



**MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)
CARLA N. BARNETT PhD CBE
ON THE OCCASION OF
THE THIRTEENTH OBSERVANCE OF
CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY
15 OCTOBER 2021**

It is my pleasure to extend greetings on the thirteenth observance of **Caribbean Statistics Day (CSD)** on **15 October 2021**.

The theme for this year is “***Leave No One Behind - Everyone Counts***” which is the same theme used for the Launch of the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Census.

There is no doubt that statistical data are fundamental to decision-making, whether driving business decisions or formulating government policy. Data’s role in confronting the challenge of COVID-19 is one example. Statistics perform a critical function in tracking the trends in infections and in underpinning the clinical trials for vaccines, as well as monitoring both the economic and social indicators, as they are influenced by the effects of the pandemic.

Countries need to produce timely statistics to help drive the recovery from the pandemic in both the health and economic sectors. To achieve this goal, statistical agencies must be adequately resourced to provide the data inputs to ensure evidence-based decision making.

The all-important education sector is benefitting from a collaboration between CARICOM Statisticians, and the Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICT4D) Programme of the CARICOM Secretariat. Caribbean Specific Information and Communication Technology Indicators are being developed, such as the physical resources that individuals and families possess, including smartphones and desktop/laptop computers, the use made of digital technologies and the number of educational programmes for schools/youths delivered through ICT.

Interventions such as these will aid the recovery process, and demonstrate the importance of supporting the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) that was endorsed by Heads of Government in 2018. This requires cooperation among governments, the private sector and international development partners.

Implementation of the RSDS will also assist in gauging our success at achieving the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which comprises 17 goals, 169 targets and 231 indicators. The national statistical offices and ministries, departments and other agencies of government must produce these indicators to enable monitoring of the achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Indeed, 231 indicators is a colossal demand, particularly for statistical agencies in developing countries.

Critical support has been received from a number of partners, including the European Union, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Government of Italy, for implementation of various critical aspects of the RSDS. I commend all partners who are providing support towards the strengthening of statistics in CARICOM.

As it relates to the Population and Housing Census, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused CARICOM Member States to experience challenges in executing the Census that should have started in the Region in 2020. No country was able to conduct its Census enumeration in 2020, and some of those countries that had planned to undertake this activity this year have postponed or are considering postponing this exercise to 2022. The Census provides significant information for evidence-based decision-making and I, therefore, hope that households and individuals in CARICOM do respond to the Census, so that its results can achieve the objective of providing accurate data for our decision makers.

I take this opportunity to commend the statisticians in CARICOM, including those at the Secretariat and in Member States, for their tremendous efforts in producing and disseminating high quality statistics. I also encourage the necessary investment in statistics so that it can inform the management of the economic, social and environmental affairs, and contribute to the successful transformation of CARICOM Member States.