

Fourth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin
America and the Caribbean

Asuncion, Paraguay

June 27-30, 2017

Country Statement for Barbados

The Government of Barbados appreciates the invitation that was extended by ECLAC to participate in this Fourth Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing and the Rights of Older Persons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The population of Barbados is 280,000 persons. In 2010, the number of persons over the age of 65 was 30,800 (11.3%) and it is projected that in 2025, persons over the age of 65 will be 50,400 (18%). Persons are living longer and are in need of array of social protection systems, programmes and services to address their needs and maintain their well-being.

The following are measurements taken by the Government of Barbados to implement the 2012 San Jose Charter and the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing:

- In June 2013 the National Policy on Ageing for Barbados was passed in Parliament
Included in the document is a policy statement, demographics and social dimensions, health and health care, physical and built environments, social environment, legislation, research and institutional arrangement
- The Draft Protocol for the prevention, reporting, investigation and management of Elder Abuse was completed and presented to the Minister responsible for Social Care in 2012
- The National Social Security Scheme provides for older persons 66 1/2 years and older, once they have paid into the plan
- Contributory and non-contributory pension schemes are in place. Non-contributory pension is for older persons that were informally employed and could not pay into a pension plan. They receive a stipend twice a month
- In terms of transportation, persons 65 years and older can travel on public transport buses free of cost
- Universal health care for its citizens
- Barbados Drug Service supplies free medication at point of service to patients 65 years and older and those diagnosed with hypertension, diabetes, asthma, glaucoma and epilepsy
- National Disabilities Unit provides medical and assistive devices for older persons
- In the past 5 years, formal gerontological training was introduced at the community college level
- The Barbados Association of Palliative Care is a non-governmental organization that provides support services at no cost to individuals and families

- In the Ministry of Health, 80% of persons registered in the Non-Communicable Disease Programme are over 65 years old and have at least one non-communicable disease. Thus special attention is given to older persons attending the programme
- In 2015, the Ministry of Health expanded its care and treatment of HIV, with clients being seen in the community polyclinics as well as the Lady Meade Clinic, which is the central hub of clinical HIV care
- The Ministry of Health has a mechanism for monitoring and oversight of the Geriatric Hospitals and the private sector nursing and senior citizens homes
- There is a HIV Focal Point Person (who reports to the National HIV Commission) that deals with issues pertaining to the older population i.e., public awareness campaigns, seminars
- Currently, the National HIV Commission is working on their HIV National Strategic Plan 2014-2018
- Seniors' HIV Drama group (ages 50-93) took the HIV message to the community and staged major productions in 2013, 2014 and 2016.
- In February 2016, the Seniors' HIV Drama Group released a CD, entitled "Take Warning"
- In 2015, the second state operated elderly day care centre was opened
- In 2015, Lancaster House was opened to provide short term housing for older persons who lost housing due to fire, eviction, manmade disasters, etc. Currently serves 5 families.
- In 2012, the refurbishment and reopening of the Night Shelter for Homeless Men
- Housing Repairs for older persons through a Poverty Alleviation and Reduction Programme fund
- In the past 5 years, the number of island wide seniors' recreational activities programmes increased from 14 to 16. These active ageing programmes provide exercise, dancercise, arts and crafts, and lectures and seminars on relevant topics pertaining to older persons
- The National Senior Games are held annually. In 2016, the games had 289 participants. The government pays for 24-26 older persons annually in October to compete in the World Senior Games in Utah, United States. Barbados competes in Archery, Basketball, Tennis, Track and Field, Cycling and Table Tennis at the World Senior Games.
- The state run Home Care Service has been in place since 1980. It provides services to the elderly and disabled persons at no cost to the recipient. In 2016, it served approximately 1,000 recipients (washing, cooking, personal hygiene, grooming, cleaning and limited shopping)
- In 2015, the Ministry of Social Care held a series of training sessions for government employees as well as for older persons in the community on Preparation for Retirement
- The state entity responsible for providing social and recreational services for older persons annually holds an 8 week all-day Preparation of Retirement training for its employees.
- The Evacuation of Vulnerable Persons Plan was ratified in 2012
- There is Vulnerable Persons Committee that meet on a monthly basis and is charged with the responsibility for vulnerable persons during and after manmade and natural disasters
- For the 50th Anniversary of Barbados' Independence in November 2016, centenarians were featured on our local stamps and a Celebratory Luncheon was held to honour them

The plans and priorities of the government of Barbados for the next five (5) years are as follows:

- There is a committee to monitor the implementation of the National Policy on Ageing and it has a plan of action to address the recommendations outline in the National Policy on Ageing according to urgency, i.e., short, medium, or long term
- The Draft Protocol for the prevention, reporting, investigation and management of Elder Abuse should be sent to the Cabinet of Barbados for consideration before the end of 2017
- The government will expand current legislation while working to enact a codified law to address the issue of elder abuse
- The government of Barbados will address securing additional temporary and permanent housing solutions for the elderly
- The government of Barbados is seeking to expand elderly day care centres to decrease isolation, increase socialization and provide respite for the caregiver
- Barbados will continue to observe June 15th, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, as a nationally recognized day with structured activities that promote awareness of the elder abuse phenomenon

Thank you for allowing me to share my information on the elderly in Barbados and I wish everyone a successful and productive conference.

Respectfully submitted by

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