

7th November 2014

PROGRAMME NO: 2014

Our discussion today will focus on the upcoming *Job Opening and Labour Turnover Survey* (JOLTS) which would be administered jointly by the Labour Department and the Central Statistical Office.

For the benefit of our audience, could you give us a brief background to the OECS Pilot Enterprise Survey?

The OPES is one of the LMI gathering initiatives of the member countries within the OECS. The project document along with the draft survey questionnaire was developed by Dr. Reynold Simons of the ILO' Caribbean Office in Trinidad. The questionnaire was then circulated among the member countries and in June of this year, the OECS Directors of Statistics met here in SVG to harmonise the questionnaire so as to facilitate the successful piloting of the Survey in St. Vincent & the Grenadines. The project is funded jointly by the OECS Secretariat under the 10th European Development Fund Agreement and the ILO Decent Work Team and Caribbean office. The success of this pilot would then form the basis for its implementation within the other OECS Countries.

Why was St. Vincent and the Grenadines chosen as the pilot country?

SVG was chosen because the operations of its Labour Market Information System (LMIS) to date, that is currently administered by the Labour Department, is the most effective and functional all of the systems within the sub-region. The SVG-LMIS which was developed some five years ago as a country-specific project, has since been adopted by the OECS Secretariat and is presently being implemented on a two phase basis in other OECS countries.

Having completed phase one of the system which consists of the computerization of the labour administrative records and procedures, the Labour Department is now ready for phase two which will consist of the establishment of an ongoing national survey programme that is complementary to the database of the labour administrative records & procedures.

You stated that we are now ready for phase two of the implementation of the LMIS that will focus the national survey programme; tell us more about this programme.

The survey programme is a joint initiative between the Labour Department and the Central Statistical Office. For the time being, the focus will be on two particular surveys namely the Enterprise Survey (ES) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

We will commence with the ES which is a survey of business enterprises. The focus of the survey will be on *Job Openings and Labour Turnover* and it is referred to as the *JOLTS*. It is expected to cover all nonagricultural industries in the private sectors (but excludes the informal sector) throughout St.Vincent and the Grenadines. It will include retailers, manufacturers, hotels, and other service providers among others. The LFS is planned for next year and would be conducted annually.

What is the purpose of carrying out this type of survey?

This survey was developed to address the critical need for reliable and timely data on total employment, job vacancies, hires, quits, layoffs, and other separations. Through this survey as well as other labour market information-gathering initiatives the Department of Labour is attempting to fill the information gap that presently exists and to ascertain the performance of St.Vincent and the Grenadines labour market.

It should provide us with an evidence-based guide on such issues as which economic sectors and industries are growing and those that are facing significant challenges; what types of training and education do employers require of prospective employees; what jobs are employers having difficulty filling; and what occupations are projected to grow the fastest?

How have you been preparing for this ES?

Well, so far the Labour Department has already recruited a team of enumerators who have since taken part in a three day training workshop. We have already prepared their photo

IDs for presentation to the business owners/executives. We are in the process of preparing all the necessary paper work such as their contracts, etc. There will be a follow-up training exercise next week as well as a media briefing.

What would be the likely benefits of this survey?

The findings of this survey would benefit a wide range of people. There are job seekers, who would be seeking information about job opportunities, education and skill level requirements; for employers, labour market information can assist them in their decisions regarding recruitment and training practices, and on if and where to locate their operations and the kind of investment to be made; for educators & training institutions, the findings can be useful when forecasting student demand, developing curricula, and planning training courses/programmes; and for national policy-makers, they can be used as a main economic indicator of employment growth, to monitor the economy and to formulate employment and training policies, projects and programmes.

Any final word as we wrap up?

Yes; just to let our listeners know particularly those within the business community that the benefits and usefulness of this JOLT Survey can only be realized through the full cooperation and participation of the members of the business community. We therefore appeal to you cooperate with the interviewers as they visit your establishments. Employers and managers are assured that individual names of business enterprises and corresponding details will not be made public.