

THIRTY-FOURTH MEETING OF  
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF  
CARIBBEAN STATISTICIANS

SCCS/2009/34/8

Gros Islet, Saint Lucia

26-28 October 2009

25 October 2009

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**DEVELOPMENTAL WORK IN THE AREA OF ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS  
AND PROPOSED WORK PLAN FOR 2010/2011**

**1. Background to the Production of Environmental Statistics**

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat and the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) had in the past collaborated on a project, "Strengthening of Capacity on the Compilation of Statistics and Indicators for Conference Follow-up in the CARICOM Region". One of the main outcomes of this project was the publication "CARICOM Environment in Figures 2002". A workshop comprising participants from environmental agencies and statistical offices was convened at the commencement of the project and the need was seen to strengthen the inter-agency collaboration at the national level in this area of statistics. Additional training was held for some countries as well as a Review Meeting that considered the data compiled during the project. The project led to the formation of an Advisory Group and the development of an Environmental Statistics Programme for the Region. A core list of indicators was identified which formed the basis of data collection that led to the production of a second Environmental Statistics Report, with data up to 2004/5.

**2. Review of CARICOM Environment in Figures 2004**

The publication, CARICOM Environment in Figures 2004 which was prepared by the CARICOM Secretariat, Statistics Sub-Programme based on data submitted by Member States and Associate Members, data obtained from the UNSD and from other regional

and national organisations was first published via the website of the Regional Statistics Sub-Programme in September 2008. This publication has since been reviewed with the assistance of the staff of the Environment Statistics Section of the UNSD. The revised publication was placed on the Statistics website in July 2009.

### **3. Convening of a Regional Workshop with focus on Environmental Statistics**

The CARICOM Secretariat convened a workshop on Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics and Indicators-Assessment of Data Submitted by Member Countries and Development of an Action Plan. The workshop was convened during the period July 20-24, 2009 in Antigua and Barbuda at the Grand Royal Antiguan Beach Resort, St. John's, Antigua and country representatives were invited from both areas of statistics.

The workshop was funded by the World Bank Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) and the UNSD. UNECLAC also assisted in facilitating the area of Social/Gender Statistics while the UNSD assisted with the area of Environmental Statistics. All Member States and one Associate Member, The British Virgin Islands, participated in this workshop. Guyana was only represented at the Environmental component of the workshop. The main aim of the workshop was to conduct an assessment of the data submitted by Member countries and to develop an Action Plan for a **new round** of data collection.

For the Environmental Statistics area, participants were provided with the status of the Core Environmental Indicators (including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) prior to the 2008 update) which were received by the CARICOM Secretariat for the period 1998-2004. This was the period of data collection, although some countries submitted data for 2005 on some indicators. In addition, the Caribbean Specific Millennium Development Goals (CSMDGs) Indicators that were approved by the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) in 2008, were submitted to participants to indicate the availability of these indicators in their respective countries. With respect to the metadata, a template was submitted for participants to document the metadata for each indicator, such as the concept and definition, source of the data and method of computation.

The workshop also sought to identify the current gaps and deficiencies in Social Gender and Environmental Statistics and Indicators and to examine the methodologies, procedures and possible best practices for filling the gaps in the data and metadata. Focus in the workshop was on the review of the core list of indicators that were identified in the past during the CARICOM Programme on Strengthening Capacity in Social/Gender and Environmental Statistics, which included the indicators for the MDGs. The general idea was to adjust the core list to include the statistics and indicators of the CSMDGs and to include any additional indicators that countries would like to see included in the core.

Fourteen (14) participants from thirteen (13) CARICOM member countries attended the Environmental Statistics component of the workshop. Ms Reena Shah from the UNSD Environment Statistics Section co-facilitated this component of the Workshop.

#### **4. Main Activities and Results Achieved**

The following were the main activities undertaken and results/achieved at the Environmental Statistics Component of the workshop:

- Refinement of the list of Core Statistics and Indicators;
- Conduct of group discussions relative to indicators that are country specific;
- Review of the methodology currently being used for each indicator under the Environment Component;
- Examination of the sources of the Environment Data;
- Documentation of Data Quality Challenges/Inconsistencies, Data Relevance and Use, Gaps and Deficiencies in Environmental Statistics and procedures for Filling Gaps in Data;
- Made recommendations for the new round of data collection in Environmental Statistics.

#### **5. Action Plan from the CARICOM Workshop on Environmental Statistics and Indicators**

Participants did not develop an action plan as such but made recommendations for

follow-up work, some of which are included below:

- Participants noted that there is a lack of a comprehensive standard at the international level for concepts, definition and methodologies for gathering Environmental Statistics and Indicators. They recommended meetings with National Data Collection Agencies to try to understand how they compile the data and the methodologies used and to inform them about the indicators required by regional and international organisations.
- Participants recommended that they should compare the methodologies used by data collection agencies with those compiled by the CARICOM Secretariat Regional Statistics Sub-programme in their CARICOM Environment in Figures 2004 publication;
- A Technical Working Group in Environmental Statistics be formed consisting of representatives working on Environment Statistics from five (5) member countries;
- Capacity building and training in the generation of Environmental statistics and indicators;
- Partner with existing programmes to reduce reporting to many agencies.
- Continued inter-agency collaboration.

## **6. Challenges and Opportunities**

Environmental Statistics is a relatively new and emerging field of statistics in the Region, with a large number of data sources and institutions involved, and with a lack of benchmarks and standards. Member States currently do not have the resources to have a separate Environmental Statistics Unit. There is need for capacity building in this area of statistics. Increased inter-agency collaboration and the use of software such as the United Nations-based DevInfo to facilitate the compilation and dissemination of statistics that are available within agencies at the national level must be emphasised as mechanisms for improving data availability at the regional and international levels.

## 7. Work Plan in Environmental Statistics for 2010/2011

The 2010/2011 work plan will focus on data collection for the indicators and the refinement of concepts, definition and methodologies for gathering the Statistics and Indicators. The areas of concern to the Region relative to environmental issues based on the report of the Twenty-Ninth (29<sup>th</sup>) Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government held in Antigua and Barbuda in July 2008 will be **Energy, Water, Climate Change and Disaster Management**. The main focus of the work will be on these areas.

Elements of the approach to be followed will include:

- (i) Conduct of a review on the specified areas of Environmental Statistics indicated above;
- (ii) Provide support for the filling of the data gaps in the selected areas including:
  - (a) activate the Help Desk focusing on specific areas relative to resources to assist countries in compiling of these statistics;
  - (b) establish/activate a Technical Working Group on Environmental Statistics;
  - (c) collaborate with international and regional organisations to strengthen these areas of Environment Statistics.

### **ACTION TO BE TAKEN**

The **Meeting** is **invited** to:

- **consider** the recommendations from the CARICOM Workshop on Environmental Statistics and Indicators.

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