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A CARIBBEAN THAT COUNTS

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ABOUT ECLAC/CDCC

The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is one of five regional commissions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It was established in 1948 to support Latin American governments in the economic and social development of that region. Subsequently, in 1966, the Commission (ECLA, at that time) established the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean in Port of Spain to serve all countries of the insular Caribbean, as well as Belize, Guyana and Suriname, making it the largest United Nations body in the subregion.

At its sixteenth session in 1975, the Commission agreed to create the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) as a permanent subsidiary body, which would function within the ECLA structure to promote development cooperation among Caribbean countries. Secretariat services to the CDCC would be provided by the subregional headquarters for the Caribbean. Nine years later, the Commission's widened role was officially acknowledged when the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) modified its title to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

Key Areas of Activity

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean (ECLAC/CDCC secretariat) functions as a subregional think-tank and facilitates increased contact and cooperation among its membership. Complementing the ECLAC/CDCC work programme framework, are the broader directives issued by the United Nations General Assembly when in session, which constitute the Organisation's mandate. At present, the overarching articulation of this mandate is the Millenium Declaration, which outlines the Millenium Development Goals.

Towards meeting these objectives, the Secretariat conducts research; provides technical advice to governments, upon request; organizes intergovernmental and expert group meetings; helps to formulate and articulate a regional perspective within global forums; and introduces global concerns at the regional and subregional levels.

Areas of specialization include trade, statistics, social development, science and technology, and sustainable development, while actual operational activities extend to economic and development planning, demography, economic surveys, assessment of the socio-economic impacts of natural disasters, climate change, data collection and analysis, training, and assistance with the management of national economies.

The ECLAC subregional headquarters for the Caribbean also functions as the Secretariat for coordinating the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The scope of ECLAC/CDCC activities is documented in the wide range of publications produced by the subregional headquarters in Port of Spain.

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CONTENTS

FOCUS: ECLAC in the Caribbean is a publication of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) subregional headquarters for the Caribbean/Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC).

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A CARIBBEAN THAT COUNTS

The Caribbean is making steady progress towards implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other relevant frameworks including the SAMOA Pathway on Small Island Developing States (SIDS). This year, The Bahamas and Jamaica joined Aruba, Belize, Curacao and Sint Maarten (as part of the Kingdom of The Netherlands) as the only countries of the Caribbean thus far to have presented their Voluntary National Reviews[1] (VNRs) to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

In 2019, Guyana and Saint Lucia are due to present their VNRs. This is not only an encouraging trend but a reflection of the increased awareness and acknowledgement of the importance of national ownership in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Governments are now eager to institute national mechanisms for implementing, monitoring and reporting on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

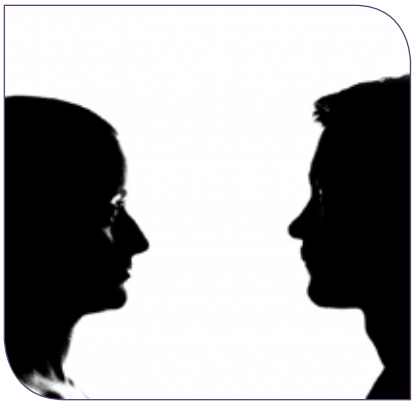
The importance of data – high quality, timely, and disaggregated data – is routinely highlighted in national and subregional dialogues, centering on the SDGs. Discussions in the VNRs have more pointedly alluded to the inadequacy of data and the countries have generally identified statistical capacity as an area of challenge. Belize, during the presentation of its VNR in July 2017, indicated that "a significant challenge in achievement of the GSDS (Growth and Sustainable Development Strategy) and SDG targets is the collection and management of data which is a key component of successful achievement of goals and targets and the ability to make evidence-based decisions."[2] The Bahamas echoed a similar message in their VNR, presented in July 2018, declaring that "strengthening the country's statistical capacity to produce high quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data, is particularly critical to support effective policy and decision-making and to ensure the continuous review of the country's progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals."[3] Jamaica, arguably one of the countries with the most advanced statistical capacity in the subregion, echoed the challenge when they reported in the Statistical Annex[4] to their VNR presented in July 2018 that only 36.9 per cent of the indicators on the Global SDG Indicators Framework could be produced by the country, although almost half of the unavailable indicators fell under Tier III.[5] Notably, the report highlights the disproportionate lack of data for environmental indicators.

The data challenge in the Caribbean is not new. However, the demand for monitoring and measurement integral to Agenda 2030, is of necessity putting a spotlight on the need for enhanced capacity in data and statistics. At ECLAC, there is also a renewed focus on the unique challenges facing the Caribbean. Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, this year launched the "Caribbean First Initiative", which places Caribbean issues on the forefront of ECLAC's agenda.

