



## **Knowledge-Sharing Webinar Measuring SDG 5.4.1 (Unpaid Domestic and Care Work) in the Labour Force Survey**

**Didier Trebucq**

**UN Resident Coordinator -  
Remarks**

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**9:00 am – 12:00 pm AST**

- Ambassador Manorma Soeknandan, Deputy Secretary General, CARICOM Secretariat
- Dr. Carlene Radix, Head, Human and Social Cluster, OECS Commission
- Ms. Tonni Ann Brodber, Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office-Caribbean
- Permanent Secretaries and representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- Directors of National Gender Machineries
- Directors of National Statistical Offices
- Representatives from Regional Institutions and Organizations, Women's Civil Society Organizations and other CSOs and NGOs, academia and other stakeholders.
- Ladies and gentlemen
- Good Morning

I am thrilled to join you at today's Webinar as it seeks to address two important hindrances to sustainable development - the absence of reliable data and gender inequality.

We are seeing several efforts being made by CARICOM and Caribbean Governments to address the scarcity of data presents an ongoing challenge for policy makers. The recently drafted UN Common Multi Country Analysis highlights the lack of data, as arguably the most critical impediment to measuring and managing progress towards Agenda 2030 in the Caribbean. **If left unchecked this has the potential to affect development gains, segments of the society become invisible and this undermines the support given to the most vulnerable, often the women, elderly or disabled people.**

At the Regional level, assessments of national statistical systems have confirmed uneven availability of gender statistics, that is constraining CARICOM Member States in measuring accurately the socioeconomic status of women and men. One of the largest data gaps identified relates to SDG indicator unpaid domestic and care work.

And so today, I could not be more delighted to address you as we prepare to bridge the gap between data and gender equality – specifically unpaid care work. We know that women are among the most vulnerable in our region And so, I am always excited to support the work championed by UN Women as we, the UN family, seek to empower and enhance the standard of living of women and more specifically, to improve the financial

independence of women; promote their equal participation in various facets of society. And this will ultimately improve the quality of life of all households.

COVID-19, however, with lockdowns period losses of jobs, has uncovered the glaring disparity that women face due to their care responsibilities within the home. As a matter of fact, our society has realized in this period that it could not reasonably function without adequate care given to our more vulnerable groups. So the **time has come to value this important contribution that women all over the world are choosing to make daily.**

As countries continue to implement COVID-19 recovery strategies, it has become clear that economic frameworks must include the care economy, including measures to reduce and redistribute unpaid care work. **Childcare, elder care and care of the sick is as crucial to a functioning economy as is any investment in a road or building.**

It is for these reasons that I commend the organisers of this forum. This initiative is truly a prime example of regional partnership and networking among various stakeholders which I strongly encourage. We have expanded our network of collaboration in the form of the SDG Fund Joint Programme beyond the UN family, to involve regional and national partners, including the CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS Commission, CDEMA and national statistical offices, as well as researchers from the University of the West Indies and international research consultants specialising in this area.

I am also very pleased with the significant strides made in the implementation of the Joint Programme which focuses on Universal, Adaptive, Social Protection. As it relates to today's exercise, technical support is also being provided to the development of a common regional approach to measuring unpaid domestic and care work, through the Housing and Population Census and the Labour Force Surveys. This approach will ensure that the methodology to be recommended fulfils the requirements of the SDG guidance for indicator measurement and will then allow for comparability of data across CARICOM countries.

While the Joint Programme's geographical focus is Barbados and the OECS, I wish to stress that all CARICOM Member States will benefit from regional technical and knowledge sharing sessions, such as the one being held today. In that connection I take this opportunity to commend the UN agencies implementing the joint programme (UN Women leading this endeavour today; as well as WFP, UNDP, UNICEF and ILO) and of course their various partners.

I have no doubt that today's session is useful step in the right direction to make gender equality an attainable goal by 2030.

I wish you a very fruitful webinar.