

APPENDIX I

RESOLUTION ON NATIONAL POLICY FOR IMPROVING THE LIVES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

WHEREAS the Government of Barbados has signaled its intention to improve the lives of Persons with Disabilities and to protect their rights and freedoms through the creation of a comprehensive and inclusive national policy;

AND WHEREAS the policy aims to foster greater inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in all areas of national life and to eliminate the stigma and discrimination that they face on a daily basis;

AND WHEREAS the policy recognises the significant role that Persons with Disabilities can play in national development if they are given more opportunities to contribute in various ways according to the nature of their disability;

AND WHEREAS the Government has engaged in extensive consultations with stakeholders within the social policy space on the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities;

AND WHEREAS the Cabinet at its meeting held September 21, 2023 approved the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities;

AND WHEREAS the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities has been laid in Parliament to foster debate on this document;

AND WHEREAS the policy recognizes the following thematic areas which are fundamental to advancing the full rights and freedoms of Persons with Disabilities:

- i) Accessibility;
- ii) Adequate standard of living and social protection;
- iii) Awareness building;
- iv) Education, training and lifelong learning;
- v) Employment, work and economic participation;
- vi) Health, habitation and rehabilitation;
- vii) Legal recognition and access to justice;
- viii) Participation in society;
- ix) Protection in disasters and emergencies;
- x) Protection of right to life, integrity, freedoms and liberties;
- xi) Regional and international cooperation;
- xii) Respect for privacy, home and family life;
- xiii) Statistics and data collection on disabilities; and
- xiv) Women and children with disabilities.

BE IT RESOLVED therefore that Parliament approve the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities.

APPROVED by the House of Assembly this day of
2024.

Speaker

APPROVED by the Senate this day of 2024.

President

APPENDIX II

ADDENDUM

The Cabinet at its meeting held September 21, 2023 considered NOTE (23) 869/MPEA17 approving the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities.

The approval of Parliament is now sought in relation to the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities.

**THE 2023-2030 NATIONAL POLICY FOR IMPROVING THE
LIVES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN BARBADOS**

MOST UPDATED VERSION

**Prepared for the
THE MINISTRY OF PEOPLE EMPOWERMENT AND ELDER AFFAIRS**

by

Dwayne Devonish, Ph. D
Professor of Management and Organisational Behaviour
The Sagicor Cave Hill School of Business and Management
The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus
Barbados

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FOREWORD

(TO BE INSERTED BY THE MINISTER)

ABBREVIATIONS

BNCPWD:	Barbados National Commission for Persons with Disabilities
BRPWD:	Barbados Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Bill)
MPEA:	Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs
NACPWD:	National Advisory Committee for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities
NCDs:	Non-Communicable Diseases
NDU:	National Disabilities Unit
PWDs:	Persons with Disabilities
UN:	United Nations
UNCRPD:	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
WHO:	World Health Organisation

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accessibility	Design of products, devices, services, environments and other resources for persons with disabilities.
Assistive tools [technology, equipment, etc]	Any item, equipment, product or system that helps maintain or improve functional capability of persons with disabilities.
Disability	Any condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions.
Discrimination	The treatment of one person or group of people less fairly or less well than other people or groups.
Habilitation	Process aimed at assisting persons with disabilities to attain, maintain or improve their overall capabilities or functioning for daily living.
Persons with Disabilities	Those with a long term [or short-term] impairment, including physical, mental, intellectual, developmental or sensory [or cognitive] impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
Reasonable accommodation	The application of one or more modifications or adjustments to various environments, services or resources that are necessary and appropriate to accommodate persons with disabilities in a given setting [e.g., workplace or customer environment] so that he or she enjoys the same rights as others
Rehabilitation	The regaining of skills, abilities and knowledge that may have been lost or compromised as a consequence of acquiring a disability or due to a change in one's disability of circumstances.
Universal design	The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest degree possible without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Persons with disabilities possess needs similar to non-disabled people. They require basic life necessities and survival related resources including access to food, housing, employment, affordable healthcare and medical supplies, social and recreational activities, adequate standard of living and social protection, among other things. However, growing evidence has shown that persons with disabilities are disproportionately at risk of being deprived of these necessities and vital resources and are more likely to experience a range of rights violations and abuses in many countries. These experiences are largely due to the existence of diverse attitudinal, environmental, institutional and other structural barriers faced by these individuals in these societies. In response, many countries have gone to great lengths to put measures in place to safeguard the interests and rights of persons with disabilities within their jurisdictions. Since the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it was obligatory for the Government of Barbados to address the significant gaps, obstacles and barriers in the wider legislative and regulatory environment (especially in light of the absence of major legislation or national policies for persons with disabilities in the country) and honour its commitment to protect and enhance the welfare of all persons with disabilities in the country. Hence, the work to develop the needed legislative, institutional and policy frameworks commenced, in earnest, to *'ensure that persons with disabilities receive the concrete deliverables commensurate to their needs in fulfillment of the GOB'S documented commitment to service the needs of PWDs and ensure their comprehensive human rights and dignity as members of the human race'* (Report on the National Advisory Committee to Guide the Establishment of a Commission for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities, 2022, p. 10).