ECLAC Caribbean is currently implementing a project to strengthen institutional frameworks in the Caribbean for an integrative approach to the implementation of not only the 2030 Agenda but also the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) sustainable development agenda that includes the SAMOA Pathway and the Sendai Framework. A critical component of this project is statistical capacity building in beneficiary countries to improve national capacities to review and follow-up on the implementation of these internationally-agreed development goals and frameworks. Improved statistical capacity is also essential for national development planning, including for disaster-risk reduction planning and post-disaster reconstruction. ECLAC's experience in conducting Damage and Loss Assessments in countries affected by hurricanes Maria and Irma in 2017 has shown the fragility of the data ecosystem of most Caribbean countries, especially vis-à-vis long-term development planning. Data for development planning are scanty and in instances where data are available, they are seldom sufficiently disaggregated to help identify disparities that might be due to gender, age, and geographical location. Meanwhile, the 2030 Agenda will require much more. Not only will data have to be disaggregated by sex, age, and geographical location, SDG indicators will need to be disaggregated by income, race, ethnicity, migratory status, and disability, where relevant. A bold effort is required to achieve this, given the uneven state of national statistical systems in the Caribbean.

▸ (continued on page 13)

[1] See FOCUS Magazine, Issue 3, July-September 2017 for an explanation of the VNRs and the HLPF process.
[2] Belize's Voluntary National Review for the Sustainable Development Goals 2017: Eradicating Poverty and Promoting Prosperity in a Changing World, p. 8. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16389Belize.pdf.
[3] The Bahamas Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals to the High Level Political Forum of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, July 2018, p. 10. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19874VNR_document_03.07.18_master_document.pdf.
[4] Jamaica Voluntary National Review Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. June 2018. Statistical Annex. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19508Jamaica_VNR_Statistical_Annex_2018_FINAL.pdf
[5] See FOCUS Magazine, Issue 3, July-September 2017 for an explanation of the three tiers of the global SDG indicators.



GENDER DISPARITIES IN THE CARIBBEAN: BRIDGING GENDER DATA GAPS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

Lydia Rosa Gény*

Gender data and statistics are a "numerical representation of facts that are located in time and space. They are important in supporting the elimination of stereotypes on gender, the formulation of policies and the follow-up of progress towards the achievement of full equality between men and women". [1]

Gender equality refers to 'the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development'.[2] For ECLAC, equality is an idée-force that has become the fundamental value that the development model must achieve, which requires the State to play a crucial role in attaining thresholds of wellbeing for the whole population, without leaving no-one behind.[3] Identifying trends, progress and gaps in gender equality in a comparative and timely manner requires the systematic implementation of a gender perspective in the production and dissemination of data. This means that not only should gender data be disaggregated by sex and other variables, such as age, race, ethnicity, health, marital and migratory status, socioeconomic background, education, geographical location, but also that the planning and implementation of censuses[4] and household, demographic and health surveys, as well as the collection, processing and classification of administrative records include a gender lens. This can be achieved through the design of questionnaires and other data collection instruments that facilitate the collection, processing, analysis, and dissemination of data that are adequately disaggregated by sex and other variables. By so doing, gender statistics would become a pivotal tool in highlighting the different forms of inequalities in the social, economic, and environmental areas that affect different groups of women and men, and to prepare evidence-based actions to overcome them.

STRENGTHENING GENDER DATA: A PRIORITY IN THE CARIBBEAN

All Caribbean governments have reiterated their commitment to improving the generation of gender data and statistics, particularly in the framework of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of discrimination against Women (CEDAW).[5]

However, in their review of the latest national reports submitted by Caribbean countries, the CEDAW Committee[6] highlighted concerns about the lack of data disaggregated by sex, age, disability, race, ethnicity and other criteria which hinders the assessment of the impact and effectiveness of public policies and programmes in improving the wellbeing of its population and the enjoyment of their human rights.[7] This data gap includes the absence of disaggregated data regarding domestic, sexual and other forms of gender-based violence.[8]

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for

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[1] Original text in Spanish, please see: 'La estadística de género es una representación numérica de hechos que se ubican en el tiempo y el espacio. Juega un papel importante en la eliminación de estereotipos, en la formulación de políticas y en su seguimiento para el logro de la plena igualdad entre mujeres y hombres' in Technical Assistance Guide for the Production and Use of Gender Indicators (ECLAC, 2006), p.18. [Publication name translated into English]. https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/31960-guia-asistencia-tecnica-la-produccion-uso-indicadores-genero

[2] UN Women, OSAGI Gender Mainstreaming - Concepts and definitions

[3] ECLAC, Gender equality plans in Latin America and the Caribbean: Road maps for development, 2017, p.11.

[4] Please see more information regarding the next round of censuses in the Caribbean: Samantha John-Aloye, Abdullahi Abdulkadri, Planning for the 2030 round of population censuses in the Caribbean, ECLAC Studies and Perspectives- The Caribbean No.68, 2018, Available at: https://www.cepal.org/en/publications/43361-planning-2020-round-population-censuses-caribbean

[5] General Recommendation No.9: Statistical data concerning the situation of women, adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against women, eighth session, 1989.

[6] Alicia Mondesire, Caribbean synthesis review and appraisal report on the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, ECLAC Studies and Perspective Series- The Caribbean No.42, 2015

[7] Barbados, Concluding Observations CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8 (24 July 2017) paras 15-16; Suriname, CEDAW/C/SUR/Q/4-6/Add.1 (18 December 2017); Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, CEDAW/C/VCT/CO/4-8 (28 July 2015) paras.46-47; Guyana, Concluding Observations, CEDAW/C/GUY/CO/7-8 (9-27 July 2012), para.40.

