar in content and in text. It is therefore not surprising that their functions are also very similar.

The current laws are, however, inadequate:

- The fine for the refusal to provide information is too low¹⁰;
- The legislation provides insufficient mandate to the statistical offices to cover a wider and more detailed range of data sets;
- It does not ensure that the information collected is used for statistical purposes only; and
- The legislation is silent on some of the more pertinent administrative arrangements necessary for data collection, compilation and dissemination across sectors and between agencies¹¹.

3.c. Structure and Functions of OECS Statistical Offices

⁸ Source: Modified from UNECLAC 2005

⁹ Only 2 States have laws that were revised in the last decade.

¹⁰ EC\$200.00 is still quoted as a fine for the refusal to provide information. Such a fine poses little or no deterrent value to would-be offenders.

¹¹ The laws simply refer to, "collaborating" with other government departments

STATISTICS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE OECS

The functions of statistical agencies are set by the various laws either by direct mention of the agency or by the duties assigned to the head of the agency. In general, the laws list four main functions. They are as follows:

- a) To take any census;
- b) To collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the social, agricultural, mining, commercial, industrial and general activities and conditions of the inhabitants;
- c) To collaborate with departments of the government in the collection, compilation, analysis and publication of statistical records of administration; and
- d) Generally, to organize a coordinated scheme of social and economic statistics.

Table 5:
Resources for Statistical Offices

Country	Number of Staff	Vacancies	Number of Staff-attended Training	Number of training courses conducted by Stats Office	Number of PCs/Laptop in Use	Number of PCs with Internet Access	Number of staff with individual work email address	Local area-network available (Y=YES, N=NO)
Anguilla	5	1	6	Over 5	8	8	ALL	N (WAN)
Antigua and Barbuda	35	5	2		20	5	35	Y
Dominica	12	0	1		13	9	14	Y
Grenada	22	1	0	0	15	14	0	Y
Montserrat	6	0	1	0	7	7	6	Y
St Kitts and Nevis	11	4	0	0	13	13	0	Y
St Lucia	35	0	7	2	30	27	15	Y
St Vincent and the Grenadines	15	2			10	3		Y

Table 6:
Functions of Central Statistical Agencies ¹²

Country	Functions
Anguilla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To collect, compile, analyse abstract and publish statistical information on commercial, industrial, social, economic and general activities and conditions of the people of Anguilla. To collaborate with all other Government departments and with local authorities in the collection, computation and publication of statistical records of administration. Organise a coordinated scheme of social and economic statistics and intelligence pertaining to Anguilla.
Antigua and Barbuda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistics portraying various aspects of the social, demographic and economic conditions of the people of Antigua and Barbuda. To compile and publish national income accounts and estimates for Antigua and Barbuda. To carry out such censuses and surveys in relation to the subjects listed in the Schedule and as may be necessary from time to time for the purposes of the above.
British Virgin Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide quality, accurate and timely information to policy makers to guide the planning process. Collaborate with other government agencies and the private sector alike to gather data thereby allowing us to maintain quality, accuracy and timeliness in the delivery of services. Develop and maintain a comprehensive and accurate economics and statistics database from which requests can readily be addressed.
Dominica	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistics portraying various aspects of the social, demographic and economic conditions of the people of the State. to compile and publish national income accounts and estimates of the State. to carry out such censuses and surveys in relation to subjects listed in the Schedule hereto as may be desirable from time to time for the purposes of a and b.
Grenada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CSO is charge with the responsibility for compiling statistics over a broad range of subjects - population censuses, economic and social statistics.
Montserrat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take any census in the Colony. To collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the social, agricultural, mining, commercial, industrial and general activities and conditions of the inhabitants of the Colony. To collaborate with departments of Government in the collection, compilation, analysis and publication of statistical records of administrations and departments. To organize a coordinated scheme of social and economic statistics relating to the Colony.
St. Kitts and Nevis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relative to the commercial, industrial, social, economic and general activities and conditions who are inhabitants of this State. To collaborate with all other departments of Government and with local authorities in the collection, computation and publication of statistical records of administration.

¹² Includes the duties of the head of the agency

STATISTICS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE OECS

Saint Lucia

- To take any census in the State.
- To organize a coordinated scheme of social and economic statistics and intelligence pertaining to the State.
- To take any census in this Island.
- To collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relating to the social, agricultural, mining, commercial, industrial and general activities and conditions of the inhabitants.
- To collaborate with departments of Government and with local authorities in the collection, compilation, analysis and publication of statistical records of administrations and departments.
- To organize a coordinated scheme of social and economic statistics relating to this Island.

