



*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



**Statement delivered by the
Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs
Barbados**

The Honourable Kirk D. M. Humphrey, M.P.

to the

**Conference of State Parties to the
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

*Overarching Theme: Harmonizing national policies and
strategies with the CRPD: achievements and challenges*

13, June 2023

Mr. President, Barbados became signatory to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and ratified it in 2013 indicating its commitment to this important instrument. Before becoming a signatory to the convention, Government identified the need to address the issues faced by Persons with Disabilities and established the National Disabilities Unit in 1997 as a public entity to provide services, policy support and advocacy for this vulnerable group.

Over the intervening years in keeping with Barbadian values, much focus has been placed on improving the lives of persons with disabilities. This has allowed us to align with the Articles of the Convention and we are now at the stage where there is an intensification of efforts to improve their livelihoods.

In this regard, the Cabinet last year established a National Advisory Committee for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities. This body subsequently submitted a comprehensive report which informed the content of the draft National Policy on Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities as well as draft legislation to support the operationalisation of the policy.

Indeed all of Government's recent policy initiatives in education, health, youth, transport, sports, labour and housing incorporate provisions to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

For example, Barbados became a signatory to the Marrakesh Treaty in February 2023. Furthermore, 10 per cent of all new state sponsored housing is to be allocated to persons with disabilities. Programmes are in place to support the blind, the deaf and hard of hearing; those with mobility challenges as well as those whose conditions impact on their full participation in community life.

In addition, there has been a deepening of the relationship between third sector organisations and the state. This is reflected in a forty per cent increase in the financial support to registered non-governmental organisations representing the interests of this vulnerable group. Furthermore, the Government has supported a wider range of groups representing persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, the Government is in the process of transforming the social sector in Barbados which entails the amalgamation of the social services including the National Disabilities Unit. This will give persons with disabilities access to greater resources and presents the opportunity for more focused family based interventions.

The Awareness Raising and Accessibilities programmes have been intensified through purposeful efforts to improve attitudes of the general population to persons with disabilities and to advance their inclusion in all aspects of national life.

Mr. President, Barbados, like most developing states, experiences challenges in achieving the desired level of representation and inclusion of persons with disabilities. Notwithstanding this our country remains resolute in it's quest to advance their rights.

We will continue in our efforts to conform with the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities while at the same time adhering to the values and traditions that make us uniquely Barbadian.

I thank You!