[8] Barbados, Concluding Observations, CEDAW/C/BRB/CO/5-8 (24 July 2017), para.16; Trinidad and Tobago, Concluding Observations, CEDAW/C/TTO/CO/4-7 (27 July 2016) para.21; Grenada, Concluding Observations, CEDAW/C/GRD/CO/1-5 (22 March 2012), para.23; Jamaica, Concluding Observations, CEDAW/C/JAM/CO/6-7 (9-27 July 2012) para.22.

Sustainable Development. As part of the implementation of this new global Agenda and the monitoring of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, all member States are required to mainstream gender[9] in policies and programmes. This has also been highlighted at international and regional events, including at the first United Nations World Data Forum in 2017, at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), and at the sessions of the Forum of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean on Sustainable Development in 2017 and 2018. Meanwhile, the last Global Forum on Gender Statistics in 2016 noted that only 50 per cent of global indicators identified as relevant for a gender analysis had data available for global monitoring and less than 25% had data disaggregated by sex.[10]

Over the last 40 years, Caribbean countries have been active in shaping the regional gender agenda, which aims at strengthening national statistical production systems in order to include a gender perspective in analysis and create a bank of gender indicators; and to develop instruments for periodic measurement of unpaid work.[11] More recently, within the remit of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030, adopted in 2016, Governments of the subregion have included a specific pillar on establishing and strengthening gender national statistical systems. This includes the improvement of coverage, quality, periodicity, and comparability of disaggregated and disseminated statistics and indicators, as well as the promotion of time-use surveys.[12] The 2030 Agenda and the Regional Gender Agenda could, reinvigorate the promotion of gender data in the Caribbean for the next 12 years, not only for the follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals, but also in support of other agendas and platforms related to the Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA Pathway), Population and Development, Statistics, Social Development, and Human Rights,[13] among others.

In addition to providing the necessary information for evidence-based policies and programmes that could assist Caribbean countries in meeting their global commitments, gender data also serve as a powerful tool for showcasing disparities between different population groups, thus giving visibility to the challenges faced. In this regard, gender data can serve as an efficient policy instrument to make decision-makers aware of the needs of the different groups in society. They are then in a better position to respond with targeted and innovative measures. The dissemination and availability of gender data is a critical step in effectively addressing gender roles and stereotypes rooted in society and which contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities. For example, the results of time-use survey conducted in 17 countries in Latin America[14] have shown that women spend about one third of their time on unpaid domestic and care work in comparison to men, who spend only 10 per cent. This unpaid work was valued at between 15.2 per cent to 24.2 per cent of GDP.[15] Therefore, it is impossible to comprehensively understand and tackle the deep-rooted inequalities that are linked to the gender division of labour within the household if time-use data are unavailable.

EVIDENCE-BASED ACTIONS TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN THE SUBREGION

In seeking to promote a more equal society, Caribbean policy-makers should take greater advantage of existing data platforms, tools and instruments. At the international level, the UN Statistical Commission adopted in 2013 the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators, which is a collection of 52 quantitative indicators and 11 qualitative indicators addressing issues related to gender equality and women's empowerment.

These indicators are aimed at guiding national production and international compilation of gender statistics.[16] The UN has also recently published guidelines for integrating a gender perspective into statistics[17] and for collecting data on violence against women that emphasizes the need for specialized surveys in this area.[18] Other initiatives exist, including those by UN-WOMEN and the UN Foundation's the Data2X, which is a platform dedicated to improving the quality, availability and use of gender data worldwide.[19] The conduct of time-use surveys should also be seen as an essential component of any comprehensive plan to improve gender statistics in the Caribbean.

▸ (continued on page 12)

[9] Please see ECLAC Focus Magazine 'Achieving sustainable development with equality in the Caribbean: the Critical Role of Gender Mainstreaming' Issue 3 / July - September 2017.
[10] United Nations Secretariat Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division, Report of the Sixth Global Forum on Gender Statistics, ESA/STAT/AC.326/L3P (November 2016),p.18.
[11] See Consensuses of Santo Domingo (2013), Quito (2007), Lima (2000), Santiago (1997).
[12] Pillar 9 of the Montevideo Strategy for Implementation of the Regional Gender Agenda within the Sustainable Development Framework by 2030.
[13] Please see OHCHR a Human Rights-Based Approach to Data.
[14] Caribbean countries have not yet conducted any time-use survey.
[15] ECLAC, Lucia Scuro, Iliana Vaca-Trigo, Working paper 18, Time distribution: a key element of the inequality analysis, Conference of European Statisticians, Work session on Gender Statistics, UNECE, Belgrade-Serbia, 29 November- 1 December 2017.
[16] For more information: https://genderstats.un.org/#/home
[17] For more information: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/genderstatmanual/ and https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic-social/Standards-and-Methods/files/Handbooks/gender/Integrating-a-Gender-Perspective-into-Statistics-E.pdf
[18] UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2014). "Guidelines for Producing Statistics on Violence Against Women." Available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/docs/Guidelines_Statistics_VAW.pdf
[19] For more information: http://www.data2x.org

HARMONISATION OF CENSUS QUESTIONS ON DISABILITY TO FACILITATE EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

Francis Jones

Statistics on disability are a fundamental starting point for the development and monitoring of disability policy. In Caribbean countries, the decennial population and housing censuses are the primary (in most cases the only) source of official statistics on persons with disabilities. This is because household survey samples are typically too small to produce reliable information on disability, especially more detailed information on the type and severity of disabilities.