St. Vincent and the Grenadines

- To collect, compile, analyse, abstract and publish statistical information relative to the agricultural, commercial, industrial, financial, social and general activities and conditions of the inhabitants of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- To collaborate with the departments of the Government in the collection, compilation and publication of statistical records of administration.
- To take any census of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines as provided in the Act.
- Generally to organise a scheme of coordinated social and economic statistics pertaining to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Source: Modified from UNECLAC (2005)

Table 7:
Staffing Patterns in Statistical Offices in OECS States

	Anguilla	Antigua and Barbuda	British Virgin Islands	Dominica	Grenada	Montserrat	St. Kitts and Nevis	Saint Lucia	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Total
DEGREE	3	5	6	4	5	3	4	8	7	45
With subject matter training	3	3	2	4	5	3	4	8	4	36
Male		1	1		2		2	5	1	12
Female	3	2	1	4	3	3	2	3	3	24
Without subject matter training		2	4						3	9
Male		1	1						1	3
Female		1	3						2	6
NON DEGREE	3	37		9	30	3	10	34	9	135
With subject matter training	3	37		7	4	2	3	13	4	73
Male		8		4	2		1	3	3	21
Female	3	29		3	2	2	2	10	1	52
Without subject matter training				2	26	1	7	21	5	62
Male				1	10		2	5	2	20
Female				1	16	1	5	26	3	52

STATISTICS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE OECS

	Anguilla	Antigua and Barbuda	British Virgin Islands	Dominica	Grenada	Montserrat	St. Kitts and Nevis	Saint Lucia	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Total
TOTAL STAFF	6	42	6	13	35	6	24	42	16	190
With subject matter training	6	40	2	9	11	5	30	21	8	132
Male		9	1	3	4		14	8	4	43
Female	6	31	1	6	7	5	16	13	4	89
Without subject matter training		2	4	2	26	1	7	21	8	71
Male		1	1		10		2	5	3	22
Female		1	3	2	16	1	5	16	5	49
% with Degree	50	12	100	31	14	50	29	19	44	
% with Subject matter Training	100	95	66	85	26	83	50	50	50	
% Female	100	76	66	69	60	100	64	69	56	
Optimum staff levels¹³	10	55	8	15	50	12	24	44	21	

Source: Modified from UNECLAC (2005)

3.d. Equipment Stock in OECS Statistical Offices

When the stock of equipment available to Statistical agencies is examined Anguilla, Grenada, Montserrat were satisfied with their equipment stock. In Anguilla, Montserrat, and St. Kitts/Nevis, the ratio of computers to staff was 1.00 or higher; Dominica had a ratios of 0.92. Interestingly, calculators still feature prominently in the equipment stock of Statistical Agencies despite the advances made in obtaining computers for their staff. Internet availability to staff is on the increase and networking technology has allowed agencies to provide printing capabilities to staff without a proliferation of stand alone printers.

¹³ As defined by UNECLAC

Table 8:
Resource Constraint for Statistical Functions

	Population	Staff/1000 population	1 PC to Number of Staff	1 Internet Access to Number of Staff
Anguilla	12,200	0.41	0.75	0.75
Antigua and Barbuda	80,139	0.44	2.00	8.00
Dominica	69,810	0.17	0.92	1.33
Grenada	104,490	0.21	1.53	1.64
Montserrat	4,681	1.28	0.86	0.86
St Kitts and Nevis	47,928	0.23	1.15	1.15
St Lucia	162,434	0.22	1.17	1.30
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	100,596	0.15	1.70	5.67

Source: ECCB Statistical Capacity Building Indicators Survey (SCBI), 2005.

3.e. Surveys Conducted by the OECS Statistical offices

A. Economic Surveys

Consumer Price surveys and Labour Force surveys are conducted in all the countries. Statistical Agencies have also conducted a Census of Population and Housing within the last five years. Some of the surveys are either household based or involved the survey of persons in an individual capacity. A number of establishment based surveys are also conducted. All OECS States conduct regular National Income and Balance of Payments Surveys: Personnel from the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank assist in the compilation of the results in each of the Member States; they also assist in standardizing the information that is published on national income and balance of payments.

In the area of economic statistics, CARTAC¹⁴ has assisted OECS States in improving the compilation of national accounts through the integrative

STATISTICS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE OECS

Table 9:
Data and Information Sources of National Statistics Offices

National Statistics Offices							
Anguilla	Antigua & Barbuda	Dominica	Grenada	Montserrat	St Kitts & Nevis	St Lucia	St Vincent & The Grenadines
Surveys							
Constitutional & Electoral Reform	Census 2001	CPI (monthly)	CWIQ	CPI (monthly)	Labour Force (annual)	Labour Force (annual)	
Radio Anguilla Survey	CPI (monthly)	National Accounts (annual)	Labour Force Survey	National Account (annual)	CPI (monthly)	CWIQ (annual)	
Adolescent Health Survey	National Accounts (annual)	Labour Force (every 2 or 3 years)	Household Income & Expenditure	BOP (annual)	National Accounts (annual)	Establishment Surveys (annual)	
Seat Belt Survey	BOP (annual)	Occupational Wages Survey Force (every 2 years)	CPI (monthly)	Construction Index (annual)	BOP (annual)	National Accounts (annual)	
Minimum Wage Survey	Census	Survey of Living Conditions Force (every 3 years)	National Accounts (annual)	Census	Census	BOP (annual)	
Reproductive Health Survey		Census	BOP (annual)			CPI (monthly)	
Health Client Satisfaction Survey			Census			Census	
Anglec Customer Satisfaction Survey							
Tertiary Education Needs Survey							
CPI (quarterly)							
National Accounts (annual)							
BOP (annual)							
Census							
Administrative Data Sources Used							
Government Records		Education Planning (annual)		Registry, Physical Planning	Registrar Records (annual)	National Insurance Cooperation	Registry
Statutory Bodies Records		Health Statistics Unit (annual)		Treasury, Inland Revenue	Line Ministries records	Inland Revenue Dept.	Inland Revenue
Stores		Inland Revenue Dept. (annual)		Communication and Works	Statutory Bodies records	Health Statistics Unit	
		Customs Dept. (monthly)		Post Office, Social Security		Registry, Births, Deaths, Marriages	

