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Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

Expert Group Meeting on MDGs and IADGs Monitoring
in the Caribbean
Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
2-3 February 2009

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EVALUATION REPORT

Expert Group Meeting on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs) Monitoring in the Caribbean

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INTRODUCTION

In fulfilment of the objectives of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD)-commissioned project on the “*Monitoring of MDGs in the Caribbean*”, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) convened a two-day expert group meeting of statisticians and development experts on 2-3 February 2009, in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. The objectives of this expert meeting were to:

- (a) Identify the status of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) reporting in the Caribbean (at the national and regional levels);
- (b) Discuss concepts applied for data collection and reporting; and
- (c) Identify areas in need of technical assistance through the project.

This report presents the assessment of the views of the participants following the two-day meeting.

EVALUATION METHOD

A total of 21 statisticians and experts from civil society, national statistical offices and regional/international organizations attended the meeting. At the end of the second day, all meeting participants were asked to complete an evaluation form which assessed their views of various aspects of the meeting. Thirteen of the attendees completed this form, for a total response rate of 61.9%.

The evaluation consisted of 14 items which took the form of both open-ended and rating scale questions.

SUMMARY

Participants’ expectations

The first four questions in the evaluation sought the participant’s views on the extent to which the meeting objectives were met and participants’ expectations were fulfilled. In the initial question participants were asked to rate the extent to which the objectives of the workshop were met. Of the 12 respondents, nine indicated that the objectives were met “completely” and three indicated that they were met “partially”.

Without exception, respondents’ expectations of the meeting were centred around “sharing of experiences with counterparts on MDG monitoring and reporting”. In addition, respondents cited the meeting as a forum for “understanding the regional strategy for coordinating MDG activities”, “evaluating issues faced in compiling MDG indicators” and identifying “technical assistance in addressing conceptual issues with data capturing and coordination”. The full list of participants’ expectations is given at Annex II.

Following from the expectations articulated in question 2, participants were asked to rate the extent to which those expectations were actually satisfied. The 12 responses for this item were split equally between the options of “completely” satisfied and “partially” satisfied. Reasons identified for indicating partial satisfaction included:

- “it was not clear what level of input was needed therefore there was little participation by the smaller countries”;
- “very valuable and useful discussion but I am not sure that the regional coordinating strategy has been clearly described”;
- “participation of smaller countries or islands in the discussions was minor; identifying areas in need for technical assistance was not discussed thoroughly”;
- “it would have been helpful to have real data from the countries so that more substantive questions could have been asked”;
- “I don’t think that the areas in need for technical assistance were completely identified. Perhaps time did not allow”;
- “the issues raised will provide ECLAC with the gaps that need to be filled – but at the national level, nothing new was forthcoming”;
- “I thought there would have been an action plan to address the gaps”.

Participants’ impressions of the workshop

(i) *Presentations*

Participants were asked to rate the delivery of presentations for each session using a 5-point Likert scale with 1 implying “Very Good” and 5 implying “Very Poor”. Only about 75% of the respondents actually gave feedback for this item and this low response rate could have been attributed to layout of the question. The responses are summarized below:

	Very good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor	No response	Total
Session 1	4	5	1	0	0	3	13
Session 2	4	6	0	0	0	3	13
Session 3	4	5	1	0	0	3	13
Session 4	6	4	0	0	0	3	13
Session 5	4	4	0	0	0	5	13

(ii) *Practical experience*

As for the previous question, participants' views on the "practical experience of the seminar" were captured using a 5-point Likert Scale. With the exception of one participant who did not respond, the 12 remaining respondents rated the experience as either "very good" or "good", with "good" being the modal rating.

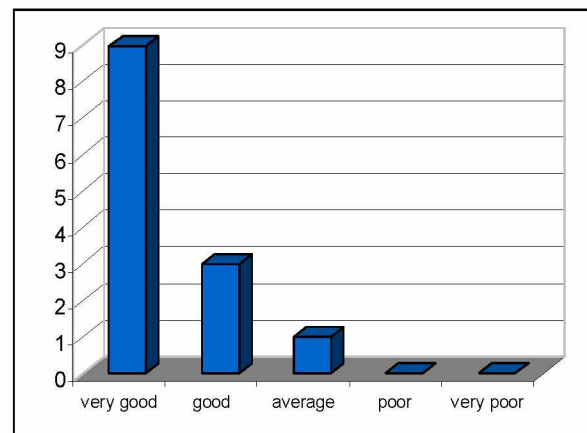
(iii) *Rating of varied aspects of the workshop*

Participants were also given an opportunity to rate or assess some additional aspects of the workshop. Those responses are captured in the table below:

	Very Useful	Moderately Useful	Inappropriate	Potentially Useful	No response	Total
Overall presentation by facilitators	10	3	0	0	0	13
Opportunity of participation	11	1	0	1	0	13
Response of panellists to my questions	7	4	0	0	2	13

