

MESSAGE BY THE HON. MINISTER OF FINANCE, MR. WINSTON JORDAN ON THE OCCASION OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY, THURSDAY 15TH OCTOBER, 2015.

Today marks the seventh annual observance of Caribbean Statistics Day, an observance which has quickly evolved into a major event in the Regional Statistical Calendar. On this occasion, It gives me great pleasure, as Minister of Finance with responsibility for Guyana's Central Statistical Office, the Bureau of Statistics, to convey this Message and greeting to the staff of the Bureau, to the CARICOM Secretariat, to all Guyana and the Region.

It is a particularly proud moment for me to be granted the opportunity to convey this message of acclaim and support to our National Statistical Office and the wider Regional Statistical Community. One of my first messages, on being sworn into office, was to the Bureau's Chief Statistician, signalling to him the Government's immediate interest and commitment to transform the Bureau into a world class entity that is capable of providing quality data of all kinds in a timely and efficient manner. In this regard, notwithstanding previous initiatives of capacity building at the Bureau, one of the first Cabinet decisions made was to provide a permanent home for the Bureau at the location formerly occupied by the Customs Department of the Guyana Revenue Authority. It is my expectation and that of the Cabinet that on the 8th commemoration of Caribbean Statistics Day, in October of 2016, the Bureau would be housed, for the first time in its fifty-eight (58) years of existence, in its own building.

In addition to providing permanent headquarters, other tangible manifestations of our commitment include substantial institutional capacity building, with the support of the Inter-American Development Bank. Supplementing this initiative is the Project Plan by Statistics Canada, involving technical assistance and training support to all statistical offices in the Region over the next seven (7) years. In the case of Guyana, their first technical support missions are expected to arrive in January 2016.

With the benefit of working closely with the Chief Statistician and staff in my earlier professional career, I know of the central and critical importance of a strong Central Statistical Office to the decision making process of government and other stakeholders. In many cases, the shortcomings of Central Statistical Offices to function at optimum are directly related to the ambiguous signals sent by Administrations in relation to their commitment to provide the type of resources to make these offices modern, relevant and institutions of excellence.

This is why the motto for Caribbean Statistics Day, “ Better Data, Better Lives”, adopted from the identical motto for World Statistics Day, which will also be celebrated just five (5) days hence, resonates deeply with me. In spite of whatever initiatives may have been instituted before, the Government’s commitment to statistics today is unswerving and long-term.

The Government will put in place the components to give realization to the first part of the motto “Better Data”. Indeed, it is no small coincidence that the theme for my first Budget presentation was “A Good Life For All”. We fully understand and appreciate that the ‘Better Life’ and the ‘Good Life for All’, which was articulated in my Budget Speech as a Policy Objective of this Government, will be best served by a powerful Central Statistical Office and a most efficient National Statistical System informing and guiding the decision making process.

It is my honour, therefore, to convey this message of acclaim and support on this seventh (7th) Annual Observance of Caribbean Statistics Day.

**Winston Jordan
Minister of Finance
15th October, 2015.**