The 2023-2030 National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities represents one of the most progressive, multifaceted and targeted efforts to advance the full rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities in Barbados. Commissioned by the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs, this National Policy emanates from the work and outputs of the National Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities (an interim mechanism formed and tasked with the responsibility for paving the way for the highly anticipated Barbados National Commission for Persons with Disabilities). The Policy offers, alongside and in compliance with

the Barbados Right of Persons with Disabilities legislation, the essential regulatory framework for promoting, protecting and ensuring the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by persons with disabilities in the country. As the first ever National Policy for persons with disabilities in Barbados, it leverages the underlying tenets, principles and articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to accomplish the following aims:

- **Promote, advance and protect the full human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons with disabilities in Barbados;**
- **Strengthen and enhance national awareness, commitment and energies towards supporting, protecting and advocating for the rights, needs and concerns of persons with disabilities in all spaces of Barbadian society;**
- **Foster and maintain a full national environment in which all forms of marginalisation, discrimination and non-inclusion, and all other barriers and constraints affecting persons with disabilities are eliminated;**
- **Create and sustain the needed enabling conditions for all persons with disabilities to fully access essential opportunities, resources, services and benefits that will serve to lead to and enhance their independent functioning, meaningful participation and engagement, and overall personal and professional growth and development in Barbados; and**
- **Provide an overarching strategic orientation and framework in which the development and implementation of the ensuing policy strategies and companion activities can be fully operationalised, executed and realised for all persons with disabilities and related beneficiaries in the country.**

To complement the aforementioned aims, the overarching vision statement of this National Policy was proposed as follows:

‘A FULLY INCLUSIVE BARBADIAN SOCIETY THAT PROMOTES THE SELF-DETERMINATION, DIGNITY AND EQUALITY OF ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION) IN A WAY THAT EMPOWERS THEM TO LEAD SAFE, PRODUCTIVE AND FULFILLING LIVES, CAREERS AND DESTINIES’

Underpinning this vision statement are the guiding core values in keeping with the Convention and the national commitment and will to promote and protect all persons with disabilities, their rights, freedoms and liberties in Barbados:

- **ACCEPTANCE OF HUMAN DIVERSITY AND HUMANITY: THE NATION-WIDE ACCEPTANCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS PART OF HUMAN DIVERSITY AND HUMANITY.**
- **ACCESSIBILITY: FULL CONSIDERATION AND ACCOMMODATION OF THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**
- **EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION: FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, AND JUST TREATMENT, PROCESS AND OUTCOMES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**
- **EMPOWERMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING: THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ENVIRONMENTS AND SPACES FOR EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO CREATE POSITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE IMPACTS IN SOCIETY AS WELL AS THE PROMOTION OF FREE AND INDEPENDENT LIVES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**
- **PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION: FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL AFFAIRS AND SECTORS OF BARBADIAN SOCIETY.**
- **RESPECT AND DIGNITY: RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE, INHERENT DIGNITY, INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY, INCLUDING THE FREEDOM TO MAKE ONE'S CHOICES, AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**

The Policy also advances fourteen (14) priority areas, consistent with the Convention, and each area is accompanied by a clearly articulated policy goal, a set of strategic recommendations and companion actions/activities for execution (see following pages for a tabular summary of key policy priority areas, goals and strategic directives).

1. ACCESSIBILITY

POLICY GOAL 1:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public.

Strategy 1.1
Facilitating Access to The Built Environment

Strategy 1.2
Facilitating Access to Housing and other Forms of Accommodation

Strategy 1.4
Facilitating Access to Information and Communications

Strategy 1.3
Facilitating Access to Transportation

Strategy 1.5
Facilitating Access to Technical Aids, Equipment and Personal Mobility Resources

2. ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

POLICY GOAL 2:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have adequate standard of living and access to the necessary social protection to fully respond to and address their diverse needs in Barbados.

Strategy 2.1
Provision of Adequate Standard of Living

Strategy 2.2
Provision of Necessary Forms of Social Protection

3. AWARENESS BUILDING

POLICY GOAL 3:

To ensure that all persons in Barbados are sufficiently equipped with the needed awareness, education and knowledge about persons with disabilities (and diverse categories of disabilities) to foster positive societal attitudes and acceptance in the country and reduce the incidence of discrimination.

Strategy 3.1
Development and Implementation of National Awareness Building Campaign

Strategy 3.2
Design and Deployment of Targeted Awareness Building and Educational Programmes

4. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

POLICY GOAL 4:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the high quality, inclusive education, training and lifelong opportunities, programmes and resources to realise their fullest potential.

Strategy 4.1

Facilitating Access to Quality Education, Learning Support Services and Resources

Strategy 4.2

Facilitating Access to Training, Lifelong Learning Opportunities, and Other Developmental Programmes, Services and Resources

5. EMPLOYMENT, WORK AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

POLICY GOAL 5:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to opportunities to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to them.

Strategy 5.1

Provision of Employment Opportunities

Strategy 5.2

Provision of Opportunities for Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

Strategy 5.3

Offering Decent, Accessible and Inclusive Work Experiences

6. HEALTH, HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION

POLICY GOAL 6:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care, habilitation and rehabilitation programmes and services (as well as those tailored to their specific needs) as provided to other persons.

Strategy 6.1

Provision of High-Quality and Accessible Health Care, Medical and Wellness Services, Products and Resources

Strategy 6.2

Provision of High-Quality and Accessible Habilitation and Rehabilitation Care and Related Services

7. LEGAL RECOGNITION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

POLICY GOAL 7:

To ensure that persons with disabilities are adequately recognised before the law, enjoy legal capacity and have effective access to justice on an equal basis with others.

