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**Barbados Statement at the Adoption of the Barbados UPR
October 3 2023**

Ambassador Matthew Wilson

Thank you Vice Chairperson

Thank you to the Secretariat for facilitating my virtual participation today.

I regret that Barbados was unable to provide its Addendum in time for Members to have sight of our progress and our responses. This really puts into view two things:

1. the seriousness of which Barbados has approached this- we did not want to share updates on issues as important as this until and unless it had been endorsed by the Cabinet of Barbados,
2. But also highlights the capacity constraints that small states like ours have. The UPR is important. We have committed to it. But it is but one of many critical issues our small country has on its plate and I am afraid that even though the timeline between May and today seems long - between the summer break and the UNGA we had not been able to complete our domestic process around the addendum.

In May, Minister Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade led our delegation to the UPR. It was a positive and constructive process. Member States made a total of 224 recommendations and following that session we sought to address them around the following broad thematic areas:

1. Administration of justice, fair trial, right to life
2. Establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and a National Mechanism for Implementation, Reporting and Follow-up
3. Prohibition of slavery/human trafficking and protection of migrants
4. Right to an adequate standard of living; right to work; health and education, economic, social, religious and cultural rights

5. Issues around rights of women
6. Issues around Child Protection
7. Issues around Persons with disabilities
8. Issues around rights of LGBTQI+ persons
9. And Miscellaneous around Climate change and disaster risks, and Combatting gun violence

Barbados has examined all recommendations made, in accordance with the provisions of paragraphs 27 and 32 of the annex to Council resolution 5/1 and paragraph 16 of the annex to Council resolution 16/21.

In total, out of the 224 recommendations received, I can say that 129 enjoyed the support of Barbados and 86 were noted. 3 were supported and fully implemented and 9 were supported and noted. This will be included in more granular form in the addendum which is being finalised for circulation.

First I am pleased to highlight which recommendations have been fully implemented:

1. We have amended the nationality laws to ensure women confer nationality on their children in all circumstances
2. We have amended the relevant laws to ensure all parents can confer nationality on their children
3. We have repealed or amended all discriminatory provisions in legislation including by providing equal rights in conferring nationality to an adopted child or foreign spouse

This process has caused us to look carefully at our domestic organizational structure for addressing human rights issues which is why one of the first steps to be taken will be to recommend the Establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI).

In response to the 14 recommendations to ratify the Convention Against Torture, we have supported this. We are already in touch with various actors to support us in getting this underway. We take note of the recommendation around its optional protocol.

We also support the recommendation to consolidate the legal framework on the protection of migrants by ratifying the international convention on the protection of the rights of all migrant workers and members of their families. You may recall that Barbados is the newest member of IOM and we will be working with them on this.

Moving to child protection we have supported the recommendation to sign and ratify the optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We have also supported adoption of laws that clearly define and prohibit child sexual abuse and exploitation, increase the minimum age of criminal liability

and criminalizing child marriage. We have also supported the recommendations around adopting alternatives to corporal punishment. We will also continue advancing our work on our Child Justice Bill.

Moving to the rights of women and gender, we have supported ratifying the optional protocol to CEDAW, supported all recommendations on addressing gender based violence and gender inequality including around enhancing support services for victims of domestic and gender based violence.

On persons with disabilities we have supported all of the various recommendations including around adopting legislation and ensuring access to education, housing and healthcare.

A number of recommendations were made calling for Barbados to enhance collaboration and technical assistance with partners to improve our institutional structure around human rights and to fulfill our outstanding human rights reporting. These have all been supported.

We have supported the recommendations around trafficking of persons including combatting any trafficking of children.

We have supported all recommendations around equal pay and eliminating any gender pay gap.

We have supported the recommendations to strengthen the social security system, strengthen measures to ensure access to sexual and reproductive health services, and to strengthen health systems and address maternal mortality.

In terms of the 9 recommendations, being supported and noted, these all relate to support for ratifying CAT but noting the optional protocol to CAT, noting the ban on corporal punishment in schools, and noting the recommendation to ratify convention for protection of all persons from enforced disappearances, noting the second optional protocol to the covenant on civil and political rights on abolition of death penalty, and noting the ratification of the Istanbul convention

We have noted a number of recommendations which will continue to be on our radar in due course.

These include recommendations around

1. Administration of justice, fair trial, right to life
2. Issues around Child Protection
3. Issues around rights of **LGBTQI+ persons**

As you can see Barbados has taken this process very seriously but there remains work to be done- including on finalizing our addendum for submission to this Council. This is a process to get this right: capacity building, political will, civil society consultation, legislative changes and institutional strengthening are all part of it. But be assured that Barbados remains committed to human rights for all within our territory and we look to those of you with the experience and the technical assistance to accompany us on this journey. I once again thank you for your understanding and support.

