

OPENING REMARKS- DA12 PROJECTT WEBINAR- INTRODUCTION TO
CLIMAE CHANGE AND DISASTER STATISTICS IN THE CARIBBEAN

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I would like to welcome everyone to this webinar on behalf of the CARICOM Secretariat- I wish to focus my remarks generally on the impact of climate change and for the need for statistics and specifically on Environment Statistics as a major starting point.

- As you are aware, Climate Change has impacted and is impacting CARICOM countries as Small Islands and Low-lying Developing States (SIDS), manifested through warm temperatures, the devastating impact of hurricanes, tropical storms and related extreme weather conditions;
- These occurrences, in turn, affect the health and general livelihoods of CARICOM citizens, food security, water supply, agriculture production, tourism, sea level rise, damage to bio-diversity, specifically, coral reefs and coastal erosion;
- Among some of the key issues of Climate Change that need to be attended to -are emissions of Greenhouse Gases, use of Fossil Fuels and the reversal of deforestation;
- There are limits to the ability or capacity to which countries can adapt to Climate Change. In this regard, countries such as those of CARICOM have committed to the achievement of internationally agreed-to development goals including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);
- Climate Change is a threat to the achievement of these goals and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development. Critically, monitoring and measuring the impact of Climate Change are imperatives that require timely, reliable official statistics.

- In this regard, special recognition must be given to the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), particularly Ms Reena Shah, who through the first ever UN Development Account project, introduced Environment Statistics in the CARICOM Region way back in 1999 under a joint programme with the CARICOM Secretariat. This resulted in the first regional publication “The CARICOM Environment in Figures” which has been regularly published since that time and has now reached a total of 4 regional publications over the 20 year-span. Furthermore, the CARICOM Secretariat has most recently published its first Climate Change Statistics report in 2020. This implies that we have been able to move from a core set of CARICOM Environment Indicators to a draft set of Climate Change /Disaster Indicators, under the five thematic areas of the FDES/ Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) namely, Drivers, Impact, Mitigation, Adaptation and Vulnerability, which we will present on during this webinar. These indicators can be considered during the group work that will be undertaken on draft Climate Change indicators.
- In this regard, the CARICOM Secretariat has commenced work on Mapping the CARICOM core Environment Indicators to the CARICOM Core SDG indicators and the FDES indicators. In this process we intend to identify the initial work done on Climate Change indicators which is still a work in progress by the UNSD.
- Capacity-building activities in Environment Statistics were also supported by other IDPs such as the World Bank under its Trust Fund for Statistical Capacity Building, and currently support is being received from the Government of Italy (through Istat- Italian National Institute of Statistics)- and from the Inter-American Development Bank. In the former case a series of webinars on Environment Statistics, that were instructive to countries were held during the fourth quarter last year and in the future there will be follow up webinars, including on Climate Change and on the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction. The IDB contributed to assessments of Environment Statistics in two countries, to the development of a database system for administrative data exchange at the national level and to a model data submission agreement (protocol) that countries can adapt, o strengthen inter-agency coordination, nationally.

- While there have been marked improvement in Environment Statistics, some NSOs still require capacity-building in this area of statistics and specifically on the FDES which is a building block to Climate Change and Disaster Statistics, as well as to Environmental Economic Accounting. Indeed in the latter area, environmental accounting, CARICOM countries are not yet ready to engage in these activities, not only from the need to focus on the fundamentals of Environment Statistics and the FDES, but also relative to the need to implement the System of National Accounts 2008, which is still a challenge in many countries.
- Statistics inform policy, therefore, Environment Statistics, the SDG Indicators, Climate Change and Disaster Statistics will together play a crucial role in reducing the impact and in enabling mitigating and adaptive solutions. Through evidence-based policy formulation it should be possible to effectively build economies that are climate change/disaster resilient and to meet the numerous reporting obligations that have been agreed to internationally/regionally.
- Adequate human and financial resources including statistical expertise in the area of environment statistics and the bringing on board of the several agencies that are relevant to this work must be addressed.
- This project is therefore is a step in the right direction in that it can contribute to work already put in place or currently being implemented by other institutions in CARICOM and in this regard I wish to thank ECLAC for their contribution and for recognizing the need to build on this ongoing work. I would particularly like to thank Ronaldo and his team for this support.
- I would like to close by commending Member States and Associate Members of CARICOM for their efforts- the core Environment and SDG indicators were developed by these countries working as a group and approved by them – ranging from the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians right up to the level of the Council of Ministers of Human and Social Development. The five regional publications were essentially possible because of work done at the national level that were then submitted to us or that we were able to research online. If countries do not implement we will have nothing to show

for the efforts put in place. Here's hoping for a successful webinar, I thank you.