

Government of Barbados

Statement on Land Issues

**Inter-governmental Preparatory Meeting
For the 17th Session of CSD
February 17th 2009**

Madam Chair

The planning and development of land resources involves a wide range of stakeholders especially for a country the size of Barbados where the main issues of concern relate to competing demands from numerous sectors namely – residential, tourism, agricultural and industrial. Having limited land area has resulted in an early recognition that careful management measures would have to be put in place.

Some of those measures have included:

- A Land for Landless Farmers Programme which started in 2001 and has progressed steadily, whereby available public and private lands are allocated to farmers for livestock, root crops, vegetables and orchard production. This programme has had multiple benefits including bringing idle lands into production, enhancing food security for the country and providing livelihoods for farmers.
- The Enactment of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1968 [Amended 2003] provided for land and water rights and legal security of tenure for all individuals irrespective of gender.
- The integrated assessment of the socio-economic and environmental potentials of land resources has been examined in detail under the Environmental Management and Land use Planning for Sustainable Development Project, 1998.
- Long-term conservation and rehabilitation programmes to arrest land degradation were put in place to protect the fragile soils in the vulnerable Scotland District area, while good agricultural practices including hedge row establishment and environmentally friendly agronomic practices are utilized in other farming zones.

and lastly

- There are specific programmes for empowerment of people living in poverty and for their increased access to land and land tenure arrangements. This has been facilitated through the Urban Development Commission Act and the Rural Development Act 1995. These acts provide for the improvement of social amenities, assistance to small farmers and other small entrepreneurs and the establishment and development of cottage industries in urban and rural areas of Barbados. Strategic urban planning approaches aimed at managing urban growth, limiting urban sprawl and reducing the number of people living in poverty in urban and rural areas comes under the mandates of the Urban and Rural Commissions respectively.

Madam Chair

Various sectors of the government of Barbados share the responsibility for conducting national research on the local land resource systems. The use of information systems including Geographic Information System (GIS) though expensive is being utilized for integrated planning and management of land resources. Specifically they are being used to identify land vulnerable to slippage and land degradation and also helps to identify some subsurface drainage systems.

There is presently a significant challenge in identifying activities on land that could affect the underground water supplies. In some cases Special Development Area legislation will be required to curtail such activities. There is also the need for a comprehensive land use study to be implemented to assess the change in land use patterns over the last decade.

The Government of Barbados is hopeful that emerging from CSD 17, we will be able to identify partners with whom we can share our experience in sustainable land management. We also hope to identify opportunities for capacity development and technology transfer in the area of land management monitoring and information systems.

I Thank you.