****

**Statement by Barbados on the Occasion of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Belize**

**29 January 2024**

**Speaking Time(01:50)**

Madame Vice President,

Barbados extends a warm welcome to the delegation of Belize led by the Honourable Mrs. Elvia Vega-Samos, and we thank the delegation for their comprehensive report.

Recognising our similar challenges and goals as SIDS we commend Belize for their report and the commitment shown to improve human rights within the country.

Madame Vice-President we now turn to the report.

We particularly note the implementation of the ‘#PlanBelize Medium Term Development Strategy.’

The strategy focuses on improving social policy to ensure equitable access to essential services, and includes programmes focused on improving access and delivery of education and health care. The programme sets the foundation to improve human rights related work.

The report also identifies a number of initiatives to increase the protection of human rights of individuals.

In the area of labour rights we recognise the implementation of the Belize ‘Occupational Safety and Health Act.’ Which ensures a safe working environment and protection of the rights of workers.

We take note of the steps taken to tackle child abuse and extortion with the formulation of a ‘National Child Protection Strategic Plan’ and also the launch of the ‘Road Map to End Child Marriage and Early Unions.’

In a constructive spirit, we recommend, that the Government of Belize continue to make steps to adequately resource the Office of the Ombudsman, in order to ensure that this office can be fully effective in executing its duties.

We wish Belize a successful review.

I thank you.

End.