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**Opening Address by
MR. PAUL CHEUNG, DIRECTOR
UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION**

**33rd MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICANS
Barbados, 27 October 2008**

Senator The Honourable Maxine McClean, Minister in the Prime Minister's Office
Ambassador Lolita Applewhaite, Deputy Secretary General, Caribbean Community
Mrs Juanita Thornton-Powlett, Permanent Secretary in Economic Affairs
Ms. Angela Hunte, Director of the Barbados Statistical Service
Directors of Statistics and Chief Statisticians of CARICOM countries
Representatives of National, Regional and International Organizations
Distinguished guests and colleagues

It is a great honour for me to address this gathering of chief statisticians from the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member and associated States. I would like to thank the CARICOM Secretariat for inviting the United Nations Statistics Division to participate in this meeting and to address this distinguished audience.

The UN Statistics Division has worked together closely with the CARICOM member countries and the CARICOM Secretariat for many years now. We jointly implemented a "Development Account" project from 1999 to 2003, which strengthened the region's capacity in the compilation of statistics and indicators. The project's most visible outputs were two regional publications on gender statistics as well as on environment statistics. We are pleased to learn that the CARICOM Secretariat has continued to sustain the work started under the Project by releasing recently two follow-up publications: *The CARICOM Environment in Figures 2004*; and the *Women and Men in the Caribbean Community: Facts and Figures, 1998-2005*.

Our joint "Development Account" project was successful, because it could build on an existing framework of close cooperation between national statistical offices in the CARICOM region. UNSD is strongly supporting this type of statistical cooperation. It is our conviction, that

the active sharing of practical experiences between countries of a specific geographical region is the most effective form of cooperation. In this sense, the CARICOM project has become for UNSD the model for the implementation of a number of subsequent similar projects around the world.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The theme for the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS) “Working Together to Improve Statistics in the Twenty-First Century and Beyond” is appropriate and timely. As a consequence of the monitoring requirements for the Millennium Development Goals and the UN Development Agenda, there has been an increased awareness of the importance and urgency of building statistical capacity in developing countries. However, there are no simple “quick fixes”. Statistical development requires a long term perspective and human and financial resources. We are very much encouraged by the establishment of the Regional Statistical Work Programme in support of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the Resolution passed by the Community Council in 2005 calling on Governments to increase investment in statistics as a priority for statistical activities in the Region.

In order to be successful in our efforts to build sustained statistical capacity it is in my view essential to take a coordinated approach at country, regional and global levels. At the national level, the challenge is to create an effective network of all producers of official statistics – the national statistical system under the leadership of the national statistical office. At the regional level, governing mechanisms, such as this SCCS, are a crucial element, to satisfy the regional data needs and also to support national efforts to strengthen statistical systems and capacity. Finally, at the international level, UNSD, based on the mandates given by the United Nations Statistical Commission, is committed to lead the effort towards the strengthening of the Global Statistical System, which is based on the foundation of the national systems, and which strives to satisfy the demand for comparable global data in a coordinated and effective manner.

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words on the 2010-round of censuses, a topic which features prominently on your agenda. As you know, UNSD has over the years

produced guidelines and principles to conduct population censuses and has assisted numerous countries through training workshops and technical advisory services. For this 2010-round of censuses, UNSD is committed to continue to provide technical support to countries and regions. We are, thereby, placing special emphasis on regional cooperation, which is, in our view, particularly beneficial in order to take advantage of the opportunities offered by significant innovations in census technology and methodology: It is important for countries of this region to optimize the use of the new technologies and use the available human and financial resources in the most effective manner.

In conclusion, I would like to recognize the important role played by the CARICOM Secretariat in advancing statistics in the region and reaffirm UNSD's continued commitment to work closely with the CARICOM member States, as well as with the CARICOM Secretariat.

Thank you.