Strategy 7.1
Provision of Legal Recognition and Capacity

Strategy 7.2
Provision of Access to Inclusive Justice with Fairness and Nondiscrimination

8. PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

POLICY GOAL 8:

To ensure that persons with disabilities actively engage and participate in various areas of Barbadian society including the participation in independent living and full inclusion in community life; and participation in political and public life, cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports.

Strategy 8.1
Facilitating Independent Living and Full Inclusion in Communities

Strategy 8.2
Facilitating Participation and Engagement in Political and Public Life

Strategy 8.3
Facilitating Participation and Engagement in Cultural Life

Strategy 8.4
Facilitating Participation and Engagement in Recreation, Leisure and Sports

9. PROTECTION IN DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

POLICY GOAL 9:

POLICY GOAL 9: To ensure the full protection and safety of persons with disabilities in diverse situations of risk - including disasters and emergency situations in Barbados.

Strategy 9.1
Strengthening Disaster and Emergency Plans and Responses

Strategy 9.2
Inclusion of PWDs in Disaster and Emergency Management and Responses

10. PROTECTION OF RIGHT TO LIFE, INTEGRITY, FREEDOMS AND LIBERTIES

POLICY GOAL 10:

To ensure that the right to life, integrity, and the various freedoms and liberties of persons with disabilities are sufficiently recognised and protected in Barbados.

Strategy 10.1
Protection of the Right to Life of PWDs

Strategy 10.3
Protection of Liberty and Security

Strategy 10.5
Protection of Freedom from Exploitation, Violence, and Abuse

Strategy 10.2
Protection of Liberty of Movement and Nationality

Strategy 10.4
Protection of Freedom from Torture or Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (and Protecting the Integrity of the Person)

Strategy 10.6
Protection of Freedom of Expression, Opinion and Access to Information

11. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

POLICY GOAL 11:

To ensure that regional and international cooperation is fully pursued and leveraged for the full enhancement of the lives and experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados.

Strategy 11.1
Strengthening and Enhancing Regional and International Partnerships, Knowledge Sharing and Cooperation to Better Support PWDs

12. RESPECT FOR PRIVACY, HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

POLICY GOAL 12:

To ensure the full recognition and protection of the right to privacy, home and family for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

Strategy 12.1
Protecting and Supporting the Right to Privacy

Strategy 12.2
Protecting and Supporting the Right to Home and Family Life

13. STATISTICS AND DATA-COLLECTION ON DISABILITIES

POLICY GOAL 13:

To ensure that the diverse needs, inputs and wider experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados are fully considered and incorporated into the collection, collation and analysis of statistical and research data aimed at enhancing the lives and experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados.

Strategy 13.1

Prioritising the Needs of PWDs within Statistical and Research Data Management Systems in the Country

14. WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY GOAL 14:

To ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all women and children with disabilities in Barbados (*due to their being more vulnerable to abuses and violations of their rights*) on all human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to assure their full development, advancement and empowerment.

Strategy 14.1

Protecting and Supporting Women with Disabilities

Strategy 14.2

Protecting and Supporting Children with Disabilities

Finally, the National Policy offers a comprehensive presentation and discussion on core implementation, monitoring and evaluation considerations, priorities and recommendations (with a proposed oversight governance and subcommittee structures) to guide and support its execution over the seven-year period. Appendix A outlines an internationally recognised best practice checklist for ensuring successful policy execution by implementing parties and stakeholders, and Appendix B closes this Policy document by proposing a tentative implementation (short-, medium- and long-term schedule) plan to inform the initiation of the key strategic recommendations and activities over the Policy's life course.

I. INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

An Overview and Understanding of Disabilities and Persons with Disabilities

According to recent 2022 reports from the United Nations (UN)¹ and World Health Organisation (WHO)², persons with disabilities (PWDs) constitute the single largest minority group globally, representing 15 per cent of the world's population (or one billion people) – and this figure is increasing due to population growth, increased prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), medical advances, and the ageing process. The World Report on Disability³ acknowledges that 'disability is a part of the human condition... [as]... [a]most everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life, and those who survive to old age will experience increasing difficulties in functioning" (p. 3). A disability is a complex, multifaceted and evolving concept which results from interactions between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that adversely affect their full and effective participation in different areas of society on an equal basis with others. Hence, a disability is simply not an attribute of an individual but representative of complex interactions of diverse dimensions ranging from physical, social, economic, environmental to cultural factors. For this same reason, it is most prudent not to lump all PWDs together in one group but rather view these individuals as diverse and heterogeneous as we do everyone else.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), operationalised under the recently drafted Barbados Rights of Persons with Disabilities (BRPWD) Bill (2023), notes that persons with disabilities 'include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others'. However, this definition proposed by the Convention does not exhaust the categories of disabilities that fall in direct accordance with the same but also seeks to accommodate a wider range of disabilities that

¹ United Nations (UN, 2022). Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities.html>

² World Health Organisation (WHO, 2022). WHO Global Report on Health Equity for Persons with Disabilities. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2022/12/02/default-calendar/launch-of-the-who-global-report-on-health-equity-for-persons-with-disabilities>

³ The World Report on Disability (2011). Retrieved from <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/44575>

may be recognised under national law (inclusive of persons with short-term disabilities). Disabilities can be acquired or congenital; visible or ‘invisible’; temporary or long-term; static, episodic or degenerating; as well as painful or inconsequential (World Report on Disability, 2011). The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) in 2001 classified disability across several dimensions. These include *body functions* (physiological and psychological in nature), *body structures* (anatomical parts of the body), *activity and participation* (difficulties or restrictions that an individual possesses that limits his or her engagement in an activity or a life situation), and *environmental factors* (physical, social or attitudinal aspects within one’s environment that may act as a barrier or facilitating condition).

