

Contribution to the Universal Periodic Review of Barbados

4th cycle, period 2018-2022

United Nations Subregional Team for Barbados and the OECS

A. Context¹

1. Barbados became a **Parliamentary Republic** on 30 November 2021, after 55 years of having become an independent nation State. This was the result of a Constitutional Amendment² introduced to the Parliament on 20 September 2021, which was passed by the House of the Assembly and the Senate and received immediate royal assent. The incumbent Governor-General of Barbados, Dame Sandra Mason, was elected first President on 20 October and took office on 30 November 2021. This consequential reform had been proposed on various occasions in the past, notably in a 1998 constitutional review commission recommending republican status and in plans for a referendum on the matter in 2008, which did not take place.
2. In May 2018, **Prime Minister Mia Mottley, the first woman to hold this post**, was sworn in for her first term, after her party (Barbadian Labour Party) won the general election. In January 2022 she was sworn in for a second term after a general election. Prime Minister Mottley has been a strong advocate at the global level about the cumulative vulnerabilities and needs of Small Island Developing States, notably calling the international community to strengthen multilateralism, ensure debt relief and longer terms for restructuring and for a reform of the global financial architecture in order to increase access to financing for countries facing higher vulnerability, especially to climate change.
3. Barbados has recorded **low economic growth rates** over the past two decades (2000-2020). As other countries in the subregion, Barbados' economy has been driven by tourism, and to a lesser extent agriculture, with limited economy of scale. Even before the onset of the pandemic, it has been highly susceptible to external economic shocks and natural hazards, with significant impacts on growth and development. These factors have contributed to an accumulation of sovereign debt (debt to GDP ratio reached 158 % in 2018).³ In June 2018, the Government of Barbados entered a four-year **Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF)** to restructure its public sector debt as part of the Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Program. The programme's main target was a 60% debt to GDP ratio by FY 2033/34.⁴ A primary surplus of 6 % of GDP each year was needed to reach that target. In 2019 a primary balance of 6.2 % of GDP was achieved and the debt-to-GDP fell to 123.2 %, but that was short-lived. Debt to GDP (147 % in 2020 and 135.4 % in 2021) increased as revenues dropped, and expenditures rose in response to increased health care needs and social spending to help cushion the impacts of the pandemic. The situation has been further complicated by the triple

global crisis of 2022 (food, fuel, and finance). In September 2022, the Prime Minister announced that the country will seek a new BERT agreement with the IMF.⁵

4. The Population and Housing Census originally scheduled for 2020 was postponed. Enumeration took place in August and September 2022.
5. Despite progress during the last two decades towards better human development, Barbados's **Human Development Index** (HDI) score dropped from 0.814 in 2019 to 0.790 in 2021 which placed the country in the High human development category (as opposed to very high in 2019)—ranking 70 out of 191 countries and territories.⁶
6. **Climate change, natural hazards and environmental degradation** constitute a challenge to the population and threaten livelihoods as well as the production of food from land and sea for local consumption and for exports. Green and circular economic strategies are of special importance to the authorities and could be promoted for building resilience, increasing localisation of production and commerce, leveraging resource efficiency and innovation, and reducing emissions and waste. The green and blue sectors of agriculture, forestry and fisheries currently contribute very little – 1 per cent to 11 per cent of GDP for Barbados and the OECS. A transition to inclusive, resilient, and environmentally sustainable blue and green economies has been proposed as key to achieving growth and prosperity.

B. Acceptance of international norms, status of ratification

Recommendations: 96.20, 96.22, 96.23, 96.28

7. During this period, Barbados' progress in signing or ratifying outstanding core international human rights instruments has slowed.
8. On 1st September 2022, Barbados lodged its instrument of ratification of the International Labour Organization's Violence and Harassment Convention No 190, (2019) and became the second Caribbean country to do so. It will enter into force for Barbados in 2023. The examination of the status of implementation by an expert body of the ILO will commence in 2024.
9. On 1 July 2019: accession to the HCCH Convention of the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction ("Child Abduction Convention"). The Convention entered into force on 1 October 2019.

C. Cooperation with international human rights mechanisms (treaty bodies and special procedures)

Recommendations: 96.31, 96.33

10. Barbados has been delayed in submitting its overdue reports to treaty bodies. Those include reports to the Human Rights Committee (ICCPR) pending since 2011, to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) since 2007 and to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) since 1991.
11. Barbados has not yet issued a standing invitation to Special Procedures. Between 2018 and 2022, the State has received four requests for a visit.

