



# Joint Programme 2023 Annual Progress Report

## Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in Small Island Developing States

### Cover page

**UNCT/MCO:** Barbados and Montserrat

**Reporting Period:** 1 January - 31 December 2023

**JP title:** Building Resilience & Ending Vulnerabilities in Small Island Developing States

**Thematic SDG Areas:** Digital transformation; Decent jobs & universal social protection;

**Gender Marker:** Gender-transformative (for example, the JP explicitly aimed to address the structural and root causes of gender inequality, such as by combining social protection with community dialogues and economic empowerment activities that aim to shift gender social norms and power relations)

**Engine Room Activities:** Shift in policy and regulatory frameworks; Building capacity at scale;

**Total estimated expenditures:** USD \$223,459.47

**Total estimated commitments** (including expenditures): \$233,089.96

## Executive Summary

The Joint Programme (JP) which aims to strengthen integrated population data and policy solutions to accelerate SDG acceleration in Barbados and Montserrat, supporting rights-based population policies was launched on November 25, 2022. Key progress was made to advance on the overall objectives despite internal and external constraints.

The JP has been catalytic in positioning UNFPA and UN Women to contribute to enhanced coordination and support to data strengthening within the UN and among development partners in Barbados and Montserrat, in part by harnessing other initiatives aimed at strengthening data and policy solutions in the Caribbean. For example, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance from Barbados as one of the key stakeholders in the UNFPA organized Caribbean Forum on Population and Development to share their experiences in population policy. This was an opportunity for the Government of Barbados to learn from other countries and experts on policy solutions linked to demographic challenges (low fertility, ageing and migration) and data. With technical assistance from UN Women, the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians of CARICOM at its 48th meeting on 1st November 2023, endorsed the UN Women MCO-Caribbean commissioned CARICOM Guidelines and Protocols on the Collection and Use of Administrative Data on VAWG. Administrative data reflects what is recorded/captured by an agency or service provider interacting with victims or survivors or perpetrators of gender-based violence. Additionally, UNFPA and UN Women have led efforts to ensure stronger UN collaboration on capacity strengthening of data in the Eastern Caribbean, with special attention to Barbados as a priority country for the UN Sub-regional programme team in alignment with the JP objectives.

Four representatives from the NSO of Barbados participated virtually in a training session organized by UNFPA and UNDESA on National Transfer of Accounts in Jamaica in December 2023. An online training on population mainstreaming was also developed and made available to the Government of Barbados and Montserrat. An in-person training is planned for 2024 to allow further training on data analysis for policy making and the inter-connected data and policy issues linked to population and development challenges.

The national capacity in Barbados to produce data on the SDGs was strengthened through the commencement of a pilot to measure SDG indicator 5.4.1 on “proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age and location” through the provision of 6 computer tablets and hiring of 6 enumerators in December 2023. While data collection, through the Continuous Labour Force Survey, on this indicator will commence in February 2024, the computer tablets will be used for data collection. Technical guidance (specifically a video recording on how to measure the indicator and training tools) on measuring the indicator was provided to the Montserrat Statistics Department in September 2023. Montserrat’s data collection will take place through the census which concluded in November 2023.

An evaluation of the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system, which includes the legal and institutional frameworks, legal identity, Registration practices and data protection, security, and confidentiality was prepared for Montserrat; ensuring the alignment with the work of UNFPA as a member of the UN Legal Identity Expert Group and its strategy on civil registration and vital statistics using as reference the global guidelines from the United Nations and examples from other national and international organizations to provide a thorough assessment.

Common operational dataset from official statistics, including sex-age disaggregated subnational population projections for humanitarian preparedness and response for Barbados and Montserrat and gridded population estimates were prepared for Montserrat and Barbados.

## Annual Progress

**Overall progress against 3 key results in 2023:**

On November 6, 2023, a consulting company was hired to complete a Population Situation Analysis (PSA) and develop the National Population Policy and Plan of Action. This engagement expands on two earlier single-person consultancies. The first phase of the PSA for Montserrat's preparation was finished under these earlier consultancies for the year. The mapping of Montserrat's databases containing pertinent population data, the identification of all accessible data sources, including official statistics, surveys, censuses, and administrative records, the validation of the data sources, and the preparation of the primary tables and indicators for the Population Situation Analysis were among the tasks completed. A complementary consultancy is offering quality assurance. Population analysis is crucial for defining goals, analyzing alternatives, allocating resources, and assessing the plan's effectiveness, while also identifying problems and community needs. The PSA and National Population Policy are being developed in a manner that lends for inclusivity against the background of the thematic areas of the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014 framework and in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

