

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF STATISTICIAN

As Guyana's central statistical agency the Bureau of Statistics (BOS) is once again pleased to spearhead the commemoration of Caribbean Statistics Day 2011 which is being celebrated today Friday the 14th October. On behalf of the statistics fraternity in Guyana, the BOS extends greetings and appreciation for continued support from both users and producers of statistics.

Bearing in mind the theme for this year's commemoration, "Recognizing the Essential Role of Statistics in the Development of the Caribbean Community", I take the opportunity to educate the public as to the role of the BOS.

The then Statistical Bureau was established as a department of Government in 1957, primarily to collect statistical information that was not being collected by any of the existing Departments or Ministries of the Central Government. As such its functions were initially limited and basically were targeted to prepare and publish those statistics which were not the responsibility of any existing Department to so collect and publish,

Prior to this, the collection and publication of statistics was decentralized and assigned to a few key government departments. In the early 1940s the then Sugar Producer's Association was responsible for the compilation of sugar statistics; the Agricultural Department had responsibilities for statistics on rice and the remainder of the agriculture sector; the Public Works Department was responsible for statistics on wages; and the Customs Department was in charge of trade statistics.

The volume and the scope of work undertaken by the Statistical Bureau increased tremendously after its establishment but it was not until 1965 that these functions were finally articulated in the Statistics Act No. 14 of 1965 and became Statutory. Section 3 of the said Act stipulated *inter alia* 'that for the purposes of this Act there shall be a Statistical Department ...'

The current Bureau of Statistics was in-corporated as a semi-autonomous body, outside the purview of the traditional public service by an Act of Parliament in October 1990.

In recent years the scope and volume of work of the Bureau of Statistics has further increased and has expanded into the areas of Poverty Measurement, generation of support data for the generation of MDG Indicators, and the conduct of Health surveys in support of the Ministry of Health all these being in addition of its core mandatory functions which include the measurement of the country's GDP, the economy's growth rate, the level of inflation, the magnitude and composition of Guyana's foreign trade, the generation of the key social sector and environmental indicators, the determination of the changing size and composition of the country's population, among others.

The Bureau has been able to meet its targets and increase its outputs year after year due to a small but dedicated staff of workers supported by the Hon. Minister of Finance who carries the portfolio responsibility for Statistics. In recognizing the third observance of Caribbean Statistics Day I take this opportunity to say thank you to both staff of the Bureau and the Hon. Minister of Finance and recommit to the task of providing both the policy makers and the populace with the best quality of Statistics during the years to come and to commit the Bureau to the continued development of Regional statistics through our unswerving commitment to the Regional Statistics Work Programme under the excellent coordinative effort of the Caricom Secretariat's Statistics Division.

Lennox Benjamin

Chief Statistician.

13th October, 2011.