D. Constitutional and Legislative Framework

Recommendations: 96.114, 96.118, 96.83, 96.84, 96.85, 96.94, 96.109, 96.74, 96.41, 96.73; 96.1, 96.2, 96.4, 96.5, 96.6, 96.7, 96.59, 96.27

12. In June 2022, a group of eleven persons was sworn in as members of the Constitution Reform Commission, with a view to review the constitutional structure and mechanisms required with its new Republican status.
13. UNICEF is currently supporting the Government to review the Child Care and Protection Bill 2022 and Child Justice Bill 2019, aimed at removing some forms of discrimination between children. The current drafts inter alia, raise the age of criminal responsibility from 11 to 12 years, eliminates ‘status offences’; introduces diversion into the criminal justice system; creates more sentencing options for children in conflict with the law; and abolishes the use of corporal punishment as a possible sentence and in child-care centres. The Minister of Home Affairs announced on 19 September 2022 that the Government will adopt the new Child Justice legislation before year-end. UNICEF is supporting the review of both Bills.
14. Constitution Act, 2000 #18, Section 5, Subsection 2, provides for a child at the date of birth to automatically receive Barbadian citizenship, from either parent who was born in Barbados. However, this provision does not confer similar rights on a Barbadian parent who received citizenship by descent. Prime Minister Mottley has indicated that her administration will seek to amend legislation to widen the provision on Barbadian citizenship by descent, as Barbados moves to a comprehensive constitutional reform process.
15. The Education Act provides for "compulsory school age" which means from 5 years of age to 16 years of age. The Ministry of Education has established an Education Reform Unit working on an agenda to inform improvement in law, programme, and services.
16. Regarding death penalty, since the constitutional amendment bill in 2019, that removed mandatory death sentence for those convicted of murder, there have not been additional changes. The amendment did not eliminate the option of imposing the death penalty but has instead given it to the discretion of the presiding judge.
17. In 2020, Barbados passed the Employment (Prevention of Discrimination)⁷ Act, 2020. Section 3(2) of the Act enumerates 19 prohibited grounds of discrimination, among which are: race, origin, colour, sex, sexual orientation; social status; marital status, medical condition; disability and age. Section 23 that the Employment Rights Tribunal receives and makes determinations on complaints on discrimination regulated under the Act. The ILO is assisting the Government in strengthening the Tribunal.
18. In 2021, a few days before Barbados transitioned to a Republic, a new “Charter of Barbados” was presented to Parliament. While this document is not legally binding, the Prime Minister stressed that the document “promotes the concept of active citizenship.” It refers to equality and non-discrimination in five articles, stating that “all Barbadians are born free and are equal in human dignity and rights regardless of

age, race, ethnicity, faith, class, cultural and educational background, ability, sex, gender or sexual orientation.”

E. National Human Rights Institution

Recommendations: 96.34, 96.35

19. Since 2018, Barbados has made limited progress in establishing a National Human Rights Institution.
20. There exists an Ombudsman Office in charge of addressing complaints against Government authorities in administrative matters. The Ombudsperson is appointed by the President, based on a recommendation from the Prime Minister and approval from Parliament. It submits annual reports to Parliament with recommendations of changes to laws and descriptions of activities.⁸

F. Good Governance

Recommendations: 96.75

21. The Prevention of Corruption Act 12 was repealed and replaced by the Prevention of Corruption Act, 2021 (October 2021). The Act provides for the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of acts of corruption and defines a range of potential acts committed by public officials, those in the private sector and international civil servants constituting offences and articulates the range of related investigations and penalties.

G. Prohibition of slavery, trafficking

Recommendations: 96.79

22. In 2021, an ILO’s body of legal experts (Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations/CEACR) adopted an Observation related to implementation of Convention No 182 (Worst forms of child labour, 1999), noted the need for stronger enforcement of the Trafficking in Persons Act 2016-9, and [called on the Government](#) to take action to ensure the effective implementation of the Act.
23. UNODC has held training courses with key stakeholders on trafficking prevention during this period.

