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Video Message
by
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High Representative
And
Under-Secretary-General
for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries
and Small Island Developing States

Third High-Level Advocacy Forum (HLF) on Statistics: Investing in Statistics
to Build Resilience and to Achieve Sustainable Economic Growth and
Development in the Caribbean Community

22 February 2019 in St. George’s, Grenada
I wish to extend sincere congratulations to CARICOM for organizing this important 3rd High Level Forum on Statistics.

The foresight and the commitment of the region’s leaders to strengthen and lend full support to the statistical development in the Caribbean Community is not only very vital but truly commendable.

At a time where fact is often difficult to access or worse overruled by emotion, it is so critical to be able to lead fact- based discussions and take fact- based decisions.

The new Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics is not only timely but most importantly responds to the priorities of Member States.

I am encouraged to see that critical challenges related to structural deficiencies, trade barriers, climate change, sustainable tourism, and disaster risk management are reflected in the strategy.

It will be important that we ensure that both the SDGs and SAMOA Pathway goals are mainstreamed in the region’s and countries’ statistical development agendas. We need to be able to measure progress and impact.

As so often, financing will be critical to realize the objectives of the strategy.

Reality is that the funding commitments to SIDS remain quite low and that is all the more of concern given the SDGs’ focus on the environment and climate change which impacts the SIDs in dramatic ways.

As cited in PARIS21’s 2018 Partner Report on Support to Statistics (PRESS), external aid to statistics needs to increase by some USD 200 million per annum to achieve the SDGs.

Not only external funding must increase but On the domestic side funding also needs to step up.

This is critical so that funds for key statistical activities such as surveys to improve the information base about a country’s development can be undertaken in a timely way.

There is a saying " only what you can measure is what exists " - I urge Governments in the region to develop their statistical systems and elevate the status of statistical
offices to ensure that NSOs can effectively support governments, the private sector and civil society in development activities.

In closing, I thank His Excellency Keith Mitchell, Prime Minister of Grenada, for hosting the event and for his continued and I add inspiring leadership and advocacy in pushing for statistical development in the Caribbean

I send my best wishes to you all for a successful Forum.