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**Closing Remarks**

***by***

**The Honourable Kerrie D. Symmonds, M.P.**

***during the***

**Forty-third Working Group Session**

**Universal Periodic Review**

**Human Rights Council**

**May 05, 2023**

On behalf of the Government of Barbados, I wish to thank all of you who have contributed to this peer review of Barbados’ track record in the human rights arena and the status of its implementation of recommendations emanating from the last UPR. The recommendations derived from the last review were discussed at the national level before any action was taken. This consultation was necessary considering that the interest and views of our people matter and must be taken into account as part of the democratic process.

Colleagues, today our report reflects the commitment of the Government of Barbados in streamlining its activities relating to the protection and promotion of human rights. The process has brought to the fore some bureaucratic and antiquated structures that are no longer relevant either in Barbados’ contemporary environment or universally. As I have previously indicated, the Government of Barbados will thoroughly consider the recommendations tabled today and, where appropriate, the required action will be taken.

As a democratic society, contentious issues and, in particular, legislative changes, have been and will continue to be approached in a consultative manner. The major stakeholders and persons most likely to be affected by any change in legislation or policies have had and will continue to have the opportunity to air their views.

I wish, however, to reiterate that one of our key challenges remains that of limited resources. Hence, I make an open request on behalf of my country for the assistance of any of the member states that have posed a question or made a recommendation, as well as other members of the international community with the requisite capacity or experience, to indicate their willingness to support Barbados in achieving it human rights objectives.

Colleagues, even as we endeavour to fulfil our commitments, key priorities that compete for our limited resources will often claim precedence and delay the delivery of results. However, despite these resource challenges, the Government of Barbados acknowledges the importance of the UPR. As such, being able to report on our progress to date has given me great pleasure. That being said, we would want to express appreciation for those who understand the challenges we face particularly as a SIDS.

Barbados’ presence and participation in this Forty-third Session of the UPR highlights its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights. This forum underscores and keeps current the role of Government in the preservation of the rights of all.

The UPR continues to be a useful mechanism in assisting Governments in identifying priority areas, and systems that need revision and particularly in understanding best practices in policies relating to vulnerable groups in our society. Moreover, the consultative and multi-stakeholder approach in preparation for the UPR helps us to frame a holistic picture of Barbados’ human rights context.

Colleagues, even as we absorb all that was said during this session, I wish to remind you that Barbados is one among many developing countries that is on the frontline of the existential threat posed by climate change. Much has been said in the service of human rights, however, the grave reality is that climate change is a disservice to our citizens. The fight against climate change is one that we cannot wage alone in light of our scarce resources, but it is a fight that intersects with and threatens to undermine our efforts to strengthen universal human rights.

At this point, I wish to reaffirm our commitment to the observance and furtherance of human rights. Barbados will therefore continue its journey to concretize and implement policies and legislation related to human rights founded on broad-based dialogue and, where appropriate, technical and other cooperation in furtherance of this work. Madam Vice President, colleagues we welcome your observations and the spirit of constructive engagement in which they have been offered.

I thank you.