Source: ECCB Statistical Capacity Building Indicators Survey (SCBI), 2005.

mechanism of supply and use tables, improving data collection procedures, methodologies and

coverage of the balance of payments, updating the consumer price index and developing a methodology for computing import and export price indices. In addition, CARTAC undertook diagnostic missions, advised on the preparation of GDDS¹⁵ metadata and assisted in the preparation of short- and medium-term action plans. CARTAC also provides advice in the area of compilation of government finance statistics according to the guidelines of the Revised *Government Finance Statistics (GFS) Manual*. Training has formed an integral part of the statistics activities. On-the-job instruction given as part of the diagnostic and advisory technical assistance work of CARTAC has complemented the formal training provided through three regional workshops and seminars on national accounts and balance of payments statistics. These activities sensitised participants to harmonized approaches to the compilation of macroeconomic statistics based on international standards and codes of good practice. Collaboratively, the OECS Secretariat and CARTAC have also been providing technical assistance to OECS Member States to compile and produce Export-Import Price Indices. On the subject of Labour Market Surveys, the OECS Secretariat has taken the initiative to conduct a Labour Market Survey (Needs Assessment) in St. Kitts & Nevis to guide and inform the transition process following the closure of the Sugar Industry. It is envisaged by the OECS Secretariat that a comprehensive Labour Market Study will be implemented in the OECS Member States. Additionally, the OECS Secretariat is among the seven (7)¹⁶ regional agencies embarking on the establishment of a plan for a system of Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs) for the region.

Table 6:
Data Series Collected

Country	Data Series Collected	Frequency	When Started	Most Recent Issue
Anguilla	Monthly Abstract of Statistics	Q	1988	2005
Antigua and Barbuda				
British Virgin Islands				
Dominica	Consumer Price Indices	M, Q, H,A		2004
	Annual Report on External Trade	M, Q, A		2004
	Annual travel Report	M, Q,H,A		2004
	National Accounts	A		2003
	Population Census	10 years		2001
	Labour Force Report	A 2 years		2001
	Statistical Digest	5 years		2003
	Occupational Wage data	2 years		2004
	Household Income and Expenditure data	2 years		1998
Grenada	National Income data	A	1961	2004

15 General Data Dissemination System – standards approved by the IMF to guide member countries in the dissemination to the public of their economic and financial data

16 i.e. CARICOM, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), Caribbean Tourism Association (CTO,) Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Center (CARTAC), Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB), University of the West Indies (UWI/SALISES)

STATISTICS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN THE OECS

Country	Data Series Collected	Frequency	When Started	Most Recent Issue
Montserrat	Major Agricultural Crops: Production and Export	Q	1975	2004
	Fish Production and Exports	Q	1976	2004
	External Trade Statistics	A	1986	2004
	Selected Indicator Statistics	Q		
	Selected Retail Sales	Q	1964	2004
	Work Permits Granted	Q	1972	2004
	Selected Tourism indicators	Q	1973	2004
	Selected Telecom Indicators	Q	1969	2004
	Water Production	Q	1970	2004
	Electricity Production	Q	1970	2004
	Consumer Price Statistics	Q	1964	2004
	Price Control Indicators	Q		2004
	Banking Indicators	Q	1970	2004
	Index of Retail Prices	M		2005
	Vital Events	A		2005
	Census	O	1970	2001
	Volcanic Impact Study	O	1997	
	International Trade	M	1980	2005
	St. Kitts and Nevis	Tourism	M	1970
Household Budget Survey		O	1982	1999
National Accounts		A	1975	2004
Balance of Payments		A	1986	2004
Vital Statistics: Birth and Deaths		A		
Crime Statistics		A		
Education Statistics		A		
Health Statistics		A		
Production Statistics		Q		
External Trade Statistics		M		
Balance of Payments		A		
Saint Lucia	National Accounts	A		
	Consumer Price Statistics	M		
	Tourism Statistics	M		
	Labour Force Survey Data	Q	1992	2004
	Production Statistics	M		2005
	Balance of Payment	A		2004
	Consumer Price Index	M		2005
	Employment earning and hours of work	A		2004
	Trade statistics	Q		2004
	Trade data	M		2005
	Births, deaths, marriages, teenage pregnancies	M		2004
	National accounts	A		2004

Country	Data Series Collected	Frequency	When Started	Most Recent Issue
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Tourism	M		2004
	General statistical data	A		2002
	National Accounts	A	1977	2004
	Balance of Payments	A		
	Consumer Price Index	M		
	Vital Statistics	A		
	Census	10 years	1844	2001
	Agricultural Production	A		
	Trade Statistics	M		
	Production Statistics	Q		

Source: Modified from the UNECLAC Survey, 2005

B. Social Surveys

There are currently several ongoing donor programs to support statistical activities in the region. Perhaps one of the most important is the MECOVI/SPARC Project which aims to provide an umbrella structure for insuring coordination of donor support to social statistics (see Box 1). In addition, the UNDP-led Poverty Reduction Trust Fund aims to coordinate donor support for a range of poverty-reducing interventions, particularly the design and monitoring of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs).

