

**Country Statement delivered by the Hon. Steven Blackett,  
Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and  
Community Development in Barbados at the Third  
Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin  
America and the Caribbean held between  
May 8 and 11, 2012 in San Jose, Costa Rica**

Mr. Chairman

Representatives of Costa Rica

Representatives of other countries

Representatives of the United Nations Population Fund and the  
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean  
(ECLAC)

Organisers and Secretariat for the Conference

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Day to you

I am Steven Blackett, Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development in Barbados and I bring you warm greetings from the Government and people of Barbados. At the outset, I wish to express my appreciation to the Government of Costa Rica and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) for organising the Third Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing in Latin America and the Caribbean in the lovely city of San Jose. I also wish to thank the

Government and people of Costa Rica for extending the much welcomed hospitality to my delegation.

Today, it is my pleasure to join the representatives of the other countries present in delivering the Barbados Statement on matters relating to the elderly. In my brief report, some of the major achievements reached by Barbados with respect to the Brasilia Declaration of December 2007 will be highlighted.

Mr. Chairman, the island of Barbados has a population of approximately 280,000 people. It has the highest percentage of persons aged 65 and over within the English Speaking Caribbean. The statistics of the Barbados Statistical Service show that the percentage of the population over 65 in 2010 was 11.3%. The projected population of older persons over 65 in the year 2025 will be 18%. Accordingly, it is easy to understand why much emphasis is placed on ageing.

Barbados is supportive of the Brasilia Declaration of December 2007 which outlines the responsibility of Governments subject to their legal frameworks to promote and provide basic social and health care services and facilitate access to them as it relates to the indigenous needs of older persons and the agreements indicated in the Declaration. Consistent with the objective of the Declaration, the Government is progressing with the preparation of a White Paper on the National Policy on Ageing. The National Policy on Ageing is guided by the international principles emanating from a number of conventions, especially the Madrid Political Declaration and International Plan of Action Adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing by the United Nations in 2002 which have three priority areas of consideration namely Older Persons and Development; Advancing Health and Well Being; and Ensuring Enabling and Supportive Environments.

**The Barbados National Policy on Ageing has as its priority directions: Financial and Economic Security for Older Persons, Health, Mental Health and Health Care, the Physical and Built Environment, the Social Environment, Legislation, Research and Institutional Arrangement.**

**My country places much emphasis on Active Ageing which is critical to the health and well-being of a growing ageing population. Barbados is guided by the Policy Framework developed by the World Health Organisation at the Second United Nations World Assembly on Ageing held in Madrid, Spain in April 2002. We embrace Active Ageing as defined by the World Health Organisation which seeks to promote a lifestyle that “optimizes opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance the quality of life as people age.”**

**The Government of Barbados under the theme “Active Ageing-Ageing Active” has just concluded the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual National Senior Games on April 21, 2012. There was a record number of athletes (289) that competed in the various sporting disciplines such as Track and Field, Cycling, Archery, Table Tennis, Lawn Tennis, Netball, and Basketball. Under the sponsorship of the Government of Barbados, a selected group of Athletes will be preparing to compete in the Huntsman World Senior Games in Utah, United States of America in October 2012.**

**The Recreational Activities Programme for older persons under the auspices of the National Assistance Board can be found in fifteen centres across Barbados with the opening of the fourteenth programme in 2010 and the fifteenth program in 2011. Over four hundred older persons are participants and**

A decision was made in 2011 to start the Helping Hands Volunteer Project in order to enhance the services of the Home Care Programme of the National Assistance Board. Volunteers have been selected from the Barbados Association of Retired Persons, the Barbados Returning Nationals Association and Youth with a Mission. The aim of this project is to increase the quality of life and provide social and mental stimulation for older persons who live alone. The Helping Hands Volunteer Project has been an added resource to the enhancement of services to the Home Care Programme.

I am pleased to report that in 2011 the Barbados Association of Palliative Care (BAPC) was founded in order to respond to the need for a holistic, integrated approach to end-of-life care that will improve the quality of life of persons who are experiencing life-threatening illnesses. This Association emphasizes the prevention, assessment and treatment of pain and other symptoms, as well as the provision of psychological, emotional and spiritual support. This entity has representatives from the public sector and Non-Governmental Organisations such as the Barbados Cancer Society.

Mr. Chairman, time will not permit me to go into greater detail on the myriad activities undertaken to improve the condition of the elderly in Barbados. However, I trust that it is understood that the Government is deeply committed to promoting the welfare of its senior citizens.

I thank you.