H. Administration of justice & fair trial

Recommendations: 96.68

24. In 2020, UNDP carried out a regional assessment of the justice system in 9 Caribbean countries,⁹ including Barbados. The assessment allowed the identification, through a participatory and comprehensive methodology, of the main opportunities and challenges for a “people-centred approach to justice that leaves no one behind.” Accordingly, challenges include the lack of available data for the design of regional and national assessments and result oriented solutions, and the backlog of cases – particularly in the criminal division -, with multifaceted reasons including the slow pace of investigations by police, inordinate delays in production of depositions, and lack of human and technological resources. Over-use of pre-trial detention in violation of due process contributed to the backlog because of lack of non-custodial options at the pre-trial stage.

25. The assessment explores the various reasons behind the backlog, including lack of fully integrated communications and technology systems – which means that tracking of cases, and case files throughout the justice system relies on paper documents; case flow issues as well as the need to integrate national resilience into the justice system. “To do this, these systems will have to be linked to secure, electronic case registry and case management systems. The digitization of case management is also a key element of building national resilience. The case of the destruction of Courts and other state administration offices in Dominica following the passage of Hurricane Maria was accompanied by the loss of many of the paper-based court records, leading to major challenges with pursuing the related cases.”
26. As of September 2022, according to data obtained from Dodds Prison – the island’s lone adult prison – the total prison population, including pre-trial detainees, is 736 persons, of which 62.7% were pre-trial detainees/ remand prisoners. Women represented 2.9% of the total population in prison, and “juveniles, minors, young prisoners” represent the bulk of the those on remand. Dodds Prison has separated zones for different groups of its population.
27. The study concludes with a series of recommendations in line with SDG16.3. Among those: strengthen regional cooperation and implementation of existing regional platforms; coordinate the establishment of a Regional Judicial Training Institute that should ensure mainstreaming of a gender perspective; enhance consideration of critical data to inform budgeting and planning; ensure a gendered approach to judicial reform; more cross-learning promoted in the region and sensitizing on the Caribbean Court of Justice. The study also recommends more sensitization and take-up of CARICOM model legislation.
28. The Attorney General has indicated that concrete steps are being taken to address backlog and undue delays, including the appointment of three temporary judges, and bringing the DPP’s Office up to its full staff complement. UNICEF has expressed concern that this may be at the expense of establishing the specialised Family Court in the short to medium term.

I. Economic, social, and cultural rights: general measures of implementation

Recommendations: 96.89

29. The COVID-19 pandemic is estimated to have increased poverty in Caribbean countries by 10-25%.¹⁰ The immediate impacts on employment, loss of livelihoods and of income due to widespread border closures and social distancing measures that were taken at the height of the pandemic were evident. Unemployment rose sharply at the height of the pandemic as increasing numbers of people sought social assistance. An estimate of 41.6% of persons surveyed in Barbados in 2020 reported that they were not able to meet their household needs with 57% of those coming from low-income households who had not been able to meet their household needs during the survey.¹¹ Data from that survey also showed that approximately 38% of workers who lost their jobs were low-income women employed in tourism. Physical distancing measures, including business and school closures implemented to contain the spread of the virus resulted in many challenges, including loss of learning, increased gender-based violence, and violence against children.

30. WFP, jointly with other stakeholders, have conducted surveys on Caribbean Food Security and Livelihoods Survey between 2020 and August 2022.¹² Accordingly, in April 2020 69 % of respondents across the region experienced disruptions to livelihoods, 43% saw their income reduced and 17% reduced their food consumption. The sudden stop in tourism, which contributes 39 % of total GDP and 38.9 % of total employment, was projected to contribute to a 7.6 % decline in GDP. As a result, unemployment was expected to skyrocket to 40 %, up from just 10 % pre-pandemic, and severe poverty was projected to increase from 4.3 % to 19.5 %.
31. A similar trend was observed in Barbados, as unemployment rose from 10.1% at the end of 2019 to 17.9% in the second quarter of 2020, and unemployment claims rose sharply to over 52,282 claims in 2020, compared to 11,369 in 2019.

Table 1: Key macroeconomic indicators- comparison

Indicator	Barbados	
	2019	2020
Real GDP Growth (%)	-1.3	-18.0
Primary Balance (% of GDP)	6.0	-0.97
Overall Balance (% of GDP)	3.6	-4.8
Debt to GDP (%)	117.3	142.2

Source: IMF WEO, Central Statistics Offices, ECCB

32. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased use of social protection systems across the Caribbean. At the start of the pandemic, Barbados was the only country that had an unemployment scheme managed by the National Insurance Scheme (NIS) which provided an estimated 2% of GDP in unemployment and severance payments for the period 2020/21. Other measures undertaken by the Government of Barbados include welfare support, an adopt a family program, and a household survival program (see Table 19).