MECOVI

The OECS MECOVI¹⁷ Project is designed to generate adequate and high quality information about the living conditions of people, in 6 States in the OECS, in terms of scope, coverage, reliability, timeliness and policy relevance. This kind of information is needed for the design, monitoring and evaluation of policies, programs and projects, aimed at reducing poverty and the promotion of greater social equity. The objective of the MECOVI Regional Training Program is to strengthen the institutional capacity of the personnel in CSOs by upgrading their technical skills and competence in planning, designing, and implementing household surveys. The users of the surveys are trained in up-stream survey activities including advanced training in data analysis and interpretation designed to strengthen their skills in wider poverty analysis.

The MECOVI Project is being implemented with a view that it will support the improvements of the Survey of Living Conditions (SLC). In line with bolstering the improvements of the SLC was a consultancy¹⁸ directed towards analysing the beneficiary member Countries' capabilities to implement an efficient SLC using new and existing mapping (Enumeration Districts¹⁹) and departmental resources.

17 MECOVI is a Spanish acronym for: "Programme for Improvement of Surveys and Measurements of Survey of Living Condition in Latin America and the Caribbean". The Program has two main components: (i) country-specific activities, and (ii) Region-wide activities.

18 In spite of the fact that the consultancy to develop and update survey mapping in the beneficiary Countries is a praiseworthy initiative, much more in the area of the use of Enumeration Districts in processing and analysis is required.

19 An Enumeration District refers to the area assigned to a single census-taker to count persons and prepare schedules with one census period. An Enumeration Districts Map shows that boundaries of an Enumeration District and helps to administer and control data collection.

To date through the MECOVI Project (see Box 1 below for project description), the OECS Secretariat has conducted two regional workshops on:

- Living Standard Measurement Surveys; and
- Data Analysis and Interpretation for Informing Social Policy and Poverty
- Reduction Strategies.

In addition, national workshops are being conducted on:

- Data Analysis and Interpretation;
- Sampling Methodology; and
- Social Policy Design, Development and Analysis

Box 1¹

MECOVI/SPARC Project

The MECOVI program was established in 1997 to assist the governments in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Region to strengthen local capacity in planning and implementing household surveys to support analysis of poverty and social policy in the region. Since its launch, the MECOVI program has enlisted commitments of about US\$18 million in grant funds from donors (IDB, World Bank, UN-ECLAC, UNDP, Canada, Germany, Japan, Norway, Sweden, etc). The project has performed successfully and is presently being implemented in 6 countries in the OECS. In addition a mini-MECOVI program (subsequently called the MECOVI/SPARC project) has been launched in the Caribbean region. This project links closely with such other initiatives as (i) CDB's support to member countries in surveys of living conditions and poverty assessments; (ii) DFID's social development initiative; (iii) IMF's GDDS and CARTAC initiatives; (iv) IDB-CDB data disseminations project; (v) UNDP-OECS Social Indicators project; (vi) OECS support to poverty reduction strategies; (vii) UWI Document Centre; (viii) ECLAC-CDCC social statistics data base and social vulnerability index project and (ix) UNSD-CARICOM capacity-building in compilation of statistics and indicators.

The MECOVI/SPARC program aims to strengthen local capacity in core competencies in the Central Statistical Offices and Planning Ministries, in particular, by:

- (i) improving survey capabilities in survey strategies, survey design, and implementation, and improving its relevance to policy work;
- (ii) strengthening analytical capabilities in survey methodologies, poverty analysis and sectoral policies; and
- (iii) Promoting wide utilization of the data, sponsor policy-oriented research, and disseminate research and policy work.

COUNTRY POVERTY ASSESSMENT

The CDB in collaboration with DFID, the EU and CIDA are presently assisting Member States with formulating a second generation of Country Poverty Assessments (CPA)²⁰. A CPA has three overall objectives. The first is to assess the current living conditions affecting the welfare of people of the State and to analyse the poverty situation; the processes that generate and maintain conditions

²⁰ The first generation of CPAs were undertaken in the mid 1990s.

conducive to poverty, existing responses to the poverty situation; and the means available for effective actions to reduce poverty. The second is to identify the policies, strategies and action programmes that would reduce the extent and severity of poverty in the States; enhance social development; and improve the overall quality of life in the country. The third is to develop recommendations and a programme of action which sets out strategic options for addressing critical issues emerging from the study, including recommendations to improve existing social development interventions, and the institutional and legal framework.

