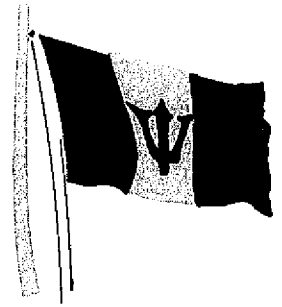




*Permanent Mission  
of Barbados to  
the United Nations*



**STATEMENT BY**

**SENATOR IRENE SANDIFORD-GARNER  
PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT**

**AT THE**

**47<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON POPULATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT**

**ON**

**NATIONAL EXPERIENCE IN POPULATION MATTERS: ASSESSEMENT  
OF THE STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF  
ACTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION  
AND DEVELOPMENT**

**10 APRIL, 2014**

**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS  
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*Please check against delivery*

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

My delegation wishes to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to steer the work of this 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission. Barbados looks forward to the successful conclusion of negotiations and the adoption of a concise, consensus outcome document. Barbados also aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of Bolivia on behalf of the G77 and China and the distinguished representative of Costa Rica on behalf of CELAC.

Mr Chairman,

Barbados reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the key actions for its further implementation. This landmark document was, and continues to be the basis for the elaboration of sound and progressive national policies on population and development, including in the critical areas of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

Barbados is of the view that the implementation of the Programme of Action beyond 2014 is entirely compatible with the post-2015 development agenda and the elaboration of the sustainable development goals. We welcomed the convening of the First Session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean in Montevideo in August 2013, which adopted the Montevideo Consensus.

Barbados has made notable progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action, although some gaps remain. Several policy measures have been introduced to improve the living conditions of the population, in such areas as health, education, housing, environment and social welfare.

Guided by the principle of universal access, health care is free at the point of delivery and funded through general taxation, with expenditure for health at approximately 4% of the GDP.

Barbados accords high priority to developing an equitable, efficient and accessible health care system within the context of its overall national development.

Barbados reiterates its full commitment to ensuring universal access to quality sexual and reproductive health services and the enjoyment of reproductive rights. Comprehensive services are provided through our primary health care system and in collaboration with select non-governmental organizations.

The unmet need for contraceptives has been reduced in the general population, including through the availability of emergency contraception. Safe termination of pregnancies is provided through the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1983. Early detection and prevention of cervical cancer has reduced the number of deaths related to cervical cancer, and the HPV vaccination was introduced in Barbados in January 2014.

The maternal death rate stands at 0.8 per thousand live births, and there were six maternal deaths between 2007 and 2009. We are seeking to ensure that quality care continues to be offered and is accessed within the first trimester of pregnancy.

Our sexual and reproductive health programmes include a comprehensive HIV programme which is evidence-informed, gender-sensitive and human rights-based, and which addresses aspects of prevention, treatment, care and support. Increased access to STI/HIV prevention, treatment and care services for vulnerable population groups and populations at risk has been assured through the National HIV Programme, which was expanded in 2001. A cardinal feature of this expansion was the introduction of Anti-retroviral therapy (ARV) free at the point of service delivery. This has resulted in noteworthy declines in HIV-related morbidity and mortality and in mother-to-child transmission rates.

With regard to HIV, Barbados' achievements include the following:

- A significant expansion of HIV prevention and care services through decentralized testing with and referral to high quality care services;
- Coverage for ARVs is currently estimated at 86% for those who need it;
- A reduction of AIDS mortality rates to under 2%;
- A reduction of mother-to-child transmission of HIV to 0.8% between 2003 and 2012: Barbados has had no reported cases of transmission of HIV from mother to child in the last seven years.

With regard to children and adolescents, a Health and Family Life Education curriculum, a school-based sexual and reproductive health education programme at primary and secondary levels, has been introduced in our schools and is jointly presented by the Ministries of Health and Education.

The National Youth Policy of the Ministry of Health outlines a framework for action on youth development and identifies key strategy areas including family, core values and lifestyle diseases. We recognize the need to address inconsistencies in legislation to align the age of consent with the age of legal access to reproductive health services and commodities without parents' consent.

Mr Chairman,

Non-communicable diseases pose a major threat to the development of Barbados. The management and prevention of NCDs has therefore been one of our national priorities for some time, given that an estimated 1 in 10 adults is afflicted with at least one of these conditions. We are very proud of the establishment of the Barbados National Registry - the first of its kind in the Caribbean - to address issues related to epidemiological data collection, including cancer. We are working assiduously to achieve the targets of the UN High-level meeting on NCDs for 2010-2025.

Barbados reaffirms its commitment to women's full enjoyment of their human rights, and a national policy on gender is now being developed. It will be the guiding framework through which gender perspectives are mainstreamed in national planning, legislation, programmes and activities to advance development. Barbados recognizes that despite significant advances in the status of women, the empowerment of women is an issue to which we must continue to devote attention. Violence against women, particularly domestic violence, is a scourge which we continue to face. Barbados recognizes the urgent need to work with men, women, boys and girls in efforts to encourage positive social norms. Barbados has committed to establishing a Family Court which will include the hearing of domestic violence cases.

Mr Chairman,

The ICPD Programme of Action stressed the crucial contribution of international cooperation to improving quality of life and achieving development goals. This continues to be the case, particularly as developing countries continue to grapple with the severe impacts of the global financial and economic crisis. Barbados reiterates the need for international cooperation which encompasses issues such as technical assistance relative to legislative reform, institutional strengthening and relevant training; the provision of initiatives which are web-based in nature with a view to containing cost; the sharing of best practices, collaborative ventures as well as a pooling of resources, particularly with regional counterparts. We also highlight, once again, the urgent need to strengthen national statistical capacity, a critical component in creating, monitoring and evaluating policy.

We have benefitted greatly from collaboration with partners, including the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, in our efforts to achieve our development objectives. We look forward to continued cooperation with development partners in this regard, as we seek to achieve the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action.

I thank you.