



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

"ON THE OCCASION OF THE ELEVENTH OBSERVANCE OF CARIBBEAN STATISTICS DAY 15 OCTOBER 2019"

On this Eleventh Observance of Caribbean Statistics Day (CSD), I encourage us all to reflect on the power of statistics and how it impacts our daily lives, including in life and death situations such as natural disasters that affect us ever so often in CARICOM.

A very critical use of Statistics is in weather forecasting which uses statistical modelling techniques to make predictions or forecasts. More importantly, if it is the case that a hurricane is likely, modelling its path makes use of data that also inform on the number of persons that are likely to be affected.

It is therefore possible to warn or move persons out of these areas, and to provide basic data for national disaster management and other agencies that provide support and interventions after the event and to assess and to better inform the recovery efforts.

One important and interesting indicator that we try to measure in the Region is the Number of Households/Persons that are near to coastal areas. For some of our Member States this figure is approximately 100 percent.

The importance of such data was underlined in the aftermath of Hurricane Dorian which struck The Bahamas last month with loss of lives, destruction of property, damage to the infrastructure and overall devastation to parts of the country.

The Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) is therefore timely and necessary to strengthen and sustain statistics and modernise and transform the work being done in the regional and national statistics systems in order to assist us in **"Building the Resilience of the Caribbean Community"**. This is the theme for the Eleventh CSD commemoration, as it was for the previous year, because of its continued relevance to the Community. Strong regional statistical co-operation is vital in the achievement of a resilient Community.

Heads of Government endorsed the Strategic Framework for the RSDS at their Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting (Jamaica, July 2018) recognising that it is central to the advancement of the regional integration process. It is designed to make available harmonised, intra-regional statistics to guide and monitor its progress and to provide information for decision-making that is evidence-based.

The co-operation of Member States and support of our International Development Partners is vital for the implementation of the CARICOM RSDS.

In this the Eleventh Year of the CSD, I applaud CARICOM Statisticians for pursuing their dream and their vision of having a viable and effective CARICOM Statistical System. As Secretary-General of CARICOM, I have supported and will continue to support the strides that are being undertaken in this regard, led by the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians (SCCS).

This is all being pursued in an effort to improve the lives of the people of our Community.