Table 2: 2020 and 2021 COVID related Expenditure in Barbados

Expenditure	Additional Spending or Foregone revenue	Total BBD\$ mn	Total % of GDP
Healthcare spending	Spending on medical supplies (\$78.8 mn) Purchase of medicines (\$7.8mn)	88.6	0.3
Support to households	Covid Relief Program (\$40 mn); Household Survivor Program (\$20 mn); Home Ownership Providing Energy (HOPE) (\$250 mn)	310	1.0
Support to Firms	Business Cessation Benefit (\$20 mn); Small Business Wage Fund (20 mn); Creative Industries stimulus (\$1 mn); Value Added Tax Loan Fund (\$40 mn); Small Hotel Investment Fund (\$20 mn); Barbados Employment and Sustainable Transformation Program (\$300 mn)	426;	0.4
Benefits	Unemployment insurance (NIS) (\$114 mn)	114	0.2
TOTAL		936.6	10.1

Source: IMF 2021. IMF 2021. Barbados Article 2021 Article IV Consultation, Sixth Review under the Extended Arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility, and Request for Modification of Performance Criteria. Washington, DC.; Barbados Authorities

a) Right to education

Recommendations: 96.93, 96.92, 96.96, 96.112

33. It is worth noting that the Education Act clearly outlines the nature of compulsory education for all children ages 5-16 years. Attendance Officers support schools in its enforcement. It is unlikely that an explicit reference to the right to education in law will be actioned until a fuller public consultation on education reform programme is rolled out in 2022/2023.
34. While there has been indication that action will be taken, at this stage there is currently no clear national policy to ensure formal education for pregnant schoolgirls, but it is expected that the impending public education reform will take this into consideration. The main national hospital QEH refers all pregnant school-aged girls to the Ministry of Education to support their continued education, this is a better practice regionally. However, in spite of these efforts there are some cases that fall through the cracks in the absence of public policy.
35. The education system in Barbados is one of the most advanced amongst the CARICOM. Traditionally high public investment in education (averaging 4.7% of GDP between 2013 and 2018) has contributed to high literacy rates (99.6). Primary and secondary education access is near-universal, although pre-primary enrolment remains below 90%. Nearly 97% of children attended primary education, and 91% attended secondary education in 2019.¹³ These accomplishments were due in part to the 2000 comprehensive education enhancement project.¹⁴

Table 3: Key Indicators for Education

Indicators	Period	SDG	Barbados
Literacy Rate (% ages 15 and older)	2008-2018	4.6	99.6
Gross Enrolment Ratio - Pre-Primary (% of preschool-age children)	2014-2019	4.2	87
Gross Enrolment Ratio - Primary (% of primary school-age population)	2014-2019	4.1	99
Gross Enrolment Ratio - Secondary (% of secondary school-age population)	2014-2019	4.1	104
Gross Enrolment Ratio - Tertiary (% of tertiary school-age population)	2014-2019	4.3	n.a.
Primary School Dropout rate (% of primary school cohort)	2008-2018		6.6
Survival rate to the last grade of lower secondary general education (%)	2008-2018		96
Government expenditure on education (% of GDP)	2013-2018	1.a	4.7

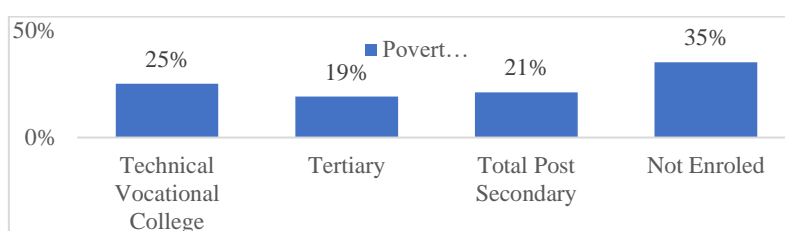
Source: UNDP 2020

36. Challenges to the overall education sector performance include the insufficiently trained teachers, sporadic maintenance of school infrastructure, and inadequate investments in materials and tools for enhancing delivery.
37. The Government of Barbados has one of the highest levels of spending on education in the Caribbean. The share of the national budget allocated to education averaged 17.7% from 1999 to 2020, comparable to the average spent in the Caribbean.¹⁵

However, spending has been on a downward trend from a high of 26.9% in 2001 to 10.8% in 2019 in Barbados, a trend that is similar in other countries in the region.

