

Statement by Barbados on the Occasion of the
Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Belize,
Monday, October 28, 2013

Thank you Mr. President.

Barbados wishes to extend a warm welcome to the delegation from Belize, in particular Head of Delegation ***** *Her excellency Madamie Judith Apuche, Director General, Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation*

Barbados and Belize are both members of CARICOM and as such collaborate closely on a plethora of issues from trade, to environment, to security matters. Similarly, our nations are committed to the promotion and protection of human rights, as we view such rights as inextricably linked to our broader national development strategies and goals.

In this regard, my delegation wishes to commend Belize for the report it has presented today. The level of consultations undertaken with national partners in producing the report and the detailed examination of initiatives aimed at promoting and protecting human rights are to be commended.

Mr. President, my delegation will now touch on a few key policy decisions detailed in the report.

- We note positively efforts aimed at mainstreaming human rights within the national policy framework and as such commend both the three year Medium Term Strategy Framework as well as "Horizon 2030", both of which seek to secure the economic and social well being of the Belizean people.
- We commend the Government of Belize's continued effort to combat poverty, particularly in the difficult circumstances of a prolonged economic recession and the associated complexities facing highly indebted small states vulnerable to both external environmental and economic shocks.
- We also note positively, the efforts of the Government of Belize in protecting the rights of vulnerable groups in particular, programs aimed specifically at providing safety nets for the elderly, those most at risk to HIV/AIDS amongst others. The recently approved National Gender Policy, as well as the National Plan of Action for Children and Adolescents 2004 – 2015 are also testament to the government's efforts.

Mr. President, it is evident that many of the policies detailed in Belize's report, recognize the indispensable link between human rights and development. Although progress has been made in some areas, as with all countries, we do note there is room for further improvement by addressing challenges as outlined in the report.

Belize's commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights is evidenced by the country's active participation in the international human rights system and the signature and ratification of the major human rights instruments. However, like many capacity constrained states, delays in the presentation of reports to treaty bodies sometimes occur. We therefore recommend that treaty bodies and the OHCHR work with capacity constrained states where possible to address this issue.

In concluding, we commend the delegation from Belize for sharing with us, its approach to its human rights obligations and we take this opportunity to wish them a successful UPR.

Thank you.

Permanent Mission of Barbados
8/October/2013