Disability, as a lived experience, represents a vital human rights issue for several reasons. Both historical and contemporary research and statistics, on a global scale, have revealed the following critical observations regarding PWDs:

- PWDs are more likely to live in poverty, lack basic life necessities, and experience a range of social and economic inequalities across multiple areas of society, inclusive of barriers in access to healthcare, social services, employment, education, information and communications, and political participation (among others) in most societies;
- PWDs are more vulnerable to violations of their dignity as they are more at risk of abuse, exploitation, prejudice and discrimination, exclusion and violence; with women and children with disabilities being more disproportionately at risk of these same violations;
- The autonomy of PWDs, in many societies, is oftentimes denied or violated, especially in situations in which they are confined in institutions or other settings against their will, or when they are treated as legally incompetent because of their disability.

Rationale for A Rights-based Approach to Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados: A National Policy Response

Undergirded by a rights-based approach, the 2023-2030 National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados was conceptually formulated with the recognition that all PWDs are ‘rights-holders’, active members of society with legal claims, and not merely passive recipients of aid or assistance. The National Policy also acknowledges and functions in accordance with the recently drafted BRPD Bill which advances a broader legislative framework in which the enjoyment of the full and equal rights of all PWDs can be promoted, protected and ensured. Once

the Bill transitions into an official Act in Barbados, it will operate as the chief regulatory instrumentation, alongside this National Policy and overseen by a newly established Barbados National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (BNCPWD), to create the right conditions for an enabling, barrier-free and inclusive environment for all PWDs in the country, as envisioned and outlined by the wider international framework and guidelines of the UNCRPD.

As an essential international human rights treaty, the UNCRPD was designed to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms by persons with disabilities (PWDs). The Convention, through the guidance of a wide cross-section of underlying principles, core values and articles, serves to create and sustain an enabling, non-discriminatory and inclusive environment in which all PWDs live and participate as independently functioning and productive members of society. The Convention also recognises that PWDs are not 'objects of charity' but active participants who are free and capable of making decisions for their lives and destinies in any country. In 2007, The Government of Barbados signed the UNCRPD on July 19, 2007 which came into force on May 3, 2008. This Convention was then ratified on February 27, 2013. Consistent with Article 1 of the Convention, Barbados is obliged to create a sustainable policy and legislative environment to ensure that all fundamental rights and freedoms of PWDs in the country are fully recognised, promoted and protected.

In keeping with the aforementioned international obligations tied to the Convention, the Government of Barbados, in 2022, reaffirmed its commitment to responding to and meeting the diverse needs of PWDs through the establishment of National Advisory Committee for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities (NACPWD) to engage in the preparatory work necessary for the establishment of a more formal, overarching National Disabilities Commission whose primary responsibility will be the advancement, promotion and protection of the rights, freedoms and liberties of PWDs in the country. The current National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados was heavily informed and guided by the work and outputs produced by the Ministry of People Empowerment and Elder Affairs (MPEA), the NACPWD, and a wide cross-section of institutional and individual stakeholders across the various sectors of the country. This work and its resultant outputs included:

- In-depth secondary assessments of a wide range of crucial documentation on PWDs inclusive of:
 - The Barbados Green Paper on Persons with Disabilities (which was laid in Parliament on May 30, 2000);
 - The Barbados White Paper on Persons with Disabilities (which was laid in Parliament on August 20, 2002);
 - A Report by Impact Justice on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities in CARICOM Countries (dated December 2021);
 - Employment Code on Persons with Disabilities proposed by CTUSAB and the Social Partnership in 2019;
 - The Trinidad and Tobago's National Policy on Persons with Disabilities (dated July, 2018); and
 - The Revised Edition (December, 2022) of the Report on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities in CARICOM Countries by IMPACT Justice.

- A series of national- and community-level stakeholder consultations and meetings inclusive of (but not limited to):
 - All Ministries of Government along with some of their major departments and Statutory Corporations;
 - Labour Organisations;
 - Business & Employers Organisations;
 - Banking & Financial Sector;
 - Insurance Companies;
 - Construction, Civil Engineering and Architectural Companies;
 - Public and Private Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Educational Institutions;
 - Public and Private Health, Dental and Physical Therapy Institutions (and Medical Associations);
 - Sports and Cultural Organisations;
 - Political Parties;
 - United Nation agencies in Barbados, namely UNESCO & UNDP;
 - The Social Justice Committee;
 - Faith-based and interest groups;
 - PAREDOS, gender groups/associations and other civil society groups; and
 - Twenty-one (21) organisations representing PWDs under the auspices of the Barbados Council for the Disabled.

- Comprehensive needs assessment and research based on a series of one-on-one interviews, focus groups, and surveys with multiple samples of PWDs in Barbados, exploring their views, perceptions, experiences, concerns and recommendations for improving their lives in the country.

