

## **Caribbean Statistics Day 2016**

### **Reflection From the Chief Statistician, Ms Gatlin Roberts**



For some, any thought of statistics may not evoke good feelings or fond memories. However, after more than 33 years as a formal entity in the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, it would be a shame not to pay homage to the significant strides made over those years by the Statistical Office.

This year marks the eighth observance of Caribbean Statistics Day which is intended to highlight statistics and its crucial role across a wide spectrum of activities – from daily decision-making faced by individuals, businesses and students to planning, policy-making, analysis and research activities of governments, academia and other users.

The Statistical Office of St Vincent and the Grenadines joins the rest of the region in celebration under the theme, ‘Improving the lives of people – Advancing the Action Plan for Statistics’. The 8th observance of Caribbean statistics day also marks 33 years of our existence. Unlike past years, where the main feature of Statistics day came in the form of an exhibition, special activities to commemorate the day this year, recognizes the contributions of staff, past and present, which have made the field of statistics flourish in the multi-island state.

These activities include the production of two magazines; one that reflects on the development of the Statistical Office and another that showcase the statistical data that has been collected between 1980 and 2015. Several opportunities for interaction between both past and present staff is encouraged through a luncheon and viewing of a short-film feature of staff members speaking about their time as part of the “Statistical Family”. All stakeholders and members of the Diaspora can view these features on our website, <http://stats.gov.vc/>

Except for a very brief stint as a teacher – I have spent all of my working life at the Statistical Office. When I assumed work there, the general office consisted of four persons. The space was so small, our desks were back-to-back. This contributed to us being more like family rather than working colleagues. As a result, we worked hard and we also played hard, the latter being off the job of course!

Over time, the office expanded as the workload and the demand for various types of statistics increased. As the size of the office increased, the comradery decreased and the fun days outside of the office became a thing of the past.

During this journey down memory lane, I acknowledge how far the Office has come in terms of its location, having moved around several buildings before finding a home at the Financial Complex. I also recognize the structural changes within the Office and the various projects that we were able to work on as a team to aid in the country’s decision-making process. In spite of the frustrations and the disappointments, I refuse to allow anyone to belittle the work of a statistician and the work that we carry out on a daily basis. I have gained an immense joy from my time working at the Statistical Office and revel in the thought that perhaps I have made the tiniest contribution as it relates to the development of St Vincent and the Grenadines. It is my hope, that as we commemorate Caribbean Statistics Day, that the celebration will help to garner a greater profile for statistics locally and regionally.