

MESSAGE FROM THE
HON. SENIOR MINISTER OF FINANCE, DR. ASHNI SINGH

ON THE OBSERVANCE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY, 2021

THEME: “Leave No One Behind... Everyone Counts”.

Today’s observance of the Thirteenth anniversary of **Caribbean Statistics Day** marks another milestone in the ongoing promotion and development of national and regional statistics in all of the Statistical Offices of CARICOM and the wider Caribbean Region. Guyana has long been an active advocate of and partner in advancement of statistics in the Region, participating in all the major statistical development programmes of CARICOM. Our Government recognises the essential role of data and statistics in informing and guiding policy and decision-making and will continue to advocate stridently the further strengthening of statistical systems and of statistics in the Region.

In my capacity as Senior Minister of Finance with portfolio responsibility for national statistics, it is my pleasure to send greetings to our local producers and users of statistics. This is an opportune time to extol the importance of statistics in our daily lives and to commend those persons, statisticians and their support staff who are involved in collecting, processing, and disseminating our national statistics which are critical for policy decisions, research, education and keeping the public apprised of national development.

The theme for this year’s observance as notified by the CARICOM Secretariat is “**Leave No One Behind... Everyone Counts**”. This theme is all the more fitting given the unprecedented challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 has affected the health and economic development of Guyana, the Region and the world over, and has reinforced the importance of data in measuring and understanding the impacts of such events. Data collected has importantly been used to develop national policies and interventions including vaccination campaigns.

The continued impacts of the pandemic faced by Guyana in 2021 were exacerbated by country-wide flooding, resulting in His Excellency the President declaring a disaster on 10 June 2021. These floods compounded the impact of COVID-19, with widespread and large scale losses to

households and the productive sectors. Data and statistics were collected to inform not only the Government's medical response and outreach activities in all impacted areas, but also in crafting a relief and recovery plan.

Our Government is mindful of the challenges the Bureau of Statistics and other Agencies within the National Statistical System encounter in their efforts to ensure that reliable statistics are available for national development. The pandemic has changed the face of our interaction and has increased the use of online tools and media for the collection and dissemination of information. I applaud the resilience of the Statistical System and all those who are involved in and contribute to this System particularly for the work they have done during this testing time. Notwithstanding the challenges posed by the pandemic, they continue to produce the critical statistics required for national development. The lessons we would have learnt during this challenging period will ultimately redound to improved efficiency in the medium and longer term.

Guyana has subscribed to the regional commitment of decennial census-taking and has signed on to CARICOM's regional census plan. In this regard, the Bureau of Statistics is the agency tasked with the responsibility to conduct censuses under the Laws of Guyana and has already commenced the process of planning for the execution of the 7th post-war Census in 2022, ten (10) years after the last Census in 2012.

Once again, I congratulate the Secretary General of CARICOM, the Project Director and Staff of the Regional Statistics Programme, CARICOM Secretariat, Chief Statisticians/Directors and the staff of all Statistical Offices throughout the Region, and the statistical community here in Guyana for their continued role in the development of regional statistics on this 13th annual observance of Caribbean Statistics Day.