The core policy proposals, recommendations and actions underlying this National Policy are not only in keeping with the expressed needs, concerns and general experiences of diverse groups of PWDs in Barbados but reflect the major tenets and principles of a variety of international frameworks, best practices and models including:

- Best Practices for Including Persons with Disabilities in All Aspects of Development Efforts (United Nations, April 2011);
- Framework for Disabilities Policies in Asia and the Pacific (United Nations, 2022);
- The Disability and Development Report. Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with Persons with Disabilities (United Nations, 2018)
- WHO Global Disability Action Plan 2014-2021 (WHO, 2015)

All of these frameworks, best practices and other above-mentioned inputs that have closely informed the development of this National Policy all converge with a holistic and unified understanding that the needs, experiences and lives of PWDs must be placed at the centre of national conversation, planning, decision-making, and action. In keeping with the recommendations of the UNCRPD's criteria for national disability policies, this National Policy includes or makes provisions for the following six (6) elements:

- A commitment to disability mainstreaming in law and policy;
- An alignment with the national development agenda and the UNCRPD;
- A commitment to resources for effective and efficient implementation of Policy strategies and interventions;
- Establishment of mechanisms for implementation of Policy strategies and interventions;
- An articulation of the local Government's broad policy objectives in keeping with the Policy's; and
- A definition of key assumptions and principles to guide implementation of the Policy.

The next section of this Policy document presents a summary capture of the lived experiences, challenges and prevailing conditions of PWDs in Barbados based on recently concluded situational assessments and related work performed by the MPEA and the NACPWD (among other actors).

II. A SITUATION ANALYSIS OF THE LIVES AND EXPERIENCES OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN BARBADOS

PWDs living in Barbados are faced with a myriad of issues and challenges across a wide cross section of domains of the society including those covering healthcare, education, welfare and other essential social services, employment, transportation, housing, information and communications, financial and economic security, among other areas. Moreover, there is no accurate representation of the total number of PWDs (across the range of disabilities) in the country and the most recent census, completed over a decade ago (in 2010), had an estimated **12,000 persons** in the local population with known disabilities – a total that reflects a gross underestimate of the true population of persons with disabilities, especially for the current period. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, the scale of problems and issues facing PWDs in Barbados is extremely alarming and deserves significant attention and address within the scope and purview of this National Policy.

This section presents and summarises the current situation, including the challenges, experiences, concerns and suggestions, among various groups of PWDs in Barbados. The ensuing data comes from a wide diversity of sources such as current surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with PWDs across different sections of society, town hall sessions and stakeholder meetings with PWDs and representative entities in private, public and community-based sectors, as well as a diverse range of secondary data, reports and other gathered sources of documentation capturing the plight of PWDs in Barbados. It is important to note that although the following presentation of key findings represents only a sample capture of the lived experiences, concerns and views of PWDs in the country (given the limited space inherent in this Policy document), it offers a sufficiently stark snapshot into the realities faced by PWDs on a daily basis in the country. Summaries of these realities are presented under general thematic headings that are consistent with some of key targeted priority areas that will be addressed by this Policy.

Accessibility (Physical and Built Environment, Housing, Transport, Information and Communications and Technical and Other Personal Mobility Resources)

- PWDs in Barbados face a range of physical accessibility constraints and challenges in physical buildings and facilities in both private and public spaces, roads and pathways, parking facilities and other types of physical and built infrastructure. The lack of universal design principles and related standards for facilitating full accessibility to PWDs (especially those with mobility issues) remains a glaring and perennial challenge.
- Accessibility modifications to homes and private residences of PWDs have long been a popular service provided by National Disabilities Unit (NDU) and other stakeholders; however, there have been concerns that the growing demand for these services is glaringly outstripping these entities' capacity to deliver the same. Moreover, a limited supply of accessible housing and facilities currently exist to accommodate PWDs in need of accommodation across the country. However, the local Government has committed to 10 per cent of state-funded housing (based on accessibility requirements) to PWDs subject with their registration with entities such as the NDU.
- PWDs in Barbados have expressed strong sentiments and concerns against the 'underservicing of their transportation needs' within the country. The extremely high demand for accessible transportations services coupled with the limited resources and high expense for private specialised transportation services has not only impacted the ability of PWDs to travel to and from various places but has also presented significant challenges to PWDs accessing the needed medical care, education and other social services, and critical commercial services across the island.
- Limited accessibility in existing information and communications and related channels/systems managed and provided by private and public entities remains a growing issue facing certain groups of PWDs in the country. For example, a majority of PWDs in a 2022 survey and focus group interview exercise revealed that communication barriers are prevalent across various social and public spaces including schools/educational institutions, places of employment, commercial/corporate and services environments evidenced by:
 - Lack of assistive tools and mechanisms to holistically support communication needs of PWDs affected by visual, auditory, intellectual, and other physical and developmental impairments or disabilities;
 - Lack of trained specialists such as interpreters and translators and related conversion systems (including Braille or versions for persons who use screen readers; limited use or non-use of captions on video-based messages for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing; the use of oral communications without the accompanying manual interpretation such as sign language).

- A number of PWDs in need have indicated that they had limited access to essential assistive and disability-friendly equipment, technologies and tools (especially from the public services environment) to meet their needs. For example, several PWDs noted in a survey that they were unable to secure mobility aids and other assistive devices from certain government entities due to their limited supply (against the high demand in the population) and further highlighted that the costs of sourcing them privately were generally prohibitive for many PWDs in need; and
- PWDs also reported significant challenges in accessing a range of commercial services including banking and financial services in the country inclusive of, but not limited to:
 - Incurring unnecessary over-the-counter fees due to structural, physical and/or institutional discrepancies that inhibit ATM access;
 - Difficulty navigating web pages for online banking;
 - Communication barriers experienced by different groups of PWDs (including the Deaf and hard of hearing communities);
 - The absence of a standardised policy on accommodating PWDs in the banking sector and the issuance of ATM cards. Some banks facilitate ATM applications while others deny such requests; and
 - Discriminatory practices as evidenced in systematic refusal for loans, the two-point verification in digital banking and inaccessibility to banking services by those who are cognitively disabled.

Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection

- Census data and related evidence show that 9 in 10 persons with disabilities of working age are unemployed in Barbados and have limited access to quality socio-economic opportunities and resources in the country – hence, PWDs are more likely to fall into lower socio-economic positions or impoverished conditions in Barbados.
- Further evidence from recent surveys and focus groups with PWDs in Barbados also suggests that PWDs, due to their peculiar vulnerabilities, are in significant need of social protection, income support and essential social services. Local reports on PWDs and their caregivers in Barbados revealed the following findings:
 - Lack of access to information to help PWDs who require varied forms of government support in the social system;

- Most PWDs are ineligible to receive social security benefits as a direct consequence of their disability in itself. Only blind persons and Deaf persons without speech are eligible to receive these benefits;
 - The lack of State support for caregivers. Some caregivers are forced to relinquish formal employment to care for their wards and yet are not eligible for social security / NIS support inclusive of non-contributory pension;
 - Inability of several groups of PWDs to qualify for or fully access certain types of essential insurance products including health and life insurance services; and
 - Limited insurance coverage and/or exorbitant premiums attached to essential insurance services.
- Due to the limited access to quality socio-economic opportunities and resources, PWDs in lower socio-economic brackets are less likely to accommodate their basic health and medical needs and expenses, household and utility expenses, and general daily social and economic care needs in their households; and
 - Increasing concerns posed by PWDs and their caregivers regarding the well-being of their children and adult PWDs after the death of a parent or caregiver in light of the limited accessible residential facilities and related care services to adequately look after and cater to these dependents.

Public Awareness and Education about PWDs and Disabilities, Discrimination, Rights and Freedoms

- Interviewed PWDs and representative agencies/entities confirmed that there is a general lack of public awareness and education about PWDs and disabilities in Barbados. This lack of public awareness and education in the country has manifested in and/or occasioned the following:
 - General lack of public knowledge and awareness of the full expression of fundamental rights, freedoms and liberties of PWDs in the country inclusive of rights to privacy, home and family life; freedom from discrimination, abuse, exploitation and violence; freedom of expression, opinion and access to information (among others);
 - High levels of stigma, negative perceptions and discrimination against PWDs across several sectors/areas of society including employment and work, education

and training opportunities, access to essential social care, healthcare, insurance and other financial services as well as basic commercial services;

- Lack of understanding of different types and categories of disabilities including (but not limited to) hidden or invisible disabilities and other lesser known disabilities;
- Lack of knowledge and empathy regarding the impact of various disabilities on PWDs and their access to essential opportunities, services and resources in the country;
- Lack of understanding that women and children with disabilities are disproportionately affected (due to their peculiar vulnerabilities and risks) in Barbadian society and limited knowledge about the most appropriate ways in which these vulnerable groups of PWDs can be best accommodated and responded to across various spaces of society;
- Lack of public education regarding the socially appropriate ways in which to respond to different groups of PWDs in various settings; and
- Increased prevalence of various types of barriers faced by PWDs inclusive of communication barriers, attitudinal barriers, physical barriers, and even policy and legislative barriers in the country.

Education and Training Opportunities and Experiences

- A wide cross-section of surveyed PWDs in 2022 reported the following concerns, issues and challenges with respect to education and training opportunities and related programming in Barbados:
 - Many children with disabilities in Barbados are still facing significant constraints to access high-quality educational experiences and learning resources (especially due to the nature or severity of their disabilities) across primary and secondary school systems;
 - Limited supply of special needs and disability-friendly educational institutions against the high demand of children with diverse disabilities (including intellectual and developmental disabilities) in Barbados;
 - Limited supply of contemporary/modern assistive, adaptive and other disability-friendly learning tools and technologies within the educational system – even

within schools, institutions and centres that cater exclusively to children or adult learners with disabilities;

- Exorbitant costs (and onerous waiting times) associated with the conduct of and reliance on certain types of disability-related assessments across the general educational system;
- High levels of school absenteeism due to either extremely costly private transportation services or inaccessible transportation services in the country for transporting children or adult learners with disabilities to and from their institutions;
- The general inaccessibility constraints of public education in the country have forced many families with children or learners with disabilities to turn to highly expensive private schools or educational institutions to cater to their academic and disability-related needs;
- PWDs who attend post-secondary institutions offering tertiary and technical/vocational education in Barbados report significant accessibility constraints (inclusive of physical, technical/technological, teaching and assessment, and other human resource constraints) that have adversely affected their ability to successfully complete their programmes/courses at the institutions;
- A limited supply of financial resources (e.g., national assistance/welfare funds, sponsorships, scholarships, bursaries, grants) is available for PWDs to accommodate their diverse educational and learning needs – especially in the areas of accessing private tuition, purchasing specialised assistive equipment or learning tools/technologies, and affording additional specialised educational services and aids to better support their learning within and outside of the classroom/training room.

