



CARICOM REGIONAL STRATEGY TO SUPPORT THE 2010 CENSUS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

1. INITIATING THE PROCESS AND GAINING ENDORSEMENT AT THE SECOND HIGHEST LEVEL OF THE COMUNITY

In 2005/2006, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat initiated the first phase in a programme of work designed to assist Member Countries of the Region in their preparations for the conduct of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. This Phase, which commenced with an analysis of the experiences of the 2000 Round of Census and included a consultancy which outlined the strategy of support which should be provided to countries, resulted in the preparation of a CARICOM Regional Support Strategy based on a Common Census Framework approach. Since then the CARICOM Secretariat has been working with its Member States, Associated Members and Regional and International Organisations in building regional and national capacity for the conduct of the censuses in 2010.

In November 2008, the Seventeenth Meeting of Council of Human and Social Development (17th COHSOD) which was held on **17-18 November 2008 in Guyana** was informed about the forthcoming 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses to be conducted by Member States and Associate Members and the Regional Support Strategy. The Seventeenth Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) held in November 2008 in Guyana **endorsed** the framework of support and recommended the strategy to the Twenty-fourth Meeting of the Community Council of Ministers (The Council) for further endorsement by the Council.

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL which met in June 2009 in Barbados -

Noted the efforts by the CARICOM Secretariat to support, through a regional approach, the conduct of the censuses at the national

level; and the establishment of the Resource Consortium led by the CARICOM Secretariat and the UNFPA;

***Expressed appreciation** to the regional and international agencies that have provided funding and technical assistance for the 2010 Census Round in CARICOM;*

***Endorsed** the mechanisms of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee and the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians established to monitor and coordinate the 2010 Regional Census Strategy;*

***Committed** to providing to the Statistical Department, at the national level, human and financial resources on a timely basis for the conduct of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses;.*

***Also committed** to the commencement, at the national level, of preparatory work such as enacting Census legislation, establishing publicity programmes and other mechanisms for the effective conduct of the Census and for the timely processing and release of the results.*

In the ensuing communiqué, Member countries were asked to prepare a report on the 2010 Census preparations including:

- (i) The Status of the Preparatory Work put in place relative to the conduct of the 2010 Census in their respective countries;
- (ii) Expected Cost of the 2010 Census Round and a breakdown of expected funding from the respective Governments and other sources of funds being sought from International and other organisations;
- (iii) Priority areas of assistance required; and
- (iv) Proposed Census Day.

2. RATIONALE FOR A REGIONALLY CO-ORDINATED APPROACH TO THE 2010 THE CENSUS

The rationale behind the use of a regionally coordinated approach to Census taking in the CARICOM Region is to enable methodological uniformity and comparability in the Census data collected across countries. Harmonisation of the methodologies is of critical importance to the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and the need to have a common platform for monitoring and evaluating developments across countries.

The regional strategy promotes the use of uniform concepts and definitions, a common core of questions on the Census questionnaires, technical co-operation and possibilities for the sharing of expertise and facilities. Recommended core questions for the 2010 Census Round include statistics on Free Movement, on Internet access/usage and on Disability. The CARICOM Secretariat has also embarked on the establishment of an online facility to enable access to Census tabulations which would help fill the needs of researchers, policy-makers, decision-makers and other users.

Ultimately the regional approach is aimed at the production and dissemination of comparable, high-quality data on key attributes of the population and on the housing stock that can be made available in a timely manner for use by policy-makers and other users. The key principles that underscore the Common Census Framework include the following:

- The methodological and technical processes through which Population and Housing Censuses are conducted are relatively homogeneous as reflected in the United Nations Principles and Recommendations in this area including its latest revision;
- In addition, social and demographic developments in the Caribbean are relatively similar with regard to the traditional and new challenges facing the Region;
- The methodological advances and technological developments have the potential to standardise census taking across countries of the region and facilitate greater conformity;

The Common Census approach would result in greater cost effectiveness; in the achievement of economies of scale; and, more comparable data across countries and more reliable regional aggregation. As for previous Census Rounds, the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) would monitor the regional strategy of support and be the vehicle for discussing common problems, developing strategies that can assist countries and enabling general support for the conduct of the censuses in the countries. The RCCC which comprises the Directors of Statistics/Chief Statisticians, Census

Officers, and regional and international organisations, will in turn report to the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS).

The Regional Census Strategy has received funds from a number of sources which include:

- (i) A project jointly funded by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) under the approach of the Common Census Framework Project was signed in 2007;
- (ii) The Department of International Development (The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland acting through DFID) has provided funds to support activities under the Common Census Framework. Areas of support include preparation of census mapping, conduct of training workshops and census data processing;
- (iii) The United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) has also supported the 2010 Round of Censuses through the conduct of a Regional Workshop in 2007 on Census Management and Training - Mapping and Geographic Information Systems. The UNSD has promised further support through convening or assisting with the facilitation of training workshops.
- (iv) The UNFPA has funded training workshop on Census Data Capture and a Meeting of Census Experts to discuss Experiences of the 2000 Round as it can provide lessons learnt/best practices for the 2010 Round (Recommended by the RCCC);
- (v) The CARICOM Secretariat and the UNFPA have embarked on the establishment of a Resource Consortium which provides a broad framework for cooperation to support Member States through further collaborative and reinforcing activities. The primary purpose of the Consortium is to act as a clearing house by providing a mechanism for obtaining technical, financial and other related assistance to support the Census activity in Member States and Associate Members. This Resource Consortium is expected to strengthen coordination of resources among International agencies that

wish to provide support, avoiding duplication of efforts in supporting the implementation of the 2010 Round of Censuses in the Region.

3. STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF REGIONAL ACTIVITIES AND FORTHCOMING ACTIVITIES SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2009

The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat has been active in its conduct of activity to countries to support the 2010 Census exercise. With respect to the Status of Implementation of Regional Activities in support of the 2010 Census the following activities have been implemented to support countries with the preparation and conduct of their censuses:

- **2005/6** - The CARICOM Secretariat conducted a Census Symposium in 2005 to discuss the experiences of the 2000 Round of Census as a platform for the preparatory work required to enable greater efficiency in the conduct of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in countries of the Region. Support for this symposium was received from the UNFPA and the United Nations Development Programme. Further, with support from the United Nations Population Fund, the CARICOM Secretariat also executed a Consultancy in 2006 to define an outline strategy of support to Member States and Associate Members in the 2010 Round of Censuses.
- **2006–2009** – *Strengthening Capacity in Demographic Analysis in CARICOM – Demographic Analysis Workshops* executed by the CARICOM Secretariat. This training programme is aimed at building capacity in Demographic Analysis in the Region through training courses of 7-week duration. The multi-year programme of training in Demographic Analysis seeks to address the training needs of statisticians and social policy formulators in the Region providing a critical mass of persons in this area of statistics and data analysis. Three (3) workshops have been conducted during 2006 to 2008, the first workshop being funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and the remaining workshops by the

Caribbean Development Bank. A short-course for senior personnel on the Principles of Demography was also conducted in January this year.

- **September 2007** – *A UNFPA Regional Workshop for Preparatory Activities, Analysis and Exchange of Experience for the Successful Implementation of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses for Latin America and the Caribbean* was held in Panama. The workshop reviewed the implementation of the 2000 Population and Housing Censuses, promoted collaboration between the countries and the international organisations, shared relevant information, including strategies for advocacy of the 2010 Round and identified lessons learnt on successful advocacy strategies.
- **October 2007** – *A Regional Workshop on Census Cartography and Management* organised by the UNSD in collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat was held in Trinidad and Tobago. The workshop highlighted the significant additional capabilities of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and other geospatial technologies in census mapping activities, including preparation of enumeration, enumeration operations, advanced analysis and dissemination of census data and how to successfully implement and use the technologies.
- **2007 and Ongoing** – *Establishment of Resource Consortium*. The work on the establishment of the consortium (jointly done by UNFPA and CARICOM Secretariat) commenced last year and it is to be launched in October 2008.
- **March 2008** - *UNFPA Training on Census Data Capture and Processing Using CSPro 4.0*. In collaboration with the CARICOM Secretariat, UNFPA conducted this workshop in Jamaica which focused on the IT aspects of data capturing, cleaning, tabulation, e-publishing and mapping results.
- **March 2008** - *Meeting of Population and Housing Census Experts* which was held in Jamaica to discuss challenges and best practices in the 2000 Round (funded by UNFPA, DFID and Member States and Associate Members).

- **May 2008** – *CARICOM Workshop on the Design of a Common Questionnaire* for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses. This is one component of the Common Census Framework Project funded by the IDB/UNFPA. A Draft Common Questionnaire which comprises a core of questions recommended for use in the Region and a set of non-core questions which may be included.
- **2008 and on-going** – *An assessment of mapping and GIS status* in Member States and Associate Members. The CARICOM Secretariat has started gathering information on the extent of assistance Member States and Associate Members will need on mapping and setting up of GIS for possible intervention (funded by DFID)
- **May 2009**- Back-to-back workshops on Census Organisation and Administration and Common Methodologies Workshop. The workshop on Census Organisation and Administration.

The workshop on Census Organisation and Administration was a recommendation emanating from the 15th Meeting of the RCCC which was held in Paramaribo, Suriname and sought to enhance management skills for the proper organisation and administration of the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses; to develop of a knowledge base in census organisation and administration; to promote awareness of the entire census processes in theory and practice; and to facilitate andf interchange of experience and ideas on census organisation and administration. The second workshop sought to reach consensus on the common methodologies-concepts, definitions, methods and other approaches to data collection in the 2010 Census Round.

Forthcoming Activities

The following activities are scheduled for the rest of this year:

- In late September/early October the CARICOM Secretariat would convene a workshop in Census Data processing aimed at improving on

this critical area that negatively affected the timeliness and quality of the 2000 Census results;

- During the first two weeks in October the Secretariat would also convene in collaboration with other agencies CensusInfo training workshop. CensusInfo has been developed by the United Nations Statistics Division, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) to implement the dissemination of Census data. It is based on the DevInfo database system.
- The 17th Meeting of the Regional Census Coordinating Committee (RCCC) is scheduled to be convened during the last week in October during which time stocktaking with respect to the status of preparation of countries of the Region will be undertaken; and the process of guiding, monitoring, evaluating and making recommendations to support the process in countries would be conducted.
- A Training-of-Trainers (TOT) workshop would be implemented in early November to train personnel on the common census methodologies. Meanwhile consultants have been recruited to design the questionnaire template, corresponding manuals, to provide technical assistance in the questionnaire design, to facilitate the TOT workshop and to provide assistance to countries in the preparation of the census methodologies.

While the CARICOM Secretariat in collaboration with other agencies is providing support for the conduct of a harmonized approach to Census-taking in the Region and helping countries in need, the responsibility for executing and financing the Census exercise is that of Member States/Associate Members. Given the importance of this exercise to the development of countries and the region, and to the strengthening of the National Statistical Systems, Governments of the Region have been urged to provide the resources for the conduct of this exercise at the National level. Particular attention is to be directed to the enactment of the Census legislation, establishing an effective publicity programme to elicit response from the population, and incorporating a mechanism for the

timely processing and early release of the Census Results for policy formulation and decision-making.