



**MESSAGE FROM
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SECRETARY-GENERAL, CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM)
ON
THE FIFTEENTH OBSERVANCE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY
15 OCTOBER 2023**

Sunday, 15 October 2023 marks the fifteenth observance of **Caribbean Statistics Day**, when we take time to highlight the importance of statistics to inform the development strategies of the countries of our Caribbean Community (CARICOM) as we work at the national and regional levels to improve the lives of the people of the Community.

We also acknowledge the vital role played by statistical offices and other data collection agencies, which ensure that data is consistently gathered and collated to inform policymaking and the assessment of results.

The theme for this year's observance, "***One Voice, One CARICOM: Everyone Counts***", resonates deeply with our shared vision for regional integration and sustainable development. Caribbean Statistics Day underscores the critical role that statistics plays to achieve this vision, especially as we celebrate 50 years as a Caribbean Community, the longest surviving integration movement in the developing world.

"Everyone counts" are key watchwords which remind us of our vision of a Community where every citizen can realise his or her potential and where every effort is made to ensure food security, adequate housing, and opportunities for education and employment. In the spirit of our commitment to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), no one should be left behind and the benefits of progress must reach everyone, regardless of background or circumstances. Everyone counts and everyone must be counted.

Executing the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Census has been a major challenge in many of our Member States due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its lingering effects have resulted in postponement, significant delays, hesitancy among our respondents, and great difficulty finding and retaining capable enumerators.

I urge both Governments and citizens to support the National Statistical Offices in the Region to ensure that everyone is counted. Census data is critical to inform development policies by the public and private sectors, and other interest groups, as they seek to adequately provide for the current and future needs of the people of our Region. Our objective is to count every housing unit in every CARICOM country, and everyone in the population, giving an account, in aggregate, of every person's respective socio-economic situation in all Member States.

As we mark this Caribbean Statistics Day, we acknowledge the support of our development partners, and the unstinting service of our statisticians and data professionals who provide an essential service as they diligently collect, analyse, and disseminate critical data despite a myriad of challenges. They ensure that we continue to have the information necessary to navigate the economic and social crises brought on by the recent pandemic, annual weather events and other adverse circumstances, and their unwavering efforts contribute to the resilience and sustainable development of our Region.

We also express our appreciation to the United Nations Women Multi-Country Office for the Caribbean, with whom we collaborate under the Regional Spotlight Initiative, to mark Caribbean Statistics Day and to address the need for unity, inclusivity and collective responsibility in our efforts to end incidences of violence against our women and girls.

This year's theme demonstrates the Region's strong commitment to work together on common challenges like vulnerability, the climate crisis, migration, crime, and gender inequality. It also signals our readiness to exploit opportunities in tourism, agriculture, renewable energy, the blue economy and the creative economy. The availability and use of accurate and comprehensive statistics are essential to monitor these priorities, and to track our progress on regional integration initiatives, such as the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

The CARICOM Secretariat remains committed to support national statistical systems in the Community. Each CARICOM citizen or resident has a voice and must be captured in our statistics, as we seek to ensure a brighter, more inclusive and prosperous Community for generations to come.