Employment, Work and Entrepreneurship

- A wide cross-section of challenges and negative experiences regarding employment, work and entrepreneurship have been reported by PWDs in Barbados including, but not limited to the following:
 - High levels of discrimination against PWDs have resulted in their having lower than average access to adequate and decent employment and work opportunities in Barbados;
 - Limited physical accessibility in workplaces to reasonably accommodate diverse groups of PWDs within various employment settings;

- Limited observation of health and safety protocols suitable to PWDs within workplaces;
- Limited use or application of flexible and remote work options in various places of employment has excluded PWDs within various employment contexts;
- Lack of disability awareness and sensitivity training targeted at employers and other employees in the workplace, especially applied to various organisational and management practices such as recruitment, screening and selection processes; job placement; onboarding and orientation; training and development; performance management and assessment; and workplace health and safety operations;
- General absence of specialised systems and services that aim to provide reasonable accommodations or adjustments to the workplace environments for PWDs in organisations and/or cater to the unique needs of PWDs in organisations;
- Absence of a national register of skills, competencies and training profiles of PWDs in the country for labour market policy and planning responses and for matching suitable job candidates with disabilities to relevant employers and/or employment opportunities in the country; and
- In the area of entrepreneurship, there have been reports that PWDs who are interested in entrepreneurship or new venture creation do not have sufficient access to training opportunities to assist them to develop the relevant entrepreneurial competencies or access to the requisite financial and technical support to start or sustain a business in Barbados.

Health, Habilitation and Rehabilitation

- Several constraints, challenges and concerns regarding health and healthcare as well as habilitation and rehabilitation services have been highlighted and presented by many PWDs in Barbados and included the following:
 - Increasing reports from PWDs regarding poor (or inadequate) delivery of medical treatment and patient care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and related healthcare institutions in Barbados;
 - Poor access to regular and quality dental health care, particularly for adults. Some dentists denied oral care due to behavioural concerns;
 - High costs associated with medication that is not listed on the Barbados Drug Service (dependent on the nature/categorisation of the disability, costs can be prohibitive for many PWDs seeking these supplies);

- Low levels of accessibility (with insufficient reasonable accommodations available) across medical and healthcare facilities on the island to cater to various groups of PWDs;
- Limited (or poorly equipped) habilitation and rehabilitation (private and public) care facilities and related services to meet the high demand of PWDs in need of these services;
- Healthcare providers (including the cross-section of private and public health care staff who interface with PWDs on a daily basis) with limited training in detection of disabilities as well as limited exposure to disability-sensitivity and awareness training;
- General absence of assistive and other disability-friendly aids, equipment and technologies to accommodate diverse groups of PWDs – e.g., certified interpreters in public health spaces to alleviate communication barriers for those who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- The absence of certain categories of essential (and costly) medications for PWDs under the Barbados Drug Service; and
- Early detection and assessment programmes and services for PWDs not fully streamlined through the national healthcare sector.

Legal Recognition and Access to Justice

- With respect to the areas of legal recognition and access to justice, there appears to be limited legal and judicial institutional structures that cater to PWDs as well as the presentation of major challenges and constraints affecting the rights of PWDs within the legal and justice system. Some of the major issues included:
 - Lack of disability sensitivity and awareness training of law enforcement expressed in the manner in which they interact with PWDs, expressed as:
 - hesitancy of some law enforcement officers to take statements from blind persons based on their alleged inability to sign;
 - poor sensitivity and inconsideration meted out by some police officers towards PWDs;
 - perceived lack of standardised protocols governing some officers' treatment of suspects and victims who are cognitively disabled; and
 - fear of engaging with law enforcement should minors and those with intellectual disabilities be accused of / charged with a crime.
 - Reported instances where PWDs are prohibited from having a next of kin

present when giving statements;

- Limited access of PWDs to comprehensive and inclusive legal aid services to address personal legal matters;
- Limited accessibility conditions and disability-friendly environments within the justice system to facilitate the processing of justice outcomes for PWDs inclusive of:
 - Lack of assistive equipment and technologies for recording or taking statements from PWDs;
 - General lack of disability awareness and sensitivity training of law enforcement personnel, attorneys-at-law, judicial officers and other officers;
 - General absence of certified human resources or personnel as well as specialised systems/technologies to serve as interpreters or translators for PWDs interfacing with the justice system;

National Disasters and Related Risks

- It has been reported that PWDs in Barbados are more at risk of harm, injury and death during a natural disaster or related emergency owing to:
 - Poor communication and dissemination of information (which are oftentimes inaccessible) to PWDs in the country;
 - Limited disability awareness and sensitivity training of certain categories of disaster and emergency response personnel in handling or interfacing with PWDs before, during and after a national disaster or emergency situation;
 - Limited accessibility conditions in place for meeting the needs of PWDs before, during and after a national disaster or emergency situation (e.g., lack of physical accessibility and/or assistive equipment at shelter facilities or inaccessible alternative living conditions; limited resources for supporting disability-related needs of PWDs); and
 - Limited inclusion and participation of various groups of PWDs in active disaster and emergency preparedness and response plans and processes at both national and community levels.

Participation in Various Affairs and Sectors of Barbadian Life

- Across several domains inclusive of sports, culture and recreation, community life, public and political life, PWDs in Barbados have experienced a range of issues and challenges that have adversely affected their full inclusion and participation in these said areas:
 - Limited opportunities to participate in various categories of sports and recreation, cultural activities and community life due to inadequate or lack of accessibility conditions, lack of public awareness and persistent levels of discrimination, to facilitate the inclusion and participation of PWDs in the country;
 - Despite the absence of legislative constraints, there still remains limited inclusion and participation of various groups of PWDs in core sectors of political life and public (governmental) affairs; and
 - Urgent need for all polling stations, political offices, and other facilities accommodating political and public officers to be fully accessible and equipped with the necessary equipment, tools and technologies to support the diverse needs of PWDs seeking to independently vote or participate in political life and affairs in meaningful ways.

