Brief Progress of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development Implementation on behalf of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda

On behalf of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, and the Ministry of Social & Urban Transformation, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President, and Chair, ECLAC and UNFPA for the invitation to be a part of this Sixth Session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Good day to all delegations, international and regional donor agencies/partners, civil society organizations, youth and private sector representatives.

Antigua and Barbuda made some gains in its implementation of the Montevideo Consensus, in spite of the lack of an implementation plan for the Montevideo Consensus. The Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation will therefore be seeking technical assistance from UNFPA to formulate a National Implementation Plan for the Montevideo Consensus in the near future, which is an indication of the country's commitment.
Strengthening Sources of Statistical Information, inclusive of a reformed National Bureau of Statistics, which concluded its 3rd labour force survey and embarked on its first standardized method of data collection on risk factors for noncommunicable diseases (STEPS) survey in conjunction with the Ministry of Health, WHO and PAHO.
The Bureau is currently conducting a National Population Census to be completed by the end of 2026, results that will present key data on population and development such as fertility, ageing, international migration, and persons with disabilities. Another priority area upon

conclusion of the national population census, the Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation in conjunction with the National Bureau of Statistics intends to conduct an Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment/Survey of Living Conditions aimed at poverty reduction.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda recognizes the need for a robust coordinating mechanism at the national level, supported by a comprehensive data collection system of measurement to drive the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus.

Implementation have incorporated aspects of the key priority areas, but not limited to:

Priority Measure A: Full integration of population dynamics into sustainable development with equality and respect for human rights.

Priority Measure B: Rights, needs, responsibilities and requirements of girls, boys, adolescents and Youth.

Priority Measure C: Ageing, Social Protection and Socioeconomic Challenges, inclusive of the adoption of the National Social Protection Policy.

Priority Measure D: Universal Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services.

Priority Measure E: Gender Equality.

Although there have been achievements in policy development in several areas such social protection, children protection, youth, and ageing, further advancements are required in policies in relation to gender, sexual reproductive and mental health, and persons with disabilities.

There has been a concerted effort in this phase of the implementation of Montevideo Consensus, that the development of national policies

pertaining to children, youth and adolescents; persons with disabilities; older persons and multi-dimensional ageing; should incorporate disaster management and climate change reduction; renewable energy and urban planning; agriculture, land and territorial rights protections.
There are a number of antiquated laws that can be found in the country's legislative agenda and consideration for change has been given priority. This includes thorough reviewing and aligning of legislations with international conventions that the country is a signatory to, as it relates to children, gender and persons with disabilities. These revisions may include possible amendments or repealing of existing laws.
Through Ministry of Health, a maternal, child and adolescent manual with continuous follow-up training in enhanced the sexual reproductive health (SRH) services was developed resulting in a decrease in adolescent pregnancy.

Antigua and Barbuda recognizes the successful implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development will require a multifaceted approach grounded in collaborative actions by the State, Civil Society Organizations and aligned private sector institutions. The coordinated effort will require putting people first, with the vision of not leaving anyone behind, in order to create an Antigua and Barbuda that residents irrespective of their race, gender identity, age, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or economic background can enjoy a life to its fullest, not only living but also thriving.

The next phase/steps of implementation for the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development will require action in the following areas: -

- Establishment of a resourced and remunerated committee with specific duties to oversee the coordination socio-economic issues including implementation of the Montevideo Consensus. Comprised of representatives from ministries with responsibility for, but not limited to Health, Social Protection, Youth, Gender, Education, Statistics, Aging, Trafficking, Finance, Labour, Environment and CSO representation, and will function to address national socio-economic commitments. The Department of Social Policy and Research will be the coordinating agency.
- Coordination, sharing and disbursement of data from divisions and Ministries including training of other ministries and departments is required, to strengthen national capacity to make informed decisions and monitor progress.
- While an Aging Policy exists, the strategic focus required for efficient implementation persists and needs to be prioritized. A coordinated approach is essential and the urgent assignment of a unit or department to spearhead implementation of the policy across the country.
- Augment training and refresher courses for health care professionals delivering SRH services with a special focus to LGBTQIA+ and men which continue to receive very limited attention; and provision of quality care for persons with disabilities.
- Develop a national policy framework that supports coordinating the work of gender equality across ministries, promotes gender mainstreaming and other key gender dimensions to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women and the performance of boys in Antigua and Barbuda.
- Improve the national Gender Based Violence (GBV) framework to support interoperability between agencies, improve the referral pathway, develop

an integrated data collection system for all agencies and a dedicated budget for the prevention of Gender Based Violence.
- Development of a Disability Mapping for Persons with Disabilities for improved services.

To this end, Antigua and Barbuda too reaffirms its commitment to the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus agenda on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thank You

Sharon Herbert
Social Planner
Ministry of Social and Urban Transformation
ANTIGUA & BARBUDA