



*Permanent Mission
of Barbados to
the United Nations*



STATEMENT BY

SENATOR THE HON. MAXINE MCCLEAN
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND FOREIGN TRADE
BARBADOS

AT THE

TWENTY-NINTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE FOLLOW-UP TO THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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United Nations Headquarters
New York

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Mr. President,

The adoption of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development was a watershed in the history of human rights, the empowerment of women, and the pursuit of sustainable development.

For the first time, the overwhelming majority of the world's countries recognized that sustainable development can only be achieved when sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights are enjoyed, and when women are viewed as equals and are empowered. This landmark document, together with the key actions for further implementation, continue to be the basis for the elaboration of sound and progressive national and international policies on population and development.

The continued implementation of the Programme of Action must be prioritized in the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. President,

The impact of the implementation of the Programme of Action in Barbados is clear. Recent decades have witnessed decreasing family size, the increasing participation of women in the formal workforce, and

delayed childbearing. Comprehensive, quality sexual and reproductive health services are provided through our health care system, free for citizens, and in partnership with non-governmental organizations.

The unmet need for contraceptives has been reduced in the general population, and legislation allows for the safe termination of pregnancies.

The maternal death rate stands at 0.8 per thousand live births.

Aggressive programmes aimed at reducing teen pregnancy are implemented in coordination with the non-governmental organization the Barbados Family Planning Association.

Our comprehensive, multisectoral HIV/AIDS programme is evidence-informed, gender-sensitive and human rights-based, and addresses prevention, treatment, care and support.

- Anti-retroviral treatment is provided free of cost at the point of delivery to citizens
- Greater than 80% of those needing ARV treatment receive it

- AIDS mortality rates have declined sharply and are sustained at less than 5%
- And the rate of mother-to-child transmission has been maintained at 2% or less for the last 10 years.

Mr. President,

Barbados reaffirms its commitment to women's full enjoyment of their human rights. We recognize that despite remarkable national advances in the status of women, the empowerment of women is an issue to which we must always devote attention. Violence against women, particularly domestic violence, is a scourge which we fight. We will continue to work with men, women, girls and boys in efforts to encourage positive social norms, and to engage men and boys as agents of change.

Mr. President,

The Programme of Action stressed the critical role of international cooperation in achieving sustainable social and economic development. For developing countries, international cooperation is indispensable. Barbados highlights in particular the continued urgent need to

strengthen national statistical capacity, a critical component in creating, monitoring and evaluating policy.

Barbados joins the global community in reaffirming, once again, its commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

I thank you.