38. After 50 years of state-funded tertiary education at the University of the West Indies (Cave Hill Campus), the Government of Barbados introduced tuition fees¹⁶ for Barbadian students attending the campus in 2014. This policy resulted in a 40% decline in enrolment.¹⁷ In 2018, following the announcement of debt restructuring and a subsequent fiscal adjustment programme,¹⁸ supported by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the policy was reversed, and tuition fees were erased for Barbadian students attending UWI (Cavehill). However, the total expenditure on education (as a % of GDP) in the years 2019 and 2020 has been lower than in previous years.
39. The impacts of lack of access to education have implications for sustainable development. Many students who do not fully benefit from educational achievements are likely to earn less income during their employment and more vulnerable to shocks and fall into poverty. Thus, the overall level of educational attainment and lifetime earning potential could be compromised. The poverty rates for Barbados where students engaged in CAPE and or post-secondary education are lower (21%) than those who have not accessed tertiary education (35%).

Figure 1: Poverty and CAPE/post-secondary education enrolment, youth 17-24 years



Source: Barbados Statistical Service, 2018

b) Right to health – general

40. Barbados had the highest level of health spending in the Eastern Caribbean,¹⁹ at 6.5% of GDP.²⁰ This is due mainly to the universal health care system. However, an increase in debt servicing needs from about 16% of GDP in 2008 to 51% of GDP in 2018 is a sharp contrast to the expenditure on health care spending.
41. Despite the level of the expenditure on health, chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have challenged the health care systems in Barbados. Like the rest of the Caribbean, Barbados has one of the highest prevalence of NCDs, which creates a significant burden on the health care system.²¹ Half of all deaths in the Caribbean, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic were due to NCDs, as high as 83% in Barbados.²²
42. The trend in NCDs and their burden is likely to worsen over the next few years, particularly as child obesity has been identified as a major risk to health and development in the Caribbean.²³ NCDs present a threat to health, well-being, sustainable development, and the attainment of the SDGs, underpinning the importance of increasing health coverage.

J. Table 4: Selected Health Indicators for Barbados

	Income Level	Current Health Expenditure ²⁴ (2017, % of GDP)	Out of pocket expenditure (% of total health expenditure)	Hospital beds per 1,000	Physicians per 1,000	Nurses and midwives per 1,000	Life expectancy at birth (2019)	Under 5 mortality per 1,000 live births (2018)
Barbados	High	6.8	46.5	5.8	2.5	3.1	79.2	12.2

Source: World Bank (2020), latest data available; World Development Indicators database (<http://data.worldbank.org>.)

c) Right to housing

43. Barbados is one of the most densely populated countries in the region, and it is considered highly urbanised, even though a “proportion of urban developments take place in areas classified as informal, that is, not in conformity with tenure, physical planning and/or health laws and regulations.”²⁵ These areas are disproportionately occupied by the urban poor/ lower income households and whose vulnerability is further exacerbated by climate change, with significant proportions of high/density populations concentrated in coastal and hill side areas.²⁶ Tenantry lands are the primary form of informal settlements, home to approximately 80,000 persons (over 20% of the population), where rights of occupancy remain informal and basic services and infrastructure remain undeveloped. Urban informality undermines the capacity to address disaster risk reduction and resilience-building.²⁷

d) Right to food and food security

44. According to a WFP- lead series of surveys²⁸ the “impacts of the cost-of-living crisis are heavily affecting those who are still reeling from the effects of the pandemic”. Heavy import dependency among Caribbean economies on fuel, food products and agricultural inputs means that global changes in prices can further drive inflationary trends in the region. The survey for Barbados found in August 2022 that 39% of households saw disruption in their livelihoods, and as much as 49% experienced reduction or loss of income. Of serious concern were the findings that 42% of the respondents reduced their food consumption and 25%, or 1 person in 4 reported lack of food stock in August 2022, as opposed to 12% in February 2022.