The CPA consists of four main components:

- A Macro-Economic and Social Analysis;
- A composite survey comprised of a Survey of Living Conditions (SLC) and a Household Budgetary Survey (HBS);
- A Participatory Poverty Assessment (PPA), and
- An Institutional Analysis (IA).

The CPA combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods, each with its own merit, but also complementing each other to provide a comprehensive picture of poverty in the State. The Macro-economic assessment is based on information collected mainly from published information, but also from interviews with key officials in Government. The SLC/HBS will generate quantitative information on households and individuals for the country. The PPA is conducted principally through focus group discussions, community meetings, participant observation, open-ended interviews, and walk-about in selected communities and on the basis of interviews with selected individuals. The IA is to be undertaken mainly through interviews with key personnel in the organisations identified. Secondary data are reviewed in generating information on the respective institutions.

Fundamental to the CPA process is the training of nationals of the country in the conduct of poverty assessment was a major objective of the exercise. National Assessment Team (NAT) is appointed for the purpose of overseeing the implementation of the exercise. The goal is to ensure that on the completion of the study, there is resident in the country the necessary skills to replicate the exercise or to conduct similar or related studies in future.

CORE WELFARE INDICATORS QUESTIONNAIRE (CWIQ)

In 2004, the UNDP in collaboration with the EC Delegation for Barbados and the OECS, undertook a rapid assessment of the capacity of Eastern Caribbean countries, (i) to monitor the effects of national development strategies, and most particularly Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS), on different population groups, especially the poor, and (ii) to assess the appropriateness of the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ)²¹ as one of the survey tools that countries could use to monitor the early outcomes of the PRS. The CWIQ as an instrument for provides regular monitoring of welfare and social trends for different population groups, especially the poor. The survey gives a

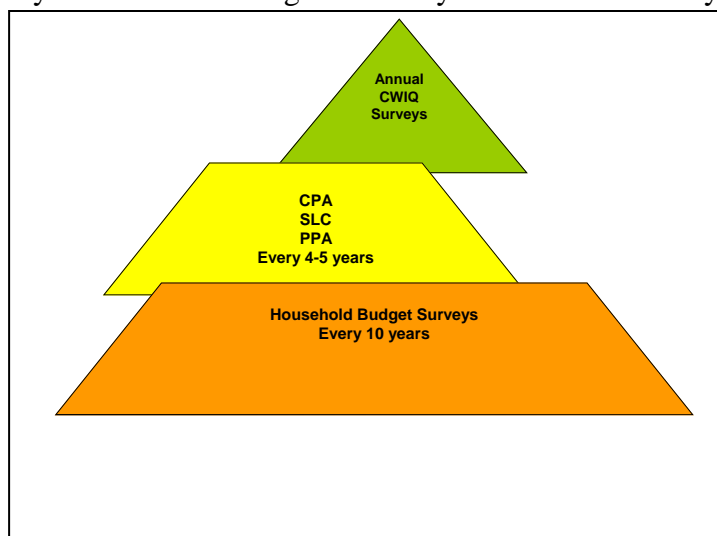
21 Further information is available on the CWIQ web site: <http://www4.worldbank.org/afr/stats/cwiq.cfm>. The survey showed that:

- Most countries were in the process of preparing a PRSP²¹ or Interim-PRSP (I-PRSP), but little thought had as been given to the question of how they were to be monitored.
- Statistical capacity, particularly the capacity to carry out household surveys, was weak.

quicker and less resource intensive method for monitoring poverty than the Survey of Living Conditions (SLC). The SLC contains extensive expenditure and income modules while the indicators available through the CWIQ survey are of two types:

1. Indicators of living standards for the households and household members - these indicators include land assets, home ownership, type of home construction, fuel for cooking, ownership of selected household goods, literacy level, employment, health and nutrition.
2. Indicators of access, utilization and satisfaction - these include access to clean water, primary and secondary school services, utilization of facilities by way of enrolment rates by gender, satisfaction with school and medical services.

A pilot was conducted successfully during 2004/2005 in Saint Lucia²². In 2005/2006 a CWIQ Survey was done in Grenada as a means, among others, to provide the country with some baseline data after Hurricane Ivan²³. Two key additional components of the Grenada report were a gender analysis of the findings, and a vulnerability assessment. The gender analysis and vulnerability assessment were supported by UNIFEM and UNECLAC respectively. Discussions are underway between Dominica and the UNDP Office for Barbados and the OECS for the conduct of a CWIQ in that country. It is envisaged that CWIQ will be administered every 12-18 months, since the whole exercise from data collection to analysis should ideally take about 2 months, given the levels of skills available to the Statistical Offices. The CWIQ is expected to provide data that will assist with the timing of targeted programmes and interventions to respond to the needs of the poor and vulnerable.



SUPPORT FOR POVERTY REDUCTION AND ASSESSMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN PROGRAMME (SPARC)

SPARC is intended as:

- An overarching framework for a strategic approach to the Poverty Assessment linked directly to Reduction and positive human development (HD) outcomes;
- An opportunity for an integrated, collaborative and joint effort by donors ;
- Enhance quantitative and qualitative assessments;
- A means to: improving regional and national capabilities in surveys and poverty analysis, i.e., establishment of baseline surveys, data processing, poverty monitoring, programme

²² based on a sample of 1,305 households.