While some basic statistics on disability are available from most Caribbean censuses, analysis and policymaking are currently hampered by the lack of harmonisation in the questions which are used in different countries. This is an issue which must be addressed in the upcoming 2020 census round.

In the 2000 census round, most Caribbean countries used a census question of the general form: "do you (or does person x) suffer from any disability or infirmity?" This question served to identify the individuals with disabilities. For those household members with disabilities, the respondent was then asked about the types of disability, for example sight, hearing, speech etc. These questions sometimes included old fashioned and stigmatizing language about disability, for example expressions like 'infirmity' or 'mental retardation.' In addition to doubts about whether these questions were effectively identifying persons with disabilities, different statistical offices used different wording with the result that data were not easily comparable across countries.

There were similar problems in other regions and, in 2001, the United Nations Statistical Commission established the Washington Group on Disability Statistics to promote and co-ordinate international co-operation in this area. The group developed a 'short set' of questions intended for use on censuses and surveys to facilitate the production of internationally comparable statistics on disability. Extensive testing was carried out to ensure that the questions are applicable in a wide variety of cultural contexts. The questions differ in some important ways from those which had previously been used to measure disability in Caribbean censuses. The questions are focused on functioning rather than impairments. Instead of asking directly if people have disabilities, respondents are asked whether household members have difficulty seeing, hearing, walking etc. There is no filter question and so respondents are asked about difficulties that each household member has with each of six activities or functions: seeing; hearing; walking or climbing steps; remembering or concentrating; self-care; and communicating. They are also asked to indicate the level of difficulty: no difficulty; some difficulty; a lot of difficulty; or cannot do at all. In this way, disability is no longer measured as a binary concept but has four levels of severity.

In the 2010 round of censuses, while some Caribbean countries made changes to their census questions to align them more closely with the Washington Group questions, other countries either made no changes or made other unrelated changes. Therefore, while the 2010 census round represented a step in the right direction, there were still a significant number of countries using traditional style census questions, or questions which albeit similar to the Washington Group questions were still not exactly the same.

These differences in the wording of census questions, both between countries and between the 2000 and 2010 rounds, present a real challenge to the cross-country analysis of statistics on disability. Although it is possible to get a broad idea of the number of persons with disabilities in the Caribbean and their socio-demographic characteristics, it is difficult to draw more precise conclusions about, for example differences in the level of prevalence of disability between countries.

Figure 1 shows the estimated percentage of the population with a disability across sixteen countries and territories. Estimates based on data collected in the 2000 census round show the prevalence of disability varied between approximately 4.0 and 6.4 per cent, and was 5.4 per cent for the Caribbean as a whole. Based on data from the 2010 census round, the range of estimates was wider, from 2.5 per cent to 7.3 per cent, and 3.5 per cent overall. In some cases, the change in the prevalence rate between the 2000 and 2010 rounds appears to have been affected by changes to question wording. For example, the census question used by Guyana in the 2000 round was different to that used in the 2010 round. The disability prevalence rate from the 2000 round was 6.4 per cent while the prevalence

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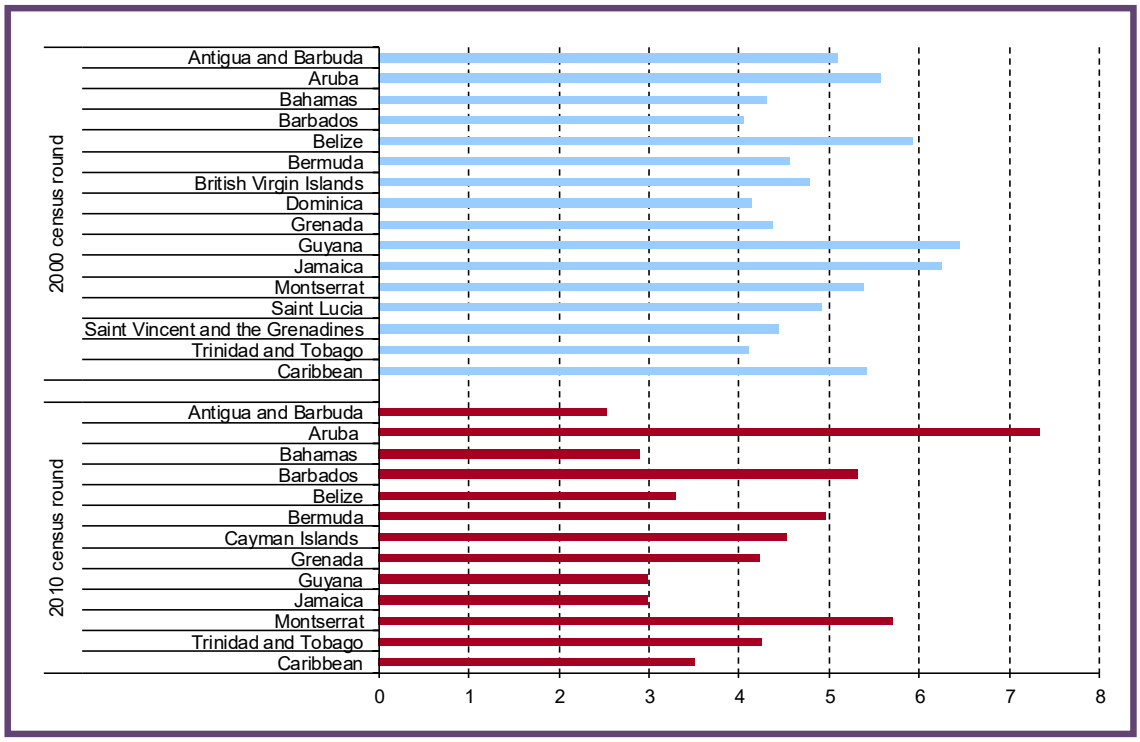
Figure 1. Prevalence of disability, 2000 and 2010
(Percentage of persons with disabilities)



Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on the basis of national population and housing censuses.