The 2023 work under the SDGs Joint Fund Programme aimed to strengthen the capacity of government partners and other entities. UNFPA and UN WOMEN offered an e-learning course on Population Dynamics and Policy, translated from Spanish to English. The course covers topics such as fertility, mortality, human mobility, demographic dynamics, ageing, climate change, population data, and the Montevideo Consensus. The course was a precursor to a wider capacity-building exercise planned for Barbados and Montserrat in 2024. In addition to participants from Barbados, the course has already benefited several other countries in the Caribbean with participants from Anguilla, Aruba, Belize, Bermuda, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Lucia, Sint Maarten, St Kitts and Nevis, Suriname, and Trinidad & Tobago.

UNFPA contributed to strengthening the capacity of government agency representatives' knowledge in mainstreaming population data into humanitarian response programs and policy development initiatives. UN WOMEN also strengthened Barbados' capacity to produce data on the SDGs through the commencement of a pilot measuring women's disproportionate responsibility. The Barbados Statistical Service's enumeration field capacity was enhanced through the hiring of three field workers and 6 computer tablets. Furthermore, virtual meetings to discuss the pilot methodology and approach also served to increase institutional capacity of the BSS and the Montserrat Statistical Department. The pilot approach used is an extension of a previous one undertaken, also with support from the SDG Fund, in Grenada. Four representatives from the NSO of Barbados participated virtually in a training session organized by UNFPA and UNDESA on National Transfer of Accounts in Jamaica in December 2023. The Barbadian colleagues were invited to participate in the week-long workshop to expose them to the NTA framework that the government is desirous of taking on to meet the requirements of 'Activity 1.1.4. Develop a long-term forecast showing the impact of population dynamics on the economy (Barbados)'.

A civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) assessment was completed for Montserrat in 2023. This milestone was achieved through two consultancies. A short-term consultant, who is an attorney-at-law, was hired to evaluate the CRVS system, with particular focus on the legal frameworks, identity, registration practices, and data protection. The consultancy was aligned with the work of UNFPA as a member of the UN Legal Identity Expert Group and its strategy on CRVS. A complementary consultant was also hired to evaluate the coverage and data quality of the Montserrat CRVS system, advising investments for strengthening the system. This consulta

#### **Main Challenges, adjustments and lessons:**

? There were challenges associated with mobilizing the national stakeholders for the official launch and kick-off of the project, which resulted in delays.

? It also took some extra time to hire a Joint Programme Coordinator due to a lack of response from appropriately qualified applicants with a background in data. This resulted in less than anticipated engagement with the relevant stakeholders. UNFPA assigned the in-house Population and Development Analyst as a temporary coordinator for the project with additional back-stopping of personnel from a Detail Assignment with data expertise. There is a small pool of data experts in the sub-region which meant there was a need to quickly adjust recruitment and

human resource strategies.

? Delayed recruitment of technical assistance teams to jointly support UNFPA, UN Women and the countries with the implementation of the activities, in part due to the small number of technical experts in the area of population and data. UNFPA draws on the regional pool of experts to complement gaps in the expertise in the Caribbean.

? The UN procurement processes can be lengthy and difficult to predict given the small number of companies that specialize in data. It is necessary to get a better understanding of the stakeholders in the area of data that can support capacity strengthening of national statistical systems.

? The implementation of a new ERP system for UNFPA and UN Women (Quantum) and institutional delays posed a significant challenge. While these challenges have been overcome, a key learning is to better anticipate the impact of corporate transitions to ERP systems and the impact this could have on programme delivery.

? Confirmation was received from Montserrat that there will be no Labour Force Survey conducted during 2023. This had a direct impact on the planned implementation for the inclusion of and piloting of the measurement of SDG 5.4.1. in Montserrat. UN Women explored options on the best way to utilize the assigned funds such as including the questions on the 2023 census for the country.