²³ The last Country Poverty Assessment in Grenada was conducted there in 1998/99 with CDB support

evaluation, data dissemination , test new methodologies, support long-term training needs, localization of global targets;

- Mechanism to regularize and institutionalize poverty assessments at the national and regional level;
- Provides basic resources to pilot the approach and support the institutionalization; and
- Localization and Regionalization of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The specific programme objectives of SPARC are, to:

- Improve country-level capacity for continuous poverty and human development assessments, analysis, post-disaster socio-economic assessment, evidence-based policy-making and programmes;
- Enable effective processes and institutional arrangements for monitoring and evaluating poverty reduction and social development policies;
- Facilitate collation and dissemination of social and poverty data and improved access to multiple and compatible data sets; and
- Coordinate and harmonize donor support and resource mobilization linked to MDGs/PRSPs and other development strategies.

SPARC envisions a programme of continuous poverty assessments using local and regional capacity comprising:

1. Annual CWIQ surveys;
2. Country Poverty Assessments (CPAs) comprising Surveys of Living Condition (SLC) and Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) every 4-5 years;
3. Household budget surveys every ten years but in different years to the census;
4. Testing of other methodologies and tools;
5. Other assessments e.g. community analysis, post-disaster socio-economic assessments
6. Facilitating the harmonization of data sets so they can be compiled for both national and regional benefits;
7. Specific gender analyses on critical social issues;
8. Support to evidence-based policy-making;
9. Regional data base of comparable social administrative and survey data;
10. Access to data through websites and web hosting; and
11. Standardization of definitions, methodologies and the development of regional indicators and targets.

C. Databases and Administrative Information

Given the relative high cost of carrying out surveys of the population, the Central Statistics Department have relied heavily upon administrative information in the past and will continue to do so in the future. The following is a listing of commonly available administrative sources.

- Customs ASYCUDA Import Database
- Immigration Visitor Data
- Court House Registry of Births, Marriages and Deaths
- Building Permits

- Work Permits
- Social Security
- Commercial Banks
- Medical Records
- Health Clinics records
- Education Records
- Police and Court Records
- Inland Revenue Department
- Shipping Manifests and Records
- Environmental Health

4. THE ANALYSIS

There is undoubtedly a growing awareness in the OECS that there is a need for empirically sound, statistical evidence, irrespective of whether it is economic statistics or social data. Arguably, in times gone by, there existed the perception that the production and compilation of economic statistics did receive priority over that of social statistics. In recent years, as shown by the information provided above, this is no longer the state of affairs. Additionally, the OECS has set the example for its Member States in areas such as national accounts, balance of payments, and census, to name a few. The use of a census questionnaire with common concepts and definitions for a core group of questions has paid dividends in that the information is comparable across the region. This concept of common concepts and definitions has been taken a step further by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank (ECCB) with the use of common methodologies for computation of national accounts and balance of payments in all the countries.

Despite the growing awareness for good quality statistics, there is generally a serious lack of statistical data in the OECS and for the most part, CSOs are ill-equipped for the task; they are also under-resourced and often lack the necessary technical skills. The frequent production and compilation of statistics are frustrated and made challenging by the high staff turn-over of the CSOs. On average the CSOs in the OECS have to grapple with a persistent high staff turn-over, as well as attracting and employing suitably qualified persons. The numbers of qualified statisticians in the OECS region are few and far in-between, thereby exacerbating an already appalling position.

In addition, as the evidence suggests, borne out by the Hutcheon Report of 2002²⁴, regular surveys on social and demographic issues do not exist with the exception of Jamaica. Even with the surveys that are completed, there is limited policy analysis and link to decision making; external consultants (including from within the region) continue to conduct most poverty studies. Assessments of poverty or other social development issues have been inadequate at best sometimes with ten years between surveys. Census data which is the foundation of all information on a country often remains only partially analyzed for 3-5 years or more after the assessment has been completed. Consequently,

²⁴ Hutcheon (2002) Draft Final Report of a consultancy to design a Multi-donor Initiative to support collection of Social Data for Poverty Assessment and Reduction in the Caribbean countries, pp.3-5.

poverty assessments and by extension poverty reduction strategies have been constrained by:

- Lack of ready access to reliable high-quality data and inadequate poverty analysis
- Limited spatial analysis
- Absence of linkages among data collectors, analysts and policy makers.

It can be concluded then that the problem of data deficiency in quantity, quality and dimension for monitoring the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals including poverty and sustainable development targets stems from four main issues:

- lack of regular and consistent surveys that generate data at appropriate levels resulting in a lack of time-series data and the lack of capacity to establish baselines;
- lack of or limited technical capacity for data collection, analysis and primary research;
- lack of recognition of key factors such as gender, susceptibility and vulnerability to poverty and the link of the effectiveness or lack of social protection measures to poverty reduction; and
- limited financial and other resources to undertake the needed regular surveys.

