



**MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL, CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY  
(CARICOM) AMBASSADOR IRWIN LAROCQUE**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE OBSERVANCE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY 15  
OCTOBER 2020**

It is my pleasure as Secretary-General of the Caribbean Community, to send greetings on the launch of the Twelfth Observance of **Caribbean Statistics Day on 15 October 2020**.

This year also marks the Third Observance of **World Statistics Day**, which is being observed on **20 October 2020**, under the theme, "**Connecting the World with Data we can Trust**". This Theme will also be used for Caribbean Statistics Day. Statistical data drives a myriad of decisions that impact the lives of the people of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and worldwide. In this period of the Novel Coronavirus global pandemic, COVID-19, statistics are required to track the status of the pandemic, and its economic and social impact, reinforcing its value to society. Statistics as a science of learning provides an essential service, through making available data for decision-making in the face of uncertainty.

In the efforts to manage and overcome the pandemic, epidemiological data underpin the information base on the spread of the virus. The collection, compilation and dissemination of basic statistics includes the number of confirmed cases, the daily number of new cases and the pattern over time, the number of deaths, recoveries, active cases and the number of tests conducted. These are just a few of the data elements that are collected by the National Statistical Systems of countries to ascertain the magnitude of the impact of the virus on the population and on the economy, and to drive the decisions for solutions to mitigate that impact.

The extent of its effect on trade, government revenues, unemployment, access to education, on children that are below the poverty line with no smartphones or internet, are some of the issues on which our National Statistical Offices and Systems are required to provide information. Sound policy decisions by governments on restrictions to be put in place, on the closing or reopening of national borders, schools and certain business places, will only be possible by utilising trusted data from the statistical offices and systems.

Globally, statistical methods and analyses are employed to assist the clinical trials that are being undertaken to obtain a vaccine.

It is clear therefore, that the CARICOM Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS), with its strategic visioning for the improvement of statistics over the next ten (10) years, takes on added significance. The strategic framework of the RSDS was endorsed in July 2018, by the Conference of Heads of Government at its Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting. Already, the Implementation and Communication Plans for this Strategic Framework have been prepared, as well as drafts of the Resource Mobilisation and Monitoring and Evaluation Frameworks, that are to be considered by the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) next month.

Investment in statistics to enable the implementation of the RSDS is critical, and I urge both Governments and our International Development Partners to continue to support the RSDS, given the vivid examples that we have seen of the importance of statistics during this global pandemic. Already the Decennial Population and Housing Census that should have started in the Region from this year and which provides a seabed of information for planning has had to be postponed by countries. The Census Framework, as a key aspect of the RSDS, would require financial and technical assistance in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the statisticians in CARICOM, including those at the Secretariat, for their tremendous efforts in producing and disseminating high quality statistics to assist in our quest to overcome our many development challenges.

In the context of the Coronavirus pandemic, this year's theme of "***Connecting the World with Data we can Trust***" for the observance of Caribbean and World Statistics Day is most relevant. To maintain that trust requires the necessary investment in statistics which in turn would lead to guiding evidence-based decisions geared towards an improved quality of life of the peoples of our Region and the world.



**MESSAGE FROM THE HON. BISHOP JUAN EDGHILL, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS  
(facilitating oversight of the Ministry of Finance and its Agencies)**

**ON THE OBSERVANCE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY, 2020.**

**THEME: “Connecting the World with Data we can Trust”.**

Today, Guyana joins the rest of the Caribbean Region in celebrating Caribbean Statistics Day under the theme **“Connecting the World with Data we can Trust”**. Indeed, today marks the twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) annual observance of this signal event and I am particularly heartened to be associated with this observance in my capacity as Minister facilitating oversight for the Bureau of Statistics, and wish to convey my best wishes to the practitioners of statistics within our Region.

Caribbean Statistics Day theme for this year’s observance was adopted from the identical motto for World Statistics Day, which will also be celebrated just five (5) days hence on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October. With Caribbean Statistics Day observed annually and World Statistics Day every fifth year, this year 2020 is another milepost for the twin observances of these two (2) major events underscored by the facts of Guyana’s major role in regional activities and its equal role as a member of the global community.

Statistics touch many lives nationally, regionally and globally. The Bureau and the Statistical Units of the line Ministries and Agencies provide the backbone for the production of statistics. I say without hesitation that one of the key instruments and areas of Caribbean development and ultimate integration has been and must continue to be the area of statistics.

As we reflect on this year’s theme: **“Connecting the World with Data we can Trust”**, it should be acknowledged that the global statistical community continues to move forward and collectively address its mind to the goals set and strategies to be implemented for the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals by countries the world over. In fact the eminent Secretary-General of the United Nations, earlier this year, in his launch of the United Nations Data Strategy entitled ‘Data we can Trust’ pointed out the objective of that initiative was to strengthen

the United Nations Organization's ability to provide more and better data to address global challenges. I fully agree with the Secretary-General that investment in data and statistics is the only way that globally we will be able to make the decisions to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and get back on track to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by year 2030.

The time has come for a paradigm shift around data sharing with security of information paramount. Collaboration and data sharing we can trust will be best served by a well-trained and powerful Central Statistical Office and a most efficient National Statistical System, informing and guiding the decision-making process.

The area of statistics over the years has manifested into one of the strongest areas of Regional networking, cooperation and development as well as a career destination for many young professionals. I convey once again my heartfelt congratulations to the Secretary General of CARICOM, the Project Director and Staff, Regional Statistics Programme, CARICOM Secretariat and the Chief Statisticians/Directors and their Staff of all Statistical Offices throughout the Region for another year of outstanding work and service to our Region, and I wish them every success in the future.

A happy Caribbean Statistics Day 2020, a happy upcoming World Statistics Day 2020, to all in Guyana, throughout our Caribbean Region and among all our partners who comprise the global community.