45. At a regional level, the number of moderately and severely food insecure persons have attained an all-time high of 57%. This situation has led to some negative food consumption behaviours, affecting lowest income households, younger respondents, and mixed and single/parent households. Some of the coping mechanisms included skipping meals or entire days without eating, reduction in health and education expenditures, spending savings to meet food needs and selling productive assets and goods.²⁹

46. The FAO has provided support to the Government of Barbados in its commitment to strengthening its Animal Health and Food control system. A strategic framework was

developed in 2021 for a new Barbados Animal Health and Food control Agency (BAHFCA). The BAHFCA Framework is intended to provide partners, stakeholders, consumers, and international regulatory bodies, as well as Agency personnel, with a clear and transparent outline of the various Agency responsibilities and activities related to the oversight of food, animal health and plant health in Barbados.

47. Stemming from the urgent request of Governments on the high input costs of animal feed, in 2021-22 FAO engaged a regional partner to conduct fish silage feeding trials to test two different feed types on sheep and rabbits. It is expected that these actions will feed into newly prioritized sectors by the government in the context of efforts linked to the CARICOM 25% import reduction efforts by 2025, and in the context of the responses to the cost of energy, food price hike and fertilizer crises.
48. Value chains improvement and apiculture were areas identified as a priority for development and to create employment for the youth and women. A Rapid Value Chain Assessment was undertaken on this sector, which showed that there is good market potential.
49. In the area of fisheries, a market viability assessment for fish silage production and utilisation in Barbados was completed. The work also supported the preparation of small-scale fish silage operation business plan to support small stakeholders. FAO in cooperation with UNCTAD--DOALOS initiated work on tuna with the development of an ocean's economy and trade Strategy for Barbados.
50. Fisherfolk organisations were empowered by strengthening their capacity to improve core leadership competencies of fisherfolk leaders, and fisherfolk particularly for women and youth. The impact of this intervention is expected to strengthen collaboration among fisherfolk organisations, fisheries authorities and other state agencies for the promotion and achievement of sustainable fisheries in the region.
51. A review of sustainable school feeding, including cost assessment, carried out in Caricom/ SIDS identified three models of school feeding programs (SFPs) in CARICOM member states based on the classification of the main groups of home-grown school feeding (HGSE) operating models.
52. Assessment of food supply and nutritional outcomes to inform decision making was conducted, with support from FAO. The findings underscore the need to go beyond the supply side and address demand side issues, particularly the nutrition and health dimensions. Recommendations were made for the strategic application of incentives to increase the availability of more vegetables and disincentives to reduce the consumption of fats and sugars and the basic need for agriculture and food policy, building upon the production & sustainability orientation that already exist but incorporating issues related to diet, nutrition and health.

e) Right to work

Recommendation: 96.86

53. In 2020, Barbados [passed](#) the [Employment \(Prevention of Discrimination\) Act, 2020](#). Section 3(2) of the Act enumerates 19 prohibited grounds of discrimination, which

include sex. The Act provides for the prevention of discrimination in recruitment; employment; access to facilities and services; opportunities for promotion, transfer, training, and other benefits; disciplinary action and dismissal. It also prohibits testing for medical condition as a condition for employment.

f) Right to water

54. An impressive 98.5% of the population has drinking water coverage and 98.1% to sanitation, according to 2020 data.³⁰ However, Barbados ranks among the top 10 most water-stressed countries in the world. Given the limited availability of surface water; the country is almost entirely dependent on groundwater from aquifer sources. Consequently, changing precipitation patterns and rising sea levels causing saline intrusion could affect the quantity and quality of water, potentially leading to competition between sectors regarding the use of water and to the rise of health problems. Another identified risk in the country is groundwater contamination, also affecting access to safe drinking water for personal and domestic use.

K. Discrimination against women

Recommendations: 96.100, 96.101

55. In 2020, Barbados [passed](#) the [Employment \(Prevention of Discrimination\) Act, 2020](#). Section 3(2) of the Act enumerates 19 prohibited grounds of discrimination, among which includes sex, pregnancy, maternity, sexual orientation and age. The Act provides for the prevention of discrimination in recruitment; employment; access to facilities and services; opportunities for promotion, transfer, training and other benefits; disciplinary action and dismissal. It also prohibits testing for medical condition as a condition for employment. Complaints in this respect could be filed with the Employment Rights Tribunal.