There are also:

- significant gaps within data collection agencies in processing and communicating data;
- variation in methodological approaches to data collection, leading to inconsistencies in poverty and other social assessments;
- limited analysis due to limited capacity; and
- inability to sustain the capacity built over the medium to long-term.

In addressing these issues the role of *research* must also be considered, including the role to be played by the University of the West Indies as well as other tertiary institutions in supporting and also conducting in-depth analyses of available data. In some cases, only preliminary analyses are conducted on survey data. However, more detailed analyses including the extrapolation of the issues with implications for policy and change are increasingly of paramount importance. Additionally, the research community can often provide guidance on how some of the difficult policy questions can and should be addressed and how assessment methodologies could be strengthened or made more specific to the Caribbean context.

Although the scope of the CSOs has now increased considerably, there are additional data sets that are not, or being infrequently, collected. Most importantly, there are significant gaps in labour market information²⁵. Such information is crucial for improving the region's competitiveness: efficient and effective link supply of skills with demand; production of skills demanded by employers, and skills enhancement and increased productivity through well-informed interventions.

²⁵ Labor Market Information (LMI) activities involve the collecting, analyzing, reporting and publishing of data on economic activities to describe and predict the relationship between labor demand and supply. Specifically, it can include the number of people employed, the wages they are earning, their occupations, the location of their workplace in relation to where they live, the number of people available to work in a given area, and the occupations that will be in demand in the future.

A procedural and mindset change, vis-à-vis the warranted importance that should be given to statistics in guiding and informing policies and decision is necessary to bring about any deviation from the prevailing irregular significance, presently characterizing the operations and functioning of CSOs. Generally in the OECS, the CSO and the services which they provide are attached importance and are acknowledged principally during the time leading up to Parliamentary Budget presentations and every ten years when the census is expected to be conducted. Consequently, the importance attached to the CSOs, as well as the services provided by them should consistently equal the importance bestowed on them ahead of Parliamentary Budget presentation and around Census time.

5. CONCLUSION

All countries need sound/reliable statistics, to manage the business of government as well as providing society generally with information about what is happening. Official statistics, that is information in numerical form produced and disseminated by government agencies, are important to support policy making, to allocate scarce resources, to monitor national progress and to make governments more transparent and accountable.

Already identified above is how statistical systems in the OECS are fragile and under increasing pressure. New demands for data, from processes such as the increasing emphasis on results management, are putting already weak statistical systems under considerable strain. At the same time, the managers of CSOs, are coming under pressure to reduce expenditure, cut costs and improve efficiency. As a result, many statistical systems are struggling, with limited public confidence in the reliability and integrity of the data and with limited capacity to turn things round in the short-term. Financial and human resources are scarce and hard decisions need to be made about which statistics to produce, what methods should be used and how the data should be disseminated and used.

For statistics to play its important role as a public good in the OECS the statistical systems have to break out of the vicious cycle of under-funding and under-performance, and to make a significant contribution to the overall national development effort. For this to happen each OECS Member States should:

- develop a **National Strategy for strengthening statistical capacity** across the entire national statistical system (NSS) including the CSO and statistical units of other government departments;
- develop a **cadre of specialised experts** at the regional level who will be able to provides specialised technical assistance to national CSOs; and
- create an appropriate mechanism that would allow for more **detailed analyses** including the extrapolation of the issues with implications for policy and change **to occur at the OECS regional level.**
- endeavour to **fully utilize existing data** located within the Central Statistics Offices.
- creation of a **statistical unit within the present structure of the OECS Secretariat** to support development planning initiatives of the Units and Divisions.
- establishment of a **National Statistical Advisory Commission (NSAC)** in Member States.

- **efficient** management of Central Statistics Offices to address both the technical and multi-faceted aspects of the human resources.

5.a.i. National Strategy for Strengthening Statistical Capacity

This strategy should present a comprehensive and unified assessment of evolving needs and priorities for statistics, and propose choices for meeting these needs in a coordinated and efficient manner: The Strategy should serve as a framework for national development and for international and bilateral assistance. More importantly however, the Strategy will serve to bring together the most important indicators and data sets within a coherent framework, which provides users with some assurances about data quality and integrity.

The National Strategy should incorporate entire national statistical system including all data processes (collection, analysis, dissemination and use), all key producers (central statistical office and statistical units of other agencies), and the mechanism for coordination among them. In addition, the national Strategy should be:

- demand-focused, responding to needs and priorities of the government and the other stakeholders;
- based on the assessment of the current status of the National Statistical Service (NSS) and build on existing activities and processes;
- realistic and prioritized taking into consideration available funds and absorptive capacity; and
- a concrete implementation plan with a timetable, deliverables, and a financing plan.

