



*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



Statement delivered by

The Honourable Edmund G. Hinkson, S.C., M.P.

at the

**17th Session of the Conference of State Parties to the
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Overarching Theme: “Rethinking disability inclusion at the current
international juncture and ahead of the Summit of the Future”**

12th June 2024

Mr. President, in June, 2022, the Cabinet of Barbados established a National Advisory Committee for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities, with the mandate to for the first time formulate a National Policy on Disabilities as well as to craft a draft Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill. These mandates were completed by March last year, with the Cabinet subsequently in September approving a comprehensive 2023-2030 National Policy representing the most progressive, multifaceted and targeted effort ever to protect, advance and promote the full and equitable enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms of the estimated seven percent of persons who reside with some form of disabilities in Barbados.

My country is committed to fostering a national environment in which all forms of discrimination and barriers constraining the realisation of the full potential and personal development of persons with disabilities are eliminated.

Our Government is ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided with the essential opportunities, including accessibility to decent housing and to benefits such as access to State trust loans for entrepreneurial ventures, leading to their increased meaningful participation and inclusion in all aspects of Barbadian life.

Our Government also provides assistive equipment such as wheelchairs and technological devices for persons with disabilities. There is also a policy to retrofit the homes of financially vulnerable persons with disabilities.

Our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, The Honourable Mia Mottley, in her Budgetary Statement this year has made provision for social security support for persons with a wider range of disabilities than is now presently the case.

Our Government has pledged to, in 2024, bring before the Parliament legislation domesticating our international obligations in compliance with the Convention. This will, when enacted, provide a legal framework for guaranteeing equality of free educational and training opportunities, accessible and dignified healthcare, affirmative action principles in employment, affordable and reliable transportation, protection from natural disasters and indeed the empowerment of persons with disabilities in every core area of life.

The imminent transformation of our social services' institutional framework by the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, with the amalgamation of key departments including that of the National Disabilities Unit, will facilitate persons with

disabilities in accessing wider resources under less bureaucratic circumstances than is presently the case.

Barbados looks forward to continuing our mutually beneficial relationship with the United Nations, to advance the rights of persons with disabilities and to assist our population in becoming more sensitive to and aware of these critical issues.

Mr. President, I thank you!