Notes: For countries which used 'Washington Group-style' questions in the 2010 census round, the prevalence rates are calculated by counting those persons in the response categories: 'Yes, a lot of difficulty' or 'cannot do at all' for one or more activities. The Washington Group questions are only intended to be used for the population aged five and over.

rate from the 2010 round was 3.0 per cent. This 'fall' in the prevalence of disability in Guyana is likely due to the change in question wording. In the 2010 round, the countries using 'Washington Group-style' questions recorded prevalence rates of 2.5 per cent (Antigua and Barbuda), 3.0 per cent (Jamaica), 3.3 per cent (Belize), 4.2 per cent (Grenada), and 7.3 per cent (Aruba). Aruba's prevalence rate, which is the highest, is likely due, at least in part, to the fact that the country has a relatively old population compared to the other countries. The Aruba census also used an introductory statement which referred to "health problems" and this may also have had some effect. A fuller analysis of the disability statistics compiled from the last two rounds of Caribbean censuses is contained in the recently published ECLAC study 'Disability, human rights and public policy in the Caribbean .'[1]

The 2030 Agenda emphasises that no one is to be left behind on the path to sustainable development, and affirms the importance of the human rights of persons with disabilities. The ability of governments to fulfil these commitments, through the development of policies and programmes for persons with disabilities, depends crucially on the availability of appropriate statistical information. The Washington Group disability questions have been shown to produce reliable and comparable statistics and are now considered international best practice. As Caribbean statistical offices review and update their census questionnaires in preparation for the 2020 round of censuses, a process coordinated through CARICOM's Regional Census Coordinating Committee, they are strongly encouraged to take this opportunity to adopt the Washington Group questions. This will ensure greater comparability of disability data across the Caribbean. ■

[1] Jones, Francis and Luanne Serieux-Lubin (2018), "Disability, human rights and public policy in the Caribbean: A situation analysis", ECLAC Studies and Perspectives Series – The Caribbean, No. 64, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago, Chile.

BRIDGING THE ENVIRONMENT MEASUREMENT GAPS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

Artie Dubrie and Iskuhi Mkrtchyan*

Sustainable use of the environment and natural resources is an essential component of the sustainable development paradigm. Environmental measurement is used to guide policy in the regulation of the anthropogenic impacts on the environment and natural resources. It supports and facilitates evidence-based policy-making, planning and development. Environment valuation is also used to ensure the appropriate incorporation of an environmental dimension in the sustainable development framework.

Assessments of eco-system services have led to a growing list of environmental issues being focused upon at the national and international level. These include, inter alia, climate change, coastal zone management, biodiversity loss, transboundary movement of hazardous waste and natural resources management. For the Caribbean region, the Barbados Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing (SIDS) (1994), the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Program of Action for the SIDS (2005) and the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (2014) have placed increasing emphasis on having appropriate and timely access to environment measurements in such areas as forests, biodiversity and oceans. Recently, the Caribbean mid-term review of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway) through the San Pedro Declaration,[1] called for greater attention to be given to the production and availability of environmental statistics, with a view to informing all levels of decision-making. For example, in the case of fisheries, the SAMOA Pathway calls for improved mechanisms for resource assessment and management.

The requirements for environmental measurements in supporting sustainable development are particularly urgent for the Caribbean SIDS, given that the major economies for this region are natural resource dependent. Moreover, the emerging green and blue economies of the Caribbean center on the sustainable use, protection and restoration of the environment.

WHAT CONSTITUTES ENVIRONMENTAL MEASUREMENTS?

Environment measurements are used to assess the value of natural capital and to support decision making on the economic uses of such resources as coral reefs and watershed ecosystems.

The data that forms the basis of such measurements is generated, inter alia, through the analysis of the impact of economic or anthropogenic factors on natural capital, as, for example, the impact of untreated waste water pollution on coastal zones ecosystems.

These measurements are essential for more effective monitoring and reporting on the progress of both the SIDS and the 2030 Agenda. In particular, they are necessary for the enforcement of environmental laws, for reporting on regional and international agreements, for preparing the State of the Environment reports, and for conducting environment impact assessments. In addition, they are also needed in post-disaster impact assessment, to inform resilience-building strategies and to facilitate monitoring on the state of the environment.

IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MEASUREMENTS IN SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CARIBBEAN REGION

Within the agreed framework for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations High Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development designated 2018 as the year for member States to highlight progress implementing environmental sustainability in their Voluntary National Reviews.

