

Statistical Commission

Forty-seventh session

8-11 March 2016

Item 3 (a): Data and indicators for the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Submitted by Barbados on behalf of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS)

ATTACHMENT II

SCCS/2015/40/11

Statement to Address the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNECLAC) Selection Criteria for Membership to The Inter-agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG) and High Level Group (HLG)

1. The Forty-Sixth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) recommended the establishment of an Interagency Expert Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (IAEG-SDG) and a High Level Group (HLG) and also agreed that the UN Regional Commissions should be given the responsibility of the selection of countries to the IAEG-SDG and the HLG in their respective Regions.
2. In the Latin American and the Caribbean Region (LAC), UNECLAC had the responsibility for the selection process. Five countries from the Region were to be selected to each group.
3. The UNECLAC assigned the responsibility for the selection of countries in the Region to the Executive of the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA) which was chaired by Ecuador.
4. The SCA Executive developed a voting mechanism that was based on the M49 geographic grouping which is a categorization that is used by the UNSD for statistical convenience.
5. The implication of this categorization was that the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) were not in one group; namely Belize was placed in Central America and Guyana and Suriname in one of the South American groups.

6. The SCA Executive proceeded with the selection notwithstanding in spite of objections to this approach to the SCA, on the grounds which included:

- The placement of CARICOM countries into different groups implied that Belize, Guyana and Suriname could not be nominated by other CARICOM Member States or vice versa.
- The CARICOM Member States attempt to bring together countries at similar levels of development and therefore the interests of those countries of CARICOM that were placed in the Latin America grouping may not be well represented in the process.
- The Executive of the SCA comprised countries from outside of the LAC Region (Spain and Canada) which implies that these countries were included in the decision-making of country selections for a very sensitive political process.
- The selection mechanism did not allow for the selection of countries with the technical expertise that can best represent the Caribbean sub-region.
- Fundamentally, at the representational level of the UN Missions in New York, for the intergovernmental negotiating process, CARICOM countries caucus as one group of which Belize is the representative on the post-2015 development agenda.
- The M49 process that was used was inconsistent with the intergovernmental process and approach.

The SCCS is being asked to communicate to the UNSC and other relevant agencies the following:

1. The displeasure of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of Member States with the approach that was used to select countries to the IAEG-SDG and the HLG.
2. That the M49 categorization should not be used as a basis for the selection of countries to groups and therefore the selection process should not be a precedent.
3. That UNECLAC should not utilize a mechanism that includes countries from outside of the region in taking decisions on issues pertaining to the LAC Region, such as this present situation.
4. Consideration should be given to the special situations that exist in the CARICOM countries, including Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), as reflected in the terms of reference of the IAEG-SDG in determining the method of selection.

5. The CARICOM Member States should be undividable given their common challenges as SIDS, their recognition as one group in other global initiatives such as ICP and other political processes of the post-2015 era.
6. The NSOs also would like to express their concern that the CARICOM Secretariat was completely ignored in the process of developing the selection mechanism and communicating it to countries of CARICOM. The CARICOM Secretariat is the premier inter-governmental agency for the CARICOM Members States and was mandated by the 53rd meeting of the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) to provide technical guidance to the UN Missions in New York.