5.a.ii. Cadre of Regional Specialised Experts

One of the many disadvantages of microstates is the limited capacity of the public sector. While the public sector is usually the biggest employer, it generally does not have access to sufficient quantities of trained and specialised skills. This situation contextualises the need for new types of skill sets to support the design, monitoring and evaluation of national development strategies, poverty reduction strategies, sectoral strategies and Millennium Development Goals, to mention a few. The cost of maintaining an entire skill set within the national statistical system can be prohibitive, if not uneconomical. It is against this background that the call is being made for a cadre of experts, each located in a Member States and working within the national statistical system, to constitute a an OECS technical assistance team in statistics. The details of the composition of the team and the pre-requisite skill sets will have to be worked out, but such a team will be able to provide the necessary backstopping to national systems, albeit only for specialised needs. The OECS Secretariat could then take on the responsibility of creating and maintaining the database of skill sets and persons who comprise the team and will facilitate the mobilisation of the needed skills on a Technical Cooperation among Member States (TCMS) basis. It may be necessary for member States to establish a specialised facility within the Secretariat to finance the costs of the TCMS which would only include the cost of travel and per diem.

5.a.iii. Regional Analyses

The inadequacy in the analyses and interpretation of the data collected has become an issue that warrants urgent attention. Developing a data analysis strategy is an important part of the planning process. It is clear that due to the thin capacities and inadequate resources at the national level, the level and rigor of analyses in OECS Member States need to be enhanced. Such analyses, on the other hand, require specialised skills which may be too costly to locate in each Member State. It is consequently, recommended that the analyses of large and complicated data sets be undertaken at the regional level, through the facilitation of either a single regional agency or a consortium of regional agencies working in collaboration with national experts. This can however only happen if Member States enact the appropriate legislation thereby transferring responsibilities to a regional mechanism

5.a.iv. Advocating and Facilitating Extensive Utilization of Existing Data

The prevalent routine of undertaking and conducting ad hoc and regular surveys, and subsequently devaluing the importance, existence and further application of the databases created from the data captured by those surveys, following the preparation and submission of an obligated report, necessitate a revolutionary change in the utilization of existing data residing within Central Statistics Offices. The avant-garde change required would set in motion the need for Data Mining²⁶ to become a common and everyday occurrence in the utilization and analysis of data. A wealth of information is contained within the databases created from the data captured by those surveys, and making the most of data which already exist would most certainly go a long way in addressing the aforementioned issue.

5.a.v. Establishment of a Statistical Unit within the OECS Secretariat

The OECS Secretariat has a linchpin role in supporting and facilitating any initiative designed and implemented nationally or sub-regionally, which aims to speak to the need for statistics to play an important role as a public good in the OECS Member States. This could only happen and made possible if the Secretariat has the in-house capacity to support and advance initiatives such as the **regional analyses, etc.** Furthermore, the rationale for establishing a Statistical Unit within the OECS Secretariat is understandable given the importance of statistical analysis to the revision of the **‘OECS Development Strategy’** and **‘OECS Human Development Report’**. Likewise, the implementation of the **‘OECS Economic Union’** would necessitate changes in the nature and scope of the functioning of the **‘Economic Affairs Division (EAD)’**, which would entail regular macroeconomic monitoring and reporting. A crucial aspect of the augmented functioning of the **EAD** would be statistical analysis.

5.a.vi. Establishment of National Statistics Advisory Commissions

The Eastern Caribbean Central Bank has been advocating and pushing for the establishment of **National Statistics Advisory Commissions (NSAC)** in the Member States. This recommendation is consistent with what obtains in developed countries like Canada, Australia and the UK. The main functions of the National Statistics Advisory Commission are advocacy, coordination and

²⁶ The process of analyzing data to identify patterns or relationships. The ability to query very large databases in order to satisfy a hypothesis ("top down" data mining); or to interrogate a database in order to generate new hypotheses based on rigorous statistical correlations ("bottom-up" data mining).

monitoring. The roles and responsibilities are to advise the minister and the Director of Statistics or Chief Statistician in any matter relating to the collection, processing, analysis, documentation, storage and dissemination of statistics. ‘The commission will need to establish itself as a source of high quality and independent advice on statistical issues. Its advice will be made available to the wider public who must be able to rely on the commission as both considered and impartial²⁷.’

5.a.vii. Efficient management of Central Statistics Offices

More often than not, interventions designed to build capacity within the Central Statistics Offices customarily center attention on the technical facets of the compilation, production and dissemination of statistics. Seldom do these interventions give attention to the managerial aspects of the Central Statistics Offices. The situation is compounded by the very fact that most if not all heads of Central Statistics Offices are more technically trained with little or no managerial training. Consequently, interventions targeting managerial training for the persons in charge of the Central Statistics Offices are needed.

This paper explores the causes of the problems and challenges besetting the Central Statistics Offices of the OECS Member States, the interventions implemented to address specific aspects of these problems and challenges and put forward recommendations designed to attend to more wide-ranging aspects of these impediments, while at the same time hypothesizing that these interventions were also designed to facilitate the sub-region’s advancement to a level where development planning is guided by reliable statistics. We showed that the problems and challenges confronting the OECS Member States are catholic. In contrast, the numerous interventions implemented up till now, more often than not speak to specific issues. For the most part we perceived the root cause of the problems and challenges to be a systematic one. Bearing this in mind our recommendations are designed to address above all the prevailing inefficient systems/mechanisms or lack of any well-organized systems.

²⁷ Terms of Reference for the National Statistics Advisory Commissions (NSAC). Prepared by the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank.