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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COVENANT ON
ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Reports submitted in accordance with Council resolution 1988 (LX)
by States parties to the Covenant, concerning rights covered by
articles 10 to 12

Addendum

BARBADOS

[17 June 1981]

ARTICLE 10. PROTECTION OF THE FAMILY, MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

The Government of Barbados recognizes the need for protection and assistance to the family. Government programmes are planned to reach all groups, especially vulnerable groups requiring physical or health care and education, and special groups such as the handicapped.

Specific coverage is extended as follows:

A. Protection of the family

(1) and (2) National laws guarantee adults (i.e. over 18 years) the right to consent freely to marriage (Marriage Act, 1978-40 - Laws of Barbados. There is, however, a traditional social custom recognizing common law marriage as an acceptable norm for consenting adults.

(3) While there are no programmes providing subsidies for the establishment of families, the Government does offer direct as well as indirect assistance to lower income families by way of subsidized housing at low rental rates, as well as monetary and other assistance to families requiring basic necessities.

B. Maternity protection

Pre-natal and post-natal care is available to all mothers, and over 90 per cent of all maternity cases benefit from the government health care programme. Working women in Barbados have been assured greater protection as a result of the recently enacted Employment of Women (Maternity Leave) Act, 1975-16. This legislation guarantees the employees, after 12 months' service, paid maternity leave of not less than 12 weeks - 6 weeks before and 6 weeks after confinement. Provision is also made for extension of leave where necessary. The employee is further protected from dismissal or from being served with notice during the period of her maternity leave and the employer may not dismiss an employee or require her resignation on the ground that she is pregnant. Working women, including self-employed women registered under the National Insurance Scheme, are eligible for the receipt of maternity benefits during the period of their confinement. The Widows' and Children's Pension Act, Chapter 37, also provides for the maintenance of the families of male public officers in the case of their death.

C. Protection of children and young persons

(2) Special measures for the care and education of children

Children who are separated from their mothers may still be looked after by their fathers or other relatives.

Children deprived of a family are placed in children's homes which are under the supervision of the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labour and Community Services. They attend government schools appropriate to their age and ability.

The Government provides for deaf and blind pupils in a special school. Provision is made for a limited number of mentally retarded pupils in two annexes to normal primary schools. Private efforts to house the mentally retarded are assisted by a government grant.

Delinquent minors are committed to the reform schools if they have been found guilty of offences. Those below secondary school age (age 11) attend regular primary school classes at the reform schools; those of secondary school age attend government secondary school classes if they have been successful in the Common Entrance Examination.

The care and protection of children under 16 years is guaranteed by the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Act, Chapter 145, which is designed to deter, for example, neglect, cruelty and abuse of children. The Act also authorizes competent persons/agencies to intervene and provide care where necessary, by one of the following means:

(a) Family services providing for preventative and rehabilitative child care, and utilizing family casework services, informal foster care and also adoption programmes;

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(b) Day care for the children of working parents. There are 16 government-operated day nurseries catering to some 900 children.

N.B. The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1977-6 prohibits the employment of a child under 15 years in any industrial undertaking as defined in the Act.

The Act also prohibits the employment, except under certain conditions, of young persons between the ages of 15 years and 18 years in any industrial undertaking during the night or in any work which, by its nature or the circumstances under which it is done, is likely to cause injury to his health, safety or morals.

Where employment is allowed a young person must be granted a period for rest of at least 13 consecutive hours between two periods of work.

Educational programmes are available to all children from 5 through 11 in primary school programmes and from 11 to 16 in secondary education programmes. In 1976 the school leaving age was raised from 14 to 16 and vocational programmes were offered to the 14 to 16 age group. Pre-school programmes for the children aged between 2 and 5 are also provided for some children in the 16 government day care centres, in three nursery schools, in some primary schools and in some privately operated day care and nursery school facilities.

Legislation to provide for the equal status of children whether they are born to married or unmarried parents, was also brought into effect in 1979, and other legislation affecting children and young persons has been the subject of recommendations made to the Government in 1968 and 1979. These recommendations cover a comprehensive range of legislative measures aimed at guaranteeing the care and protection of children and improving the provisions relating to their education and correction and the prevention of social, economic or other exploitation.

ARTICLE 11. THE RIGHT TO AN ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

A. It is recognized that families are entitled to adequate food, clothing and shelter and to continuous improvement in their living conditions. For the working adult, these rights are protected through:

(a) Collective agreements providing for adequate wages and conditions of work. These are made possible under the provisions of the Trade Union Act, Chapter 361;

(b) Statutory regulation of the wages of certain categories of workers not covered by collective agreements is also provided in accordance with the Wages Council Act, Chapter 362, and Regulations 1956, through the medium of the Wages Regulation (Shop Assistants) Order. Such orders cover workers employed in shops.

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For persons not in the labour force, or any others without the means to obtain adequate food, clothing, shelter and continuous improvement in their standards of living, there are programmes of assistance to the indigent, under the provisions of the National Assistance Act, Chapter 48, aimed at meeting some of the basic deficiencies. Under this Act there is provision for:

- (a) An old-age pension for persons aged 65 and over, who qualify under a means test which is reviewed from time to time. The existing rate of pension is \$20 per week for persons whose income does not exceed \$25 per week;
- (b) A grant to disabled persons over the age of 18, equivalent to the amount granted to old-age pensioners;
- (c) Financial assistance to able-bodied adults and children established to be in need; and
- (d) Assistance in kind, covering, inter alia, provision of food, clothing, shelter, medical aid, education.

B. Right to adequate food

(2) Measures taken to develop or reform existing agrarian systems ...

Barbados has a very high population density and a very limited arable land base. Most of the land is held by a couple of hundred families, whereas thousands of farmers (mainly part-time) control very small farms of about 0.25 hectare each.

A number of measures have already been taken to redistribute land. Other measures are provided for in the development plan for agriculture. First there was some redistribution of land arising out of the sale and parcelization of plantation land into holdings of one hectare and up. The Government continues to take steps to allow for greater opportunities for landless persons to be selected for location on a land settlement project. Also in process of development is a rural development and tenancies project which includes providing irrigation water and other agricultural inputs for increasing agricultural productivity, family incomes and security of occupancy.

(3) Measures taken to improve methods of production and the quantity and quality of food produced ...

The Government devoted early attention to the development and maintenance of an adequate agricultural research division to determine the most appropriate technologies for use under local conditions. Policy determined that agricultural diversification would be the corner-stone of the development thrust in the agricultural sector. The diversification programme has permitted more efficient use of the very scarce land and water resources to secure increases in net income per unit area. Diversification has also provided for due attention to be given to improving the quality of food produced locally by promoting significant expansions in the production of high quality, high value fresh vegetables and fruit, dairy and other livestock products.

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Again, for some time attention has been devoted to the strengthening of the agricultural extension service to facilitate the adoption of approved new technologies by the farming community. In addition to performing the basic educational/advisory role, the extension services play a pivotal role by performing numerous services intended to satisfy farmers' production needs. The services include a number of measures to improve agricultural productivity:

1. A Farming Incentives Scheme provides grants for assisting farmers to purchase irrigation equipment and spraying equipment for controlling plant pests and diseases. This scheme also provides for subsidies for selected fertilizers, insecticides etc.
2. A Grassland Scheme provides subsidies to reduce the cost to farmers of establishing approved grasses and legumes and of erecting fencing to protect forage crops. Under the scheme farms are also assisted in the establishment, maintenance and cutting of livestock pastures at subsidized rates.
3. A highly subsidized motor tractor cultivation scheme provides a variety of cultural operations to small farms on an island-wide basis.
4. Livestock, including quality breeding stock are offered for sale to farms at subsidized rates.
5. Artificial insemination and stud services are provided on an island-wide basis at highly subsidized rates.
6. Vegetables seeds and seedlings and cuttings of a wide variety of fruit crops are produced at agricultural stations for sale to farmers at subsidized rates.
7. Spraying of fruit trees for pest and disease control is made available to farms at highly subsidized rates.
8. Soil testing is offered as a free service.
9. The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for promoting the local fishing industry and offers a number of incentives to encourage increased fish catches as part of the programme to produce more food.

(3) (a) Promotion of agricultural research ...

The Ministry of Agriculture maintains ongoing investigational and research programmes for both crops and livestock. Both national and regional investigations are mainly applied, oriented and geared to provide answers to practical problems facing the agricultural sector. Some of the research work is done in collaboration with regional organizations, such as the Caribbean Agricultural Research and Development Institute (CARDI), the Organization of American States (OAS), the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IICA), the West Indies Central Sugar Cane Breeding Station and the Sugar Cane Variety Testing Station.