## **Priority Cross-cutting Issues**

### **Cross-cutting results/issues**

### **Gender Marker and activities undertook for gender equality**

The JP is Gender-transformative (for example, the JP explicitly aimed to address the structural and root causes of gender inequality, such as by combining social protection with community dialogues and economic empowerment activities that aim to shift gender social norms and power relations). Evidence, data collection and analysis (e.g. gender assessments of programmes; policy briefs, costing for scale-up of social services);

### **SDG Transitions Acceleration**

The SDGs Programme is contributing to strengthening the data architecture through digital transformation in both countries including mechanisms to enhance data collection such as open data and emerging technologies which have the potential to play a significant alignment role in achieving the SDGs and driving digital transformation. In keeping with the integrated nature of the six transitions, there are also substantive linkages that can be made with this JP. The JP principally contributes to the transition on jobs and social protection and indirectly the transition on climate change, biodiversity and pollution. The linkage is through SDG 3: Health (Target 3.7) and SDG 5: Gender Equality (Target 5.4 and Target 5.6) but also other SDGs such as SDG 10: Inequalities. Examples of the interconnectedness include:

? Population and gender data is essential for the promotion of healthy empowered populations, including women, girls and young people, and climate resilience which is crucial in the context of Barbados and Montserrat.

? Strengthened capacity to produce data on SDG indicator 5.4.1 will provide information necessary to inform social protection policies and strategies to promote decent employment in the care economy.

? Strengthened capacity on the utilization of population data enables enhanced identification of individuals outside of existing national social protection schemes. For example, the PSA for Montserrat and the training curriculum on population mainstreaming to strengthen the capacity of national stakeholders will enable the government to analyze and assess the impact of demographic changes on national sustainable development efforts; strengthen national data systems; and formulate evidence-based sustainable development policies and programmes that can inform efforts to provide equal opportunities for decent work and equitable social protection, leaving no one behind.

? Comprehensive social protection systems require the integration of universal health coverage that addresses the health needs, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, of all and especially those most left behind.

## Annual Reporting on Results

### Exit strategy, scaling, sustainability and next steps

UNFPA and UN Women continue to advocate with governments and stakeholders on the importance of investing in data including in interaction with CARICOM and as part of the Regional Spotlight Programme.

The JP aligns with UNFPA's efforts to strengthen national capacities and engage key stakeholders on demographic resilience, data and the monitoring of the SDGs in context of the ICPD@30. For example, UNFPA organized the Caribbean Forum on Population and Development, in September 2023 jointly with the Government of Antigua and Barbuda and ECLAC, which connected over 100 stakeholders in the Caribbean including the Government of Barbados and civil society from Barbados and the region at large, emphasizing the need for population data to generate evidence-based policies and programmes. UNFPA is also in the process of finalizing a Data Strategy for the English and Dutch-speaking Caribbean that will further assist in concretizing the gains made in the Joint Fund Programme as well as assist in identifying key areas for further strengthening.

UNFPA and UN Women play a key role in advancing joint UN programming on data to ensure stronger engagement with development partners including support to SDG monitoring in Barbados. This effort enables the JP to better leverage inputs of other agencies for activities of the JP including development partners such as Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), the World Bank, Statistics Canada and CARICOM.

The capacity building and strengthening of the measurement of SDG indicator 5.4.1 by UN Women is also supported by the joint programme (Build Back Equal) funded by the Global Affairs Canada; that aims to strengthen regional capacity to measure this indicator that would provide data on a key structural barrier to gender equality and women's empowerment.

With the link between data produced from SDG monitoring Goals 5 (and specifically, indicator 5.4.1) and policy as a focus of this JP, informed by emerging results of the supported pilot, the JP activities link closely to training and sensitization on gender equality, and breaking down barriers to equitable participation in the labour market. This is done through recognition, reduction, redistribution, rewarding care work and representation of workers in the paid care economy to demand decent work conditions - with a broader impact on sustainable impact in the Caribbean.

UNFPA and UN Women collaborate with the CDB to multiply the impact of the JP. CDB participated in the UNFPA supported Caribbean Forum on Population and Development to highlight the importance of data as part of demographic resilience and UN Women collaborates with CDB on gender data and the Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment Programme.

The World Bank is another potential strategic partner for the JP as it is a key investor in statistics for the Eastern Caribbean. Areas of collaboration will be explored linked to the support to Population and Housing Census (PHC) and capacity building linked to monitoring of SDGs and specifically SDG 5. UN Women has strengthened its collaboration with the World Bank on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB), commencing 2023, and with support from the EU-UN Caribbean Regional Spotlight Programme. GRB, as a gender mainstreaming strategy, is a necessary tool to ensure implementation of the SDGs and ensure sustainable financing of policy commitments to advance gender equality.

In 2024, UNFPA and UN Women seek to align advocacy and investment into data with the political importance

given to data in the upcoming 4th SIDS Conference (27 – 30 May 2024, Antigua and Barbuda) including the plans to establish a Center of Excellence.