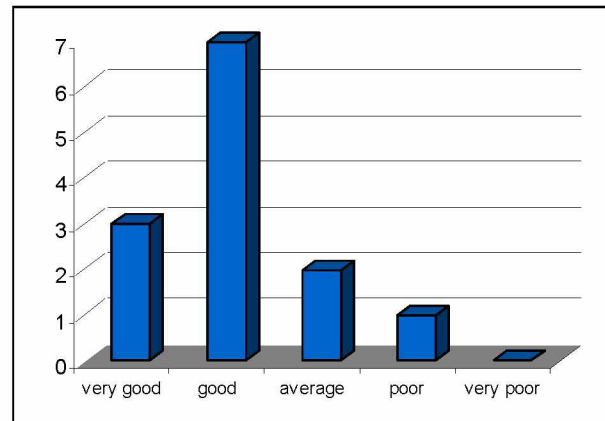
(iv) *Opportunity for sharing national experiences*

Participants' responses to the usefulness of the forum in affording an "opportunity for sharing national experiences" received very positive ratings, as detailed below.



(v) **Logistics**

Participants' assessments of the logistical arrangements for the workshop were as follows:



In response to the question of whether the logistics enriched or detracted from the seminar, nine of the 10 participants who responded to this question indicated that it “enriched” the session. A few participants provided additional comments and cited that an alternative venue might have been more appropriate.

Impact of the skills and knowledge of the seminar on future work

Participants were asked to register their comments on how they would put the skills and knowledge acquired from the meeting in practice in their respective countries. While the responses varied in terms of detail, there was a thread of similarity among the responses which were classified in order of frequency related to three key areas:

- (a) DevInfo;
- (b) Enhancement of coordination among line ministries and statistics office;
- (c) Revival or establishment of MDG committees

Topics to be included

In response to the open-ended question on what topics should have been included, only two points were cited:

- “IT to facilitate data sharing and inter-office communication”;
- “A more in-depth look at DevInfo. More time spent on “Best Practices: using examples. Approaches to gain serious buy-in from policymakers and key stakeholders”.

Topics that should be excluded

In addition to seeking participants' feedback on topics that could have been included, the survey also sought to capture some views on topics that could have been excluded. This generated very little response and those who commented indicated that "all topics were relevant" and "useful".

General comments

In the final section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to provide general comments on the meeting. The majority of respondents provided very positive comments on the meeting and those were articulated in comments such as "excellent conference/ seminar"; "very informative meeting; objectives were clear; future meetings should build on it". Respondents also registered their views on the usefulness of the forum indicating that:

- "was a very practical useful information exchange. The program has helped to clarify the important issues and the strategies that are needed for future success";
- "...seminar exceeded all expectations with regard to interactive content. Very informative sessions and helps greatly in providing a starting point for future activity";
- "very fruitful to the exchange ideas and experiences with other CSOs in the Caribbean region; looking forward for follow-up and planned workshops by ECLAC";
- "thoughts shared were very detailed and beneficial. All seemed very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Hope to experience benefits".

In a few instances, respondents' feedback took the form of recommendations which would inform subsequent meetings. In that regard the following were suggested:

- "it would be useful to provide material in preparation for coming to the conference";
- "should follow up with similar effort on the other aspects of the development agenda not just poverty-related issues; e.g. sustainability of the development efforts";
- "the presentation on the development model should be expanded and extended to each country";
- "to have presentations/ documentation on a CD for participants".

Other comments related to the arrangements and venue for the meeting. In that regard, respondents cited the location of the hotel and lack of “accessibility and communication” as concerns.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation demonstrated a very positive response to all questions and the usefulness of the forum in stimulating discussions and exchanges among key stakeholders on MDGs in the Caribbean.

Annex I

Evaluation Form

Objective: The objectives of this Seminar were to: (1) identify the status of MDG monitoring and reporting in the Caribbean (national and regional level), (2) discuss concepts applied for data collection and reporting and (3) to identify areas in need for technical assistance through the project

1. Circle the words which best describe the extent to which you believe the objectives of the organizers were met:

- 1. completely
- 2. partially
- 3. not at all

2. What were your expectations for this Seminar?

.....
.....
.....

3. Circle the word(s) which best describe the extent to which your expectations for this Seminar were satisfied:

- 1. completely
- 2. partially
- 3. not at all

4. If the answer to 2 is any statement other than 'completely', please state in what way your expectations were not realized.

.....
.....
.....

5. Using the scale below (1 - 5), how would you evaluate the delivery of the various presentations:

1. Very good 2. Good 3. Average 4. Poor 5. Very poor

Session 1:
Session 2:
Session 3:
Session 4:
Session 5:

6. Indicate by means of a check sign how you evaluate the practical experience of the Seminar:

- Very good Good Average Poor Very poor

7. Using the scale 1-4, please rate the following:

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Very useful | 2. Moderately useful |
| 3. Inappropriate | 4. Potentially useful |

- Overall presentation by facilitator(s)
 Opportunity for participation
 Response of panellist(s) to my questions

8. How would you evaluate the opportunity for sharing of national experiences:

- Very good Good Average Poor Very poor

9. How would you evaluate the logistics (venue, administrative and technical support):

- Very good Good Average Poor Very poor

10. Did the logistics enrich the Seminar or detract from it:

- Enriched Detract

11. How will you use the experience and knowledge gained during this Seminar to enhance the development of your national ICT policies?

