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PRESS RELEASE

GRENADA'S PRIME MINISTER KEEN TO SEE COUNTRIES FORGE AHEAD WITH POPULATION AND HOUSING CENSUS DESPITE COVID-19 CHALLENGES

October 19, 2021 – Grenada's Prime Minister, Dr. the Right Honourable Keith Mitchell, is keen to see Caribbean countries forge ahead with their respective National Population and Housing Census, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a message delivered on the occasion of Caribbean Statistics Day, Dr. Mitchell who is the CARICOM Statistics Champion, said, the census is the "most important statistical activity of any country".

Grenada, like other countries has been forced to delay the start of its census due to the pandemic and also alter the methodology used to conduct enumeration to ensure compliance with COVID-19 protocols. Enumeration is now scheduled to begin on November 1 in Grenada.

Dr. Mitchell said, "The current technology allows for countries to conduct contactless census using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing and Computer Assisted Web Interviewing, which I encourage countries to explore."

The Prime Minister underscored the importance of statistical data in national development. He noted too that despite its negative impacts, the pandemic also presents an opportunity to build a resilient statistical infrastructure through the infusion of Information Communications Technology (ICT) into statistics.

He said, "Our economies will be crippled without critical statistical information, needed to navigate us through and out of the social and economic impacts of this pandemic. The Population and Housing Census is the most important source of this statistical data as the information captured can be presented at the lowest geographical level for both population and households. It is imperative that we collect the data that will allow us to assess the magnitude of the impact of COVID-19 and climate change occurrences, to better plan for our future, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and successfully implement our respective National Sustainable Development Plans."

The Prime Minister also voiced support for the regionally-coordinated approach to census taking. He said, "I encourage you to use the common and harmonised methodologies, instruments, procedures and practices under this CARICOM coordinated approach, which would result in regionally comparable census data of high quality, that can inform national and regional census analysis and provide the evidence to support our public and private decision-making, policies and programmes."

The census is also a critical component of the Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) which Dr. Mitchell championed at the CARICOM Conference of Heads of Government Meeting in 2018.

Caribbean Statistics Day was observed under the theme: *Leave no one behind, everyone counts*, which was the same theme used for the region-wide launch of the Population and Housing Census in August. The intention is to give greater prominence to the census and its importance.

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