New varieties of crops and grasses are imported, screened and tested. When considered appropriate the new varieties are released to farmers.

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Registered/approved breeding stock of several classes of livestock are imported as required to up-grade local livestock. Investigational work on commercial feeds and on local feeding stuffs have received increased attention in recent years.

(3) (b) Measures to disseminate knowledge, including agricultural production techniques

There is a well established agricultural extension division, including a district extension service operating out of a number of agricultural stations. A 4-H Movement representing the youth arm of the Ministry of Agriculture has been in operation for about 15 years. Another section of the Extension Service, the Agricultural Information Unit, is responsible for dissemination of news and agricultural development technology. Over all, the agricultural extension division provides for individual farm visits, servicing farmer interests, using a range of mass media channels including television, radio, the press, agricultural fact sheets, bulletins, pamphlets etc.

(4) Measures taken to improve and disseminate knowledge regarding methods of food conservation, in particular to reduce crop and post-harvest losses and waste ... and to prevent degradation of resources through soil conservation and water management

Food conservation

Due to the small size of the island, the storage of food has not been considered a critical problem. However, a food drying facility exists and plans are afoot for providing a much expanded drying, cooling and freezing unit to be operated by a government controlled marketing organization. Currently, a private sector cold storage facility is available for use at commercial rental rates.

Until recently, rodent control was the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health. However, currently, the Ministry of Health is the sole government organization responsible for operating the rodent control programme. The Ministry of Agriculture continues to operate a plant pest and disease control unit whose services are offered at highly subsidized rates to the community at large. Jointly, this Ministry and the Ministry of Health operate an animal and human health programme that concentrates on the control of zoonoses.

Soil and water conservation

In the Ministry of Agriculture, there is a Land and Water Use Unit and a Soil Conservation Unit. Jointly, these units are responsible for preventing degradation of the nation's soil and water resources. In addition, a number of other organizations, such as the Parks and Beaches Commission are very actively engaged in conserving the very limited yet vital natural resources base.

Efforts at soil conservation include using soils within their capability limits, land reformation,, the establishment of terraces, and annual tree planting programmes.

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The Government, having recognized the importance of water conservation, undertook a water resources study in 1977 and is shortly to establish a Water Authority to manage the island's total water resources.

- (5) Measures taken to improve food distribution, such as the improvement of communications, price stabilization measures, measures to protect needy groups etc.

The island is already serviced by a comprehensive highway system which provides for the efficient distribution of foods from areas of production to markets.

The control of food prices is a responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Affairs. Price Control Inspectors visit commercial organizations regularly to ensure control of abusive practices.

The supply of food to needy groups is augmented by a number of social and welfare measures. All primary school children attending government schools receive a free midday meal. Handicapped children and old people are catered for by a variety of government and private institutions and programmes. A National Nutrition Centre maintains a community-based nutrition programme to reach the vulnerable segments of the population, such as pregnant and lactating females, and infants during weaning.

- (6) Measures taken to improve food consumption levels and nutrition, with particular reference to the most vulnerable groups of the population

The measures which were taken to improve food consumption levels were all in existence prior to 1976.

From as early as the 1940s, the Government of Barbados took the first step towards improving the food consumption level of a vulnerable group of the population when it provided a daily mid-morning snack of biscuits and milk to all children in primary and all-age schools (i.e., schools for children aged 5 to 14 years). This was extended to include the newer secondary schools as they were built.

In 1962, a pilot scheme providing hot lunches was started in six primary schools. With the assistance of the World Food Programme which provided certain basic commodities, the school lunch programme was extended until - at the present time - all children in all the primary and all-age schools on the island can receive school lunch. This consists of hot lunches three days a week, and packed lunches on the other two days. Milk is still served to all children, but biscuits are only served to those children, who do not opt to take the school lunches.

Milk and orange juice are supplied to the nursery schools as these children attend for half a day only.

There is a Nutrition Officer in the Ministry of Education who works in close collaboration with the School Meals Department and every effort is made to ensure that the daily caloric intake of all children is of the required standard.

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Agricultural science is taught and agriculture practised at secondary schools where there is land available; in primary schools, school gardening is encouraged where practicable.