**Measuring and reporting on impact**

Nil

**Overview of progress toward Financial Instrument(s)**

**Completed transactions**

## Strategic Partnerships, Documents and Communications

### Multi-stakeholder engagement

#### Stakeholder groups you closely partner with, as part of your JP approach

National Government; Civil Society Organizations;

#### Brief description of the nature of engagement. Outline the main outcomes and achievements resulting from the partnerships.

The JP's main engagement was with the relevant Government counterparts in Barbados and Montserrat; specifically the Ministries of Economy and Finance, Health and Bureaus of Gender, and in particular staff in the respective national statistical offices with the objective of providing technical support and strengthening capacity on data and population dynamics and the interlinkages to the SDGs. Engagement with civil society included the Barbados Family Planning Association and the Barbados Council for the Disabled. At regional level, interlocutors included CARICOM, UWI and the Caribbean Development Bank.

The main achievements from these engagements included sensitization and partnership building around the issues of population dynamics, demographic challenges and opportunities linked to aging, low fertility and migration.

#### How did the JP facilitate collaboration with diverse stakeholders

#### Financial leverage

#### Financial resources leveraged

Nil

#### Donor and Strategic events attended by JP in 2022

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors event
Yes, in 2023	Yes, in 2023

**Explanation if you have not held any key meeting/events for the above question.**

N/A

#### **JP contribution to SDG Financing**

Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy in focus	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in the management of programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness (value for money; i.e. social impact of \$1 spent) of spending	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks or developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	Structured new financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding
No	No	No	No	No	No

**Briefly explain how and in which area your JP contributed to enhancing SDG financing**

#### **Focus on LNOB cross cutting principles**

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
No	No	No	No

**Provide any other comments or descriptions on how your JP contributed to cross-cutting issues and principles.**  
N/A

## **Beneficiaries**

#### **Number of beneficiaries**

86

Percentage (%) of women benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of children & youth (0-24 years of age) benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of older persons (age 60 and above) benefited among the total number	Percentage (%) of persons with disabilities benefited among the total number
66	0	0	0



**Please briefly explain how people benefited from the joint programme**

The main beneficiaries of the programme to date are the interlocutors at the Government agencies working directly with the project and engaging with consultants on specific deliverables and the Government staff that were trained on the National Transfer of Accounts training organized by UNFPA and UNDESA or have benefited from the Population mainstreaming online training (exact numbers to be reported in 2024).

The e-learning course on Population Mainstreaming was opened to a wide cross-section of participants and saw enrolment from Barbados and other Caribbean, and included participants from as far as India, the USA and a few African States. As at December 2023 some 67 persons engaged with the course.

**Did your JP support the localization of SDGs by moving SDG actions to the local level and enhancing abilities of local and regional governments to promote the SDGs?**

**Provide information of how your JP supported localization of the SDGs as outlined above:**

## Communications

### Voices from the field

At the launch on 25 Nov, 2022: Officer-in-Charge, UNFPA Sub-Regional Office for the Caribbean, Jewell Quallo-Rosberg, told the forum, UNFPA continues to advocate for the use of population data and gender statistics to “lift the cloak of invisibility from persons most vulnerable to discrimination and inequality.” She added that population data would also help beneficiary Governments to plan for development and better respond to crises, including natural disasters. “Everything we do is based upon solid data and evidence - because you can’t change what you can’t see. To get to zero, we need to identify and reach those most in need. Quality population data and evidence can help us get there.”

Minister in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs in Barbados, the Hon. Ryan Straughn, in welcoming the initiative, said the joint programme will be a critical part of the Government’s programme in Barbados to revamp the way that they viewed statistics, in terms of real-time capacity to bring meaningful change to decision making.

Premier and Minister of Finance in Montserrat, the Hon. Joseph Farrell, told the gathering small states like Montserrat were disadvantaged by the absence of clean, quality, disaggregated data.

The Members of the Joint Committee and the 2 Country Coordinating Committees continue to laud the Programme for the contribution it is making in the strengthening of the data architecture of both countries as well as the strengthening of the capacities of focal points in key government and civil society organizations.

(Source:<https://caribbean.unfpa.org/en/news/un-joint-sdg-fund-programme-launched-strengthen-data-and-policy-solutions-rights-based>)

### Declaration

We hereby confirm that the information provided in this update is duly reviewed and approved by the RC and all PUNOs involved in the Joint Programme.