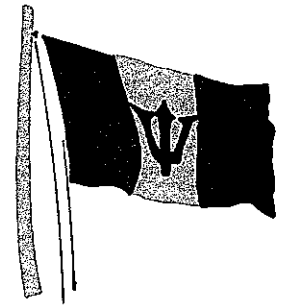




*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



**Ministerial Statement of the Government of Barbados
delivered by the**

**Minister of Economic Affairs and Investment
Senator The Hon. Chad J. Blackman**

at the

**57th Session of the Commission on Population and
Development (57th CPD)**

April 29th to May 3rd, 2024.

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

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Excellencies colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Government of Barbados is particularly pleased for the opportunity to join with you and the wider global community as we mark the 30th year of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development. Over the past three decades, although the pace of implementation has lagged, there has been substantial progress globally in a range of areas, including: the reduction in the cases of HIV and infant and maternal mortality; as well as an increase in the regulatory protection for the rights and welfare of children and women against discrimination and violence.

However, this progress has been unequal across territories, even in my own region we continue to contend with issues of: high incidences of teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence.

Efforts of all countries have been undermined by the detrimental and lingering social and economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic. Additionally, the economic and geopolitical uncertainty at a global level; the increasing high human and developmental costs due to the event of climate change; as well as the targeted efforts to erode gains for sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality, threaten to frustrate the successes made in the Programme of Action to date, and if left unaddressed will hamper our ability to achieve the objectives outlined under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. “Leaving no one behind” must be a maxim with bite. Notwithstanding our differing perspectives, life experiences and cultures should not be diminished, we cannot let perfection be the enemy of progress.

More than ever, there is a need for global commitment and rededication to advance the objectives of ICPD, which must be accompanied by the strategic prioritization and investment to address our current challenges as well as the recognition of the fiscal policy limitations of several

developing states to invest in human and social capital or the requisite statistical systems to monitor and evaluate effectiveness of initiatives.

For Barbados like many in the Caribbean, we are currently grappling with consequences emanating from an ageing population demographic and years of stagnant population growth. By 2038 the population of the sub-region is expected to decline. For us in Barbados, according to the recently concluded Population and Housing Census this is already a reality. This poses dire implications for: tax revenue generation; the effective delivery of the social services and protection programmes; and the sustainability of public insurance and pension schemes, the negative effect of which will be mainly borne by the most vulnerable of our society.

The current situation necessitates urgent action to strengthen the size and competency of the population and more importantly the labour force in order to support the achievement of our national developmental

goals. These measures will require a review of existing migration and family planning policies; transformation of the education system to ensure the labour force is equipped with the skills necessary to compete in the global arena; creation of programmes that encourage youth engagement and development; and the adaptation of social services and protection programmes to effectively cater to the requirements of the current population. However, these measures cannot be pursued in a manner that threatens the bodily autonomy or human rights of women and girls. Rather, what is required are policies which create the enabling environment that supports families who wish to have children, as well as facilitate sharing the burden of care for those with young dependents and elderly relatives among the family and the state.

I thank you.