Box 1 below provides selected examples of SDGs in which the assessment and reporting will require specific environment-related statistics. The use of environmental measurements can greatly support the diversification of environment-sensitive sectors such as tourism and agriculture, which in turn foster economic growth. In this regard, it is important to highlight that environment measurements, such as the state of conservation of a protected species, can determine the selection of tourism sites and activities.

The collection of environmental data is also a requirement for complying with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Moreover, MEAs specify requirements and define frameworks on data collection and reporting procedures. Some MEAs also designate Scientific/Technical Advisory Bodies and Compliance Procedures for reporting.

In the spirit of promoting more reliable and transparent reporting and information sharing the "Escazú" Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental matters, recently signed

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[1] San Pedro Declaration, Caribbean SIDS Regional Preparatory Meeting (2018), available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20630San_Pedro_Declaration_Revised_AT.pdf

by 14 Latin America and Caribbean countries, is an encouraging development insofar as it serves as a framework to generate and facilitate enhanced access to environmental data.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF ENVIRONMENT MEASUREMENTS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Caribbean countries have made considerable strides towards the establishment of laws, regulations and institutions supporting environmental management and the generation of environmental data.

In addressing the SDG reporting requirements, the next step will be to translate environmental data into national statistics, as statistical time series, and as composite indicators of sustainable development.

In this context, subregional intergovernmental fisheries bodies and the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) are working together to support Governments in the development of required fisheries statistics including catch, fishing effort data and stock assessments.[2]

In addition, the United Nations Environment Programme, through the Caribbean Working Group on Environmental Indicators for the Latin America and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development,[3] is supporting the building of capacity in environmental data, information access and production. These efforts will likely help to close the existing gaps in the production, application, reporting and dissemination of quality environment data and that remains a formidable challenge in the subregion. ■

Box 1. Selected Environment-related SDG Indicators to be reviewed during the 2018 HLPF

Goal 6. Clean Water and Sanitation: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- 6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality
- 6.4.2 Level of water stress: freshwater withdrawal as a proportion of available freshwater resources
- 6.6.1 Change in the extent of water-related ecosystems over time

Goal 7. Affordable and Clean Energy: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- 7.1.2 Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology
- 7.2.1 Renewable energy share in the total final energy consumption
- 7.B.1 Investments in energy efficiency as a percentage of GDP and the amount of foreign direct investment in financial transfer for infrastructure and technology to sustainable development services

Goal 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities; Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- 11.6.2 Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (e.g. PM** 2.5 and PM10) in cities

Goal 12. Responsible Consumption and Production: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns:
- 12.2.1 Material footprint, material footprint per capita, and material footprint per GDP
- 12.2.2 Domestic material consumption, domestic material consumption per capita, and domestic material consumption per GDP
- 12.4.1 Number of parties to international multilateral environmental agreements on hazardous waste, and other chemicals that meet their commitments and obligations in transmitting information as required by each relevant agreement
- 12.4.2 Hazardous waste generated per capita and proportion of hazardous waste treated, by type of treatment

Goal 13. Climate Action; Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- 13.1.2 Number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies
- 3.3.2 Number of countries that have communicated the strengthening of institutional, systemic and individual capacity-building to implement adaptation, mitigation and technology transfer, and development actions
- 13.B.1 Number of least developed countries and small island developing States that are receiving specialized support, and amount of support, including finance, technology and capacity-building, for mechanisms for raising capacities for effective climate change-related planning and management, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

Goal 14. Life Below Water : Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- 14.1.1 Index of coastal eutrophication and floating plastic debris density
- 14.3.1 Average marine acidity (pH) measured at agreed suite of representative sampling stations
- 14.4.1 Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels
- 14.5.1 Coverage of protected areas in relation to marine areas

Goal 15. Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- 15.1.1 Forest area as a proportion of total land area
- 15.3.1 Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area
- 15.4.2 Mountain Green Cover Index
- 15.5.1 Red List Index

** PM stands for particulate matter (also called particle pollution): the term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air, reference, United State Environment Protection Agency (2018), available at: https://www.epa.gov/pm-pollution/particulate-matter-pm-basics

[2] Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2018, Available at: http://firms.fao.org/firms/en

[3] UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme), second technical meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean Initiative for Sustainable Development (ILAC) (2018), available at: https://www.unenvironment.org/events/workshop/second-technical-meeting-caribbean-working-group-environmental-indicators

PROMOTING ONLINE ACCESS TO SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Francis Jones,*

ECLAC has been working for a number of years to support Caribbean statistical offices in providing controlled online access to census microdata using the REDATAM software.

Censuses are the single most important output produced by national statistical offices and the census is the only data collection exercise in which the whole country participates. The resulting data should be made as widely available as possible for analysis, research and policymaking. With the small scale of most Caribbean statistical systems (and outdated statistical legislation) limiting the range and frequency of data gathering and generation of official statistics, it is especially important that the fullest use is made of those censuses and surveys that are carried out.

REDATAM is a tool for the storage, processing, tabulation and dissemination of census and survey microdata. One of its main strengths is processing speed which is due to the use of an efficient hierarchical database structure to store data. This makes REDATAM a suitable tool for online tabulation and processing. Statistical offices can develop online web applications which give users the flexibility to define exactly the data that they require. A web application captures this user requirement and passes it to a secure server where the census microdata are held. Tabulations or other analyses such as the calculation of indicators or maps are produced with the results returned to the user in real time. This is sometimes referred to as 'remote access' and it gives users much greater flexibility and richer access to the data than is the case with a conventional census report. Figure 1 provides some examples of the tables, charts and maps which are now publically available from the Trinidad and Tobago Census 2011 through REDATAM. Users can cross-tabulate variables and obtain statistics for the country as a whole, for 15 municipalities and over 600 communities.