L. Violence against women

Recommendation: 96.112

56. UN Women signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Labour on managing gender-based violence in the workplace. In this context, a training manual has been developed in concert with the Ministry and training sessions for trainers were held. The partnership includes advocacy initiatives which will be launched during the 16 Days of Activism in 2022.

M. Children: definition, general principles, protection

Recommendation: 96.126, 96.22, 96.112, 96.70, 96.69

57. The ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations/CEACR noted the need for stronger enforcement of the Trafficking in Persons Act 2016-9, and [called on the Government](#) to take action to ensure the effective implementation of the Act. In the same observation, the CEACR also requests the Government to act with a view to determining types of hazardous work prohibited for persons under the age of 18.
58. The Minister of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs stated that the departments providing social services in Barbados will be amalgamated to make them more people-centred and responsive to issues such as violence against children in family

and community settings. He also noted that in the last year of the COVID-19 pandemic those needing welfare assistance had nearly doubled.

59. The Cabinet of Barbados has agreed on a public policy on the mandatory reporting of child abuse by identified duty bearers and extended the duty to report to “any person who by virtue of his employment or occupation has a responsibility to discharge a duty of care towards a child.” under the draft Child (Care and Protection Bill) 2022, currently under discussion.
60. The Child Justice Bill increases the age of criminal responsibility from 11 to 12 years. UNICEF’s recommendation has been to set this age at 14 years in line with Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 24 on children’s rights in the child justice system. UNICEF is providing technical assistance on the issue.

N. Children; family environment and alternative care

Recommendations: 96.128, 96.120 to 96.129

61. UNICEF, in conjunction with the End Violence Against Children Coalition, has prepared a Brief on the Legal Status of Children in the Caribbean for the attention of government and provides the results of periodic surveys which test the prevailing societal attitudes on the use of corporal punishment of children. UNICEF is also working with intergovernmental agencies to host a Caribbean wide consultation on the issue of abolition of corporal punishment.
62. The Child Care and Protection Bill 2022 and the Child Justice Bill take steps to eliminate the practice of corporal punishment in childcare facilities and as a punishment for children guilty of criminal offences. To date, there is no public policy to remove it as a sentence for children and as a form of discipline in childcare centres. UNICEF is providing technical assistance on the issue.

O. Persons with disabilities

Recommendation 96.130

63. The National Commission on Persons with Disabilities is currently conducting national consultations on issues affecting persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities. The Commission is also carrying out an extensive public education process. Most recent information available indicated that employment rate of persons with disabilities was low, with 36.3% of men and 30.4% of women employed.³¹

P. Situation of LGBTI people

64. In the Multi Country Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2022-26, the UN expresses concern that different segments of the population in vulnerable situations face limitations to benefit from socio-economic opportunities for development, notably because of factors such as gender identity. It recognizes that there remain legislative gaps in the protection of the rights of the LGBTI population, as well as in policies to address inequalities and discrimination patterns.

65. UNFPA and UN Women have integrated the LGBTQ+ community issues into their portfolio, including a regional policy on Transgender people (UNFPA) and financial support to LGBTQ+ organisations (UN Women). Since 2018, UNDP has worked in Barbados and other countries in the region to strengthen data collection and evidence-based information on the rights of LGBTI people and to enhance the capacity of governments, civil society and LGBTI groups to address and reduce inequality, exclusion, violence, and discrimination. This work has included awareness-raising about homophobic and transphobic violence and discrimination; and about negative attitudes towards LGBTI people including through engaging government officials, parliamentarians, political parties, trade unions, religious leaders, civil society, media, and the general population.
66. Two regional meetings and consultations have been held in Barbados, with joint participation of the Rapporteur on the rights of LGBTI persons of Inter American Human Rights Commission, and the UN Independent Expert on protection from violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, in 2019 (consultation) and in September 2022 in the context of the Event “Driving Analytical, Transformative Action (D.A.T.A.), a Caribbean regional Dialogue on LGBTI DATA” organized by ECADE, UniBAM, Eolas Consulting and Colours Caribbean, in partnership with the UNDP programme “Being LGBTI in the Caribbean”, with support by USAID.
67. Some recommendations for consideration:
- a. In relation to right to health:
 - i. Formulate legislation to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health services for all segments of the population without restrictions in terms of age, marital status and third-party authorization requirements.
 - ii. Develop an integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy to implement the sexual and reproductive health legislation.
 - b. In relation to right to education:
 - i. Mandate the inclusion and delivery of age-appropriate sexual and reproductive health education into the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme and for out-of-school adolescents and youth.
 - ii. Enact laws protecting against the withdrawal of pregnant learners from formal education and guaranteeing re-entry of pregnant learners to schools.
 - c. In relation to violence against women: Develop and implement the Package of Essential Services for Women and Girls Subject to Violence and strengthen the Gender Based Violence Referral and Information Management Systems.