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12. List below any topics you think should have been included.

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13. List below any topics you would have excluded.

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.....

14. General comments.

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SIGNING THIS EVALUATION IS OPTIONAL

Annex II

Participants' responses to open-ended questions

2. What are your expectations of the seminar?

- Adequate information on the activities of countries re: the MDGS; challenges facing the countries; sharing of information, ideas, useful information on data availability; methods;
- It was rather interesting meeting and I have learnt a great deal, especially the different experiences shared from the various countries;
- Understand country experiences and successes; understand the regional strategy for coordinating the MDG activities;
- Sharing experiences, formulate strategies and the next step forward;
- Information on how the Caribbean as distinct from LA is progressing in meeting the MDGs;
- To determine new (radical) far-reaching approaches to tackling endemic problems such as little or no political compulsion;
- Highlighting of issues with regard to data collection and analysts. Quite similar to yours;
- Get a good picture of the state of MDG reporting in the region;
- Some direction for the way forward at the national and regional levels ;
- To evaluate the issues faced in compiling the MDG indicators, country experiences solving data gaps;
- Sharing of experience with counterparts in MDG monitoring and reporting; availability of technical assistance in addressing conceptual issues with data capturing and coordination; the role of ECLAC in helping national statistical offices;
- To dialogue and to form a work plan to ensure that all Caribbean countries (particularly those that have not yet reported) are in a better position to monitor and sustain the effort;
- Receive information on MDG reporting in the other Caribbean countries; what are the problems that are being met?; what possible solutions and possibilities for cooperation and technical assistance?

4. In what way were the expectations not realized (for respondents whose expectations were "partially" fulfilled)

- It was not clear what level of input was needed therefore there was little participation by the smaller countries;
- Very valuable and useful discussion but I am not sure that the regional coordinating strategy has been clearly described;
- Participation of smaller countries or islands in the discussions was minor; identifying areas in need for technical assistance was not discussed thoroughly;
- It would have been helpful to have real data from the countries so that more substantive questions could have been asked;
- I don't think that the areas in need for technical assistance were completely identified. Perhaps time did not allow;
- The issues raised will provide ECLAC with the gaps that need to be filled – but at the national level, nothing new was forthcoming;
- I thought there would have been an action plan to address the gaps.

11. **How will you use the experience and knowledge gained during the seminar to enhance development of national MDG policies?**

- Incorporate suggestions; look carefully at DevInfo; contact participants for data;
- To ensure that the Central Statistical office as well as the line ministries be fully aware of the importance of the monitoring process;
- I will return with greater determination to get the MDG report finished and to deepen co-operation among stakeholders;
- Aggressively sketch the need for participation in MDG working groups and steering committee;
- Actively research DevInfo;
- The experience strengthens my intention to bring all satellite statistical offices for scheduled discussions for matters relating to national statistical coordination;
- Provide scope and direction with regard to interaction with line ministries;
- Informative;
- I would revive ICT policies to ensure relevant and monitoring MDG goals.
- Info will be used to prepare a proposal to advance the implementation of DevInfo in the DOS and to the relative line ministries;
- Setting up the organization of MDGs regularly in our country; Impact for census questionnaire; better cooperation with the administrative sources and ministries.

14. **General comments:**

- Excellent seminar/ conference. Should follow up with similar effort on the other aspects of the development agenda not just poverty-related issues; e.g. sustainability of the development efforts. Please find a way to share specific technical expertise among the statistics units – a project maybe?
- I am grateful for the opportunity to have been her and it was quite heartening to know that the UNECLAC is part of the development force behind the monitoring of the MDGs;
- This was a very practical useful information exchange. The program has helped to clarify the important issues and the strategies that are needed for future success;
- I would prefer a location where fast food restaurants and shopping mall are in walking distance. I suggest for future conferences to have the presentations; documentation on a CD for participants. Also a group picture would be nice;
- It would be useful to provide material in preparation for coming to the conference; the Caribbean sometimes suffers when its statistics are combined with those of LA – especially when LA's statistics are bad!
- Thoughts shared were very detailed and beneficial. All seemed very enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Hope to experience benefits;
- As Karoline said, seminar exceeded all expectations with regard to interactive content. Very informative sessions and helps greatly in providing a starting point for future activity;
- The meeting facilities were good but the selection of hotel for visitors was not the best choice as accessibility and communication were difficult; the presentation on the development model should be expanded and extended to each country;
- Very informative meeting; objectives were clear; future meetings should build on this one;
- Very fruitful to the exchange ideas and experiences with other CSOs in the Caribbean region; looking forward for follow-up and planned workshops by ECLAC.