The software was developed and is supported by CELADE, the Population Division of ECLAC, based in Santiago, Chile. The first versions of REDATAM were developed in the 1980s and CELADE has continued to develop and support the program since that time. It is widely used in Latin America and increasingly in other parts of the world including Africa and Asia.

ECLAC Caribbean in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, is the focal point for REDATAM in the subregion and has been organising regional and national training workshops and providing follow-up support for more than ten years. Training has been provided to twelve Member and four Associate Member Countries of the CDCC. Workshop participants are typically statisticians and IT staff from statistical offices or the wider statistical system.

A total of seven countries or territories have used REDATAM to provide online access to census data: Aruba; Belize; Cayman Islands; Jamaica; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and Trinidad and Tobago. Four of these countries provide online access to their most recent census data and ECLAC continues to work with a number of other countries to make more datasets available online.

As we move towards the 2020 round of census, statistical offices will be planning their national census operations. REDATAM provides the opportunity to greatly expand the use and analysis of census data and statistical offices should consider making it a central part of their data dissemination strategies. In addition to census data, REDATAM can also be used in exactly the same way to disseminate data from household surveys, such as the surveys of living conditions used by Caribbean countries to carry out Country Poverty Assessments. Through dissemination of more disaggregated data than would ordinarily be feasible in statistical reports, the software has the potential to promote the wider use of social statistics more generally. For further information, please see http://www.redatam.org/. ■

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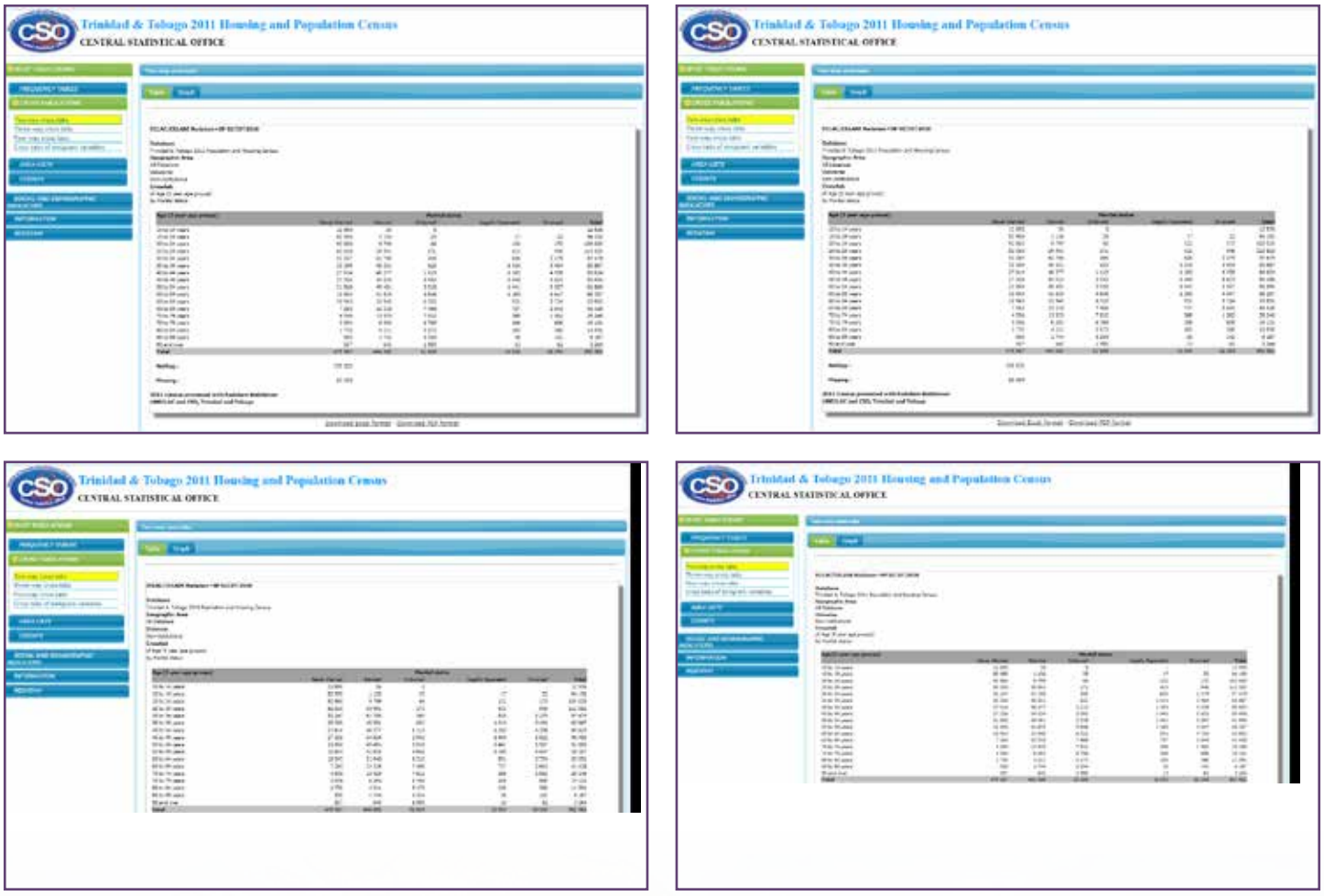
Figure 1. Online outputs from Trinidad and Tobago's 2011 Census processed using REDATAM



Source: Census 2011, Central Statistical Office of Trinidad and Tobago and ECLAC (available via http://cso.gov.tt/census/2011-census-data/ or http://redatam.org/bintto/RpWebEngine.exe/Portal?BASE=PHC2011).