04.11.2022

¹ **Note:** This contribution refers primarily to the recommendations supported by Barbados in its 3rd cycle of UPR (2018) as reflected in document A/HRC/38/12/Add.1. It also includes issues that have become prominent since 2018, which are based on UN's analysis, activities and technical cooperation and assistance provided to the Government or other stakeholders.

² Constitutional (Amendment)(No 2) Bill 2021, see

https://www.barbadosparliament.com/uploads/bill_resolution/56f53e308108b4b315d1b367c2914f7a.pdf

³ IMF <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2022/06/16/Barbados-Seventh-Review-Under-the-Extended-Fund-Facility-Arrangement-Press-Release-and-519684>

⁴ See IMF, EFF, 2018, <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2018/10/04/Barbados-Request-for-an-Extended-Arrangement-Under-the-Extended-Fund-Facility-Press-Release-46283> p. 8.

⁵ <https://our.today/barbados-seeking-new-loan-agreement-with-imf/>

⁶ See <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/BRB>

⁷ <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/110880/138067/F-244367874/BBD110880.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/barbados/>

⁹ UNDP, July 2020, "Caribbean justice" a needs assessment of the judicial system in nine countries". Available at:

<https://www.undp.org/barbados/publications/caribbean-justice-needs-assessment-judicial-system-nine-countries>, page 66

¹⁰ World Bank 2020. Macro Poverty Outlook. Washington, D.C.

¹¹ IADB (2020). The consequences of COVID-19 on Livelihoods in Barbados: Results of a telephone survey.

¹² Caricom, CDEMA, World Food Programme and FAO, see

<https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/CaribbeanFoodSecurityLivelihoodsImpactSurvey/Overview?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y>

¹³ UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2020

¹⁴ The Education Sector Enhancement Programme (EduTech 2000) was a US\$213 million project financed by the GOB and other multilateral development banks.

¹⁵ Bynoe, Craigwell and Lowe 2012. The Effectiveness of Government Expenditure on Education and Health Care in the Caribbean", International Journal of Development Issues, 11, 4-18. <https://doi.org/10.1108/14468951211213831>

¹⁶ The policy required students to pay 20% of their tuition costs effective September 2014, between \$2,812 and \$32,500.

¹⁷ Barbados Advocate September 10, 2016. Accessed February 5th, 2021.

<https://www.barbadosadvocate.com/news/opposition-concerned-over-declining-numbers-barbadians-uwj>

¹⁸ The Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation Program (BERT) is supported by the International Monetary Fund under a four-year Extended Fund Facility of \$290mn. The programme is also supported by the Inter-American Development Bank (\$100mn) and the Caribbean Development Bank in the form of budget support. At the core of this programme is fiscal consolidation, comprehensive tax reform, debt restructuring and reform to state owned enterprises in an effort to reduce debt to 60% of GDP by 2033.

¹⁹ Health expenditure in the ECCU ranges between 2 -6.5% of GDP.

²⁰ Average between 2000 and 2018.

²¹ United Nations and ECLAC 2021. Non-Communicable Diseases and their impact on Sustainable Development, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago.

²² WHO 2018. Non-communicable Diseases Country Profiles, 2018.

²³ United Nations and ECLAC 2021, *ibid*.

²⁴ Current health expenditure refers to spending on healthcare goods and services, and excludes capital health expenditures such as buildings, machinery, information technology and stocks of vaccines for emergency or outbreaks.

²⁵ UN Common Country Analysis, 2020, page 12

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ *Ibid*, page 12 & 13

²⁸ Caricom, CDEMA, WFP & FAO, September 2022

<https://analytics.wfp.org/t/Public/views/CaribbeanFoodSecurityLivelihoodsImpactSurvey/Overview?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y>

²⁹ *Ibid*

³⁰ WHO and UNICEF, Joint Monitoring Programme, www.washdata.org, accessed on 19 October 2022.