(8) Measures taken for dissemination of knowledge of the principles of nutrition

The measures (listed below) for dissemination of knowledge of the principles of nutrition were all in existence before 1976.

1. Home economics has been taught to senior pupils in all-age schools and to pupils in secondary schools from the 1940s. In Health Education classes, a nutrition component is included.

2. The Housecraft Centre was opened in 1954 for the purpose of training teachers for posts of home economics teachers in primary and secondary schools. Evening and night classes for homemakers were organized at the Housecraft Centre and later at several other centres throughout the island. Nutrition and diet therapy form an integral part of courses conducted at the Housecraft Centre.

3. At the Teacher Training College, nutrition is a compulsory course.

4. As part of the extra curricular and community activities, there are 4-H clubs and applied nutrition groups where practice of the principles of good nutrition is encouraged and applied.

5. A course for dietetic technicians is being planned as part of the activities of the Health Sciences Division of the Barbados Community College.

ARTICLE 12. THE RIGHT TO PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

A. The principal legislative document designed to safeguard the health of the population is the Health Services Act 1969. There are 21 sections which deal mostly with environmental health and include pesticide control, food hygiene and communicable and notifiable diseases.

B(1) Measures taken to reduce the still-birth rate and infant mortality

Mothers and children in Barbados have free access to maternal and child health clinics which are distributed so as to be within easy reach of more than 90 per cent of families.

Antenatal care includes the taking of routine blood tests and the distribution of vitamins and iron supplements; close attention is paid to the identification of the high risk mother. These patients are referred to the care of the hospital consultants. Others are referred at 36 weeks. All mothers are encouraged to deliver in hospital and, in 1978, 93.7 per cent of mothers did so.

Hospital services are freely available to the total population.

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Children are seen at the clinics from shortly after birth up to five years. The very few who exhibit signs of malnutrition are referred to the National Nutrition Centre where the whole family receives special attention. Nurses also pay domiciliary visits. Sick children are seen by the medical officers of health. Routine immunization is carried out at the clinics and present legislation requires that every child must be immunized against polio, diphtheria, tetanus, smallpox and measles before being allowed to enter school.

A perinatal advisory committee has been set up to improve services to mothers and new-born children, paying special attention to the hospital services.

B(2) Measures taken for the healthy development of children

(a) School meals (Ministry of Education);

(b) School children are eligible for free dental care under the Dental Registration Act 1973-17;

(c) All school children may be referred to the School Ophthalmic Clinic for attention; spectacles are provided free of charge;

(d) Occasional mass immunization campaigns are mounted to ensure that immunity is maintained in a high percentage of children, particularly with regard to poliomyelitis.

B(5) and (6) The present system provides free health services for certain persons determined by low economic status. These persons receive treatment at a network of small clinics throughout the island.

All categories may receive free treatment at the main hospital and three polyclinics and one subsidiary clinic. The number of polyclinics will be increased to eight within the next three years. These services are financed by general revenue.

Plans are being finalized for the introduction of a National Health Service.

Doctors will have a limited panel of patients. Patients will have the opportunity to register with the doctor of their choice. The service will be financed by a National Insurance Scheme and will provide primary care for the total population but will not include comprehensive dental or ophthalmic benefits. A National Drug Plan will be introduced which will seek to provide drugs at reduced prices. This will operate by virtue of a system of bulk buying for National Health Service drugs which will be obtainable at both public and private pharmacies. Certain categories will receive financial concessions by virtue of age and/or medical condition.

Accident services are provided at all clinics and hospitals.

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| C. | <u>Statistical data</u> | <u>1978</u> |
| | Still-birth rate | 15.0 |
| | Infant death rate | 27.5 |
| | Neonatal death rate | 20.6 |
| | Age-specific death rate in children 1-4 years | 1.3 |
| | Maternal mortality rate | 0.7 |
| | Beds/population ratio | 8.0 (per 1,000 population) |
| | Doctor/population ratio | 7.3 (per 10,000 population) |
| | Nurse (including nurse midwives)/population | 19.7 (per 10,000 population) |

Hospital care in 1978 was available at 10 government institutions, consisting of one general hospital, one psychiatric hospital, one maternity hospital, one leprosarium and six district hospitals, along with three private general hospitals giving a total of 2,187 beds.

All government hospital facilities provide free services to the total population.

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