▸ (continued from page 4)

GENDER DISPARITIES IN THE CARIBBEAN: BRIDGING GENDER DATA GAPS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY

At the regional level, ECLAC serves as the technical secretariat to the Working Group on Gender Statistics of the Statistical Conference of the Americas, which aims at bringing together those who produce gender statistics and those who use them. Currently, The Bahamas, Guyana, and Jamaica are part of this Working Group. In addition, the ECLAC Gender Equality Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean[20] is a reference point for gender statistics and indicators, studies, analysis and public policies on gender in the region. The Observatory maintains an extensive repository of indicators related to women's economic, physical and decision-making autonomies that could serve as a rich source of gender statistics for Caribbean countries. In addition, ECLAC also houses a statistics repository (CEPALSTAT) with more than 100 indicators under a gender tree that contains comparative information on all Latin American and Caribbean countries. At the subregional level, the CARICOM Gender Equality Indicators Model, jointly developed by UN-WOMEN and CARICOM, is aimed at identifying, assessing, measuring and tracking the persistent gender equality concerns and disparities across the subregion. For instance, Dominica has recently published the first ever Gender Equality Indicators Report in 2016. Complementary to this is the list of core SDG indicators for the Caribbean which includes selected gender indicators, adopted this year by CARICOM countries.

To get the best out of these available tools, instruments and platforms, Caribbean countries are encouraged to conduct an assessment of their capacity to generate and use gender data in order to identify both gaps and good practices. In fact, to generate gender data, there is a need for greater awareness of the value of gender statistics, as well as increased investments in statistical literacy, including on mainstreaming gender into statistics. Appointment of gender focal points in different government entities and stronger collaboration among broad stakeholders including national statistical offices, national machineries for the advancement of women, ministries, academia, non-governmental organizations and the private sector is essential. Such a strong collaboration will enhance the working relationship between producers and users of gender data and promote the sharing of good practices in addressing the challenges that currently face the production and dissemination of robust gender statistics in the Caribbean. ECLAC stands ready to continue providing technical assistance in developing and enhancing the gender statistics capacity of member States through our training programmes and studies. ■

[20] For more information: https://oig.cepal.org/en

▸ (continued from page 3)

A CARIBBEAN THAT COUNTS

The time is now to make the Caribbean count! Not only counting the debt owed by Caribbean countries but also counting the prospect for investment, growth and decent job creation in non-traditional industries in the green and blue economies; counting the time spent on unpaid domestic and care work mainly by women and girls; counting how many of our citizens are subjected to gender-based violence to highlight the growing prevalence of this malady and to address it; counting the natural resource endowment of the subregion to assess the proportion at risk of climate change impacts; counting the subregion's vulnerable populations including those living with disability and indigenous peoples; and counting the aging population of the subregion that may need state support in the years to come. The list goes on.

The time is now for governments, in partnership with international development agencies, to renew their commitment to strengthen statistical capacities in the Caribbean in a sustainable manner. This will require legislative changes to make national statistical offices more responsive to the demands for analysis based on evidence. In some cases, it may require legislative changes and improved funding for the collection, analysis and dissemination of data and statistics. Technical assistance in statistical capacity building such as the one being provided by ECLAC will only be effective if the tools developed and the skills acquired by staff find a supportive institutional environment.

The time is now for the Caribbean to strengthen its statistical capacity so that we can be certain that we have left no one behind when we report on our progress in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yours in Focus

Diane Quarless

[3] The Bahamas Voluntary National Review on the Sustainable Development Goals to the High Level Political Forum of the United Nations Economic and Social Council, July 2018, p. 10. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/19874VNR_document_03.07.18_master_document.pdf.

RECENT AND UPCOMING MEETINGS

2018

APRIL

26 April 2018
Fifth meeting of the Caribbean Development Roundtable Promoting climate resilience and sustainable economic growth in the Caribbean

27 April 2018
Twenty-seventh session of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee

JUNE

14 March 2018
XXVII Meeting of the Special Committee on Transport

List of Recent ECLAC Documents and Publications

Listed by Symbol Number, Date and Title

LC/CAR/TS.2017/17 Jan 2018
A global value chain analysis of offshore medical universities in the Caribbean

LC/CAR/TS.2017/15 Jan 2018
Economic impact of de-risking on the Caribbean: Case studies of Antigua and Barbuda, Belize and Saint Kitts and Nevis

LC/CAR/TS.2017/14 Jan 2018
Inclusive social protection and demographic change: The implications of population ageing for social expenditure in the Caribbean

LC/CAR/TS.2017/13 Jan 2018
Monitoring trade agreements: improving export performance and promoting industrialization in the goods-producing economies of the Caribbean

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