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**Panel Presentation**

**Multi-dimensional Poverty Measurement:**

**Confronting Complexity through a Data Revolution**

A good afternoon to everyone

1. As progress on income-based poverty has accelerated, so has a demand to re-balance achievements in other dimensions of well-being. There is no doubt that poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon encompassing deprivations in multiple dimensions, and there is also no doubt that multidimensionality in the measurement of poverty has important implications for policy design —the more policy-relevant information there is available, the more targeted these policies will.
2. During three days, our High Level Advocacy Forum on Statistics will be devoted to discuss that investing in generating relevant statistics and their use in the policy-making process is pivotal for informing effective, multi-dimensional and sustainable strategies for poverty reduction.
3. Our motivation for the development of a multi-dimensional approach to poverty measurement in the Caribbean has been sustained by a global debate urging the UN system to adopt a new multi-dimensional framework for poverty reduction worldwide, as part of a post-2015 development strategy. There are a number of compelling arguments about why we should move in that direction:
   1. Firstly, because multi-dimensional poverty indicators are being proven as valuable inputs for better policy coordination, targeting, monitoring, and making visible progress that traditional income poverty measures overlook.
   2. Secondly, because as poverty permeates all aspects of human development, it has been recognized that the idea that “every person matters” cannot be satisfied with averages and aggregate figures.

***What have we learned in the last decade?***

1. The key lesson of the past decade is that inequalities, exclusions and discrimination do not go away with more economic growth. As 2015 signals the kick-off of a new global development agenda and, essentially year two of the new UNDP Strategic Plan, the region faces a unique challenge: how to move ahead on social and economic achievement in a way that is balanced, and treats with equal merit areas of health and wellbeing that are not usually associated with the conventional “growth-based” agenda, but are equally important to the region.
2. In order to effectively achieve our goals in the area of sustainable human development, we must address the persistent deprivations resulting from non-inclusive development models, ensuring equity and equality in social policies. Indeed, a better and more complex understanding of the structural constraints to development demand a transformation of the frontiers and practice of poverty measurement.
3. Since 2010 the UNDP Sub-Regional Office in collaboration with the OECS Secretariat, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), UNICEF, UN Women and the World Bank, has engaged in several activities towards strengthening the capacity of statistical officers and policy makers, with a view to improve data collection towards the development of a sub-regional Multi-dimensional Poverty Index.
4. In 2013, the countries of the Eastern Caribbean agreed to adopt the Alkire-Foster methodology, developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and released for the first time in UNDPs 2010 Human Development Report, with the advantage of enabling countries to analyze multiple break-downs by dimensions and sub-groups of the population.
5. As we approach 2015, our region will embark on a new round of readjustment to global goals and means of implementation; we should therefore evaluate the impact of our policies to date, and what remains to be done. UNDP’s Strategic Plan focuses on multi-dimensional problem-solving, thus suggesting the need to solidify our commitments towards a multi-dimensional approach to poverty measurement as a key element of the CARICOM data revolution for sustained improvements in the quality of life of Caribbean people.
6. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) Sub-regional analysis carried out in 2011 notes that poverty exists alongside low growth rates and labor market rigidity as a structural concern. It is indeed multidimensional and inter-generational, as it prevents social mobility for children who grow up in poor households in general, and in female-headed households experiencing poor education and scarce labor market opportunities in particular.
7. The narrow fiscal space created by rising debt burdens and the economic crises have compounded the experience of poverty in the Caribbean through unemployment and reduced remittances. These factors have limited the ability of governments to introduce measures that adequately tackle the deficiencies in three related core ingredients of the human development approach: education, employment opportunities, and lack of social protection.

***Assessment and Response to Poverty***

1. This all suggests that our assessment of and response to poverty must:
   * Address structural causes of poverty and offset the vulnerabilities of CARICOM SIDS Member States such as economic openness and risks, and exposure to natural hazards which are transmitted to individuals and households.
   * Constantly and consistently gather up-to-date information regarding those vulnerabilities and the likelihood of countries and groups of people to experience them.
   * Seek to match those vulnerabilities, and the corresponding data, with policy decisions.
   * Seek to ensure that evidence based decision making and development planning is itself enshrined in policy and mandatory
2. The best measurements and assessments are those that can be disaggregated and applied in ways that fit the needs of our countries. In this line, the 2015 Human Development Report for Latin America and the Caribbean will provide estimates for nation-specific multi-dimensional progress indices calibrated at development thresholds appropriate to the needs of the working poor, vulnerable groups and emerging middle classes. The Report will also capture subjective measures of multi-dimensional progress to understand how individuals and groups experience it, and will provide a toolkit to diagnose and monitor good practice in attaining multi-dimensional progress at local and national government levels in the region.
3. Our goal is to ensure that the Eastern Caribbean is part of this regional HDR and so we aspire to collecting periodic and comparable data across time. Our partners here, CARICOM, CDB, and OECS, know well that our efforts in this area are not new. A lot has been done to get us farther along the path to acquiring the type of information we need, and converting it into policy imperatives.
4. UNDP is proud of the collaboration with our partners, and is committed to the continuation of partnerships in this area to further support the data revolution envisaged for the Region.
5. In closing, I would like to remind us that the conceptual frameworks, indicators, datasets, sample frames, survey instruments, and composition of indices are all among the tools at our disposal, and we must build our capacity to use them. But I want us to keep in sight the reasons for exercises such as this, and to emphasize that they are not an ends in themselves; but that they allow us to understand the gaps in human development in our countries and region, and develop the appropriate policies to address them.

Thank you.