General Assessments, Concerns and Key Insights for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados

In their Final Report, the NACPWD noted that a wide cross-section of social, economic and legislative proposals is needed to be addressed, as they cut across several domains of life faced by PWDs in the country. These strategic and operational changes, however, require a robust and comprehensive policy framework supported by genuine, active and dedicated stakeholder engagement and participation and the direct participation of PWDs themselves in both the formulation and execution phases. Apart from the aforementioned assessments and resultant insights, the NACPWD recommended that the following activities/actions are needed to complement the work inherent in the development and implementation of this National Policy:

- The finalisation of the BRPWD Bill (and its conversion to official legislation), with direct relationship and consistency with the proposed strategic framework, objectives and actions proposed within this National Policy document;

- The establishment and empowerment of the Institutional Framework of the National Disabilities Commission responsible for advancing, protecting and supporting the rights and freedoms of PWDs in the country;
- Completion and Approval of an Implementation Schedule for guiding the execution of the National Policy, which compartmentalises the various policy objectives, strategies and activities into short-term (within the first 2 years), medium-term (3 to 5 years), and long-term (5 to 7 years) implementation phases (see **Appendix B** for Policy Implementation Schedule developed in accordance with this recommendation);
- Finalisation of the Implementation Governance Structure with clearly articulated action plans and monitoring and evaluation framework and processes for the oversight of the implementation effort over the next seven (7) years.

As cited in their Final Report, the NACPWD strategically highlighted that:

‘the prospective National Disabilities Policy and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities legislation will provide the framework through which PWDs can become full participants in society and able to enjoy higher quality and improved lives’ [and]... [that]...there has to be a continuing effort to promote an improved culture among all persons as to how PWDs ought to be perceived and valued as people with equal human and constitutional rights and opportunities who should be included in every facet of life and not discriminated against in any manner or form’ (Report on the National Advisory Committee to Guide the Establishment of a Commission for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities, 2022, p. 35).

The next section of this Policy document presents a comprehensive articulation of its chief aims, principal vision statement and guiding core values and principles.

III. OVERALL AIMS, VISION AND CORE VALUES OF THE NATIONAL POLICY

The overall AIMS of the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados are to:

- **Promote, advance and protect the full human rights and fundamental freedoms of all PWDs in Barbados;**
- **Strengthen and enhance national awareness, commitment and energies towards supporting, protecting and advocating for the rights, needs and concerns of PWDs in all spaces of Barbadian society;**
- **Foster and maintain a full national environment in which all forms of marginalisation, discrimination and non-inclusion, and all other barriers and constraints affecting PWDs are eliminated;**
- **Create and sustain the needed enabling conditions for all PWDs to fully access essential opportunities, resources, services and benefits that will serve to lead to and enhance their independent functioning, meaningful participation and engagement, and overall personal and professional growth and development in Barbados; and**
- **Provide an overarching strategic orientation and framework in which the development and implementation of the ensuing policy strategies and companion activities can be fully operationalised, executed and realised for all PWDs and related beneficiaries in the country.**

In alignment with the aforementioned best practice principles, frameworks and practices governing the treatment, inclusion and engagement of all PWDs across various spaces, the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities envisions the following and adopts the same as its core **VISION STATEMENT**:

Vision Statement

‘A FULLY INCLUSIVE BARBADIAN SOCIETY THAT PROMOTES THE SELF-DETERMINATION, DIGNITY AND EQUALITY OF ALL PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION) IN A WAY THAT EMPOWERS THEM TO LEAD SAFE, PRODUCTIVE AND FULFILLING LIVES, CAREERS AND DESTINIES’

2023-2030

Underpinning this vision statement, several core values and guiding principles have been established to reflect the qualities and essential nature of this Policy and its intent. These values and principles are expressly consistent with the guiding principles of the Convention and advance a spirit of Barbadian society that endeavours to promote, protect and support the rights, freedoms and liberties of all PWDs across all spaces of living and operation in the country.

CORE POLICY VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

- **ACCEPTANCE OF HUMAN DIVERSITY AND HUMANITY: THE NATION-WIDE ACCEPTANCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AS PART OF HUMAN DIVERSITY AND HUMANITY.**
- **ACCESSIBILITY: FULL CONSIDERATION AND ACCOMMODATION OF THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**
- **EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION: FREEDOM FROM DISCRIMINATION, EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY, AND JUST TREATMENT, PROCESS AND OUTCOMES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**
- **EMPOWERMENT AND INDEPENDENT LIVING: THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF ENVIRONMENTS AND SPACES FOR EMPOWERING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO CREATE POSITIVE AND PRODUCTIVE IMPACTS IN SOCIETY AS WELL AS THE PROMOTION OF FREE AND INDEPENDENT LIVES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**
- **PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION: FULL AND EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL AFFAIRS AND SECTORS OF BARBADIAN SOCIETY.**
- **RESPECT AND DIGNITY: RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE, INHERENT DIGNITY, INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY, INCLUDING THE FREEDOM TO MAKE ONE'S CHOICES, AND THE INDEPENDENCE OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.**

IV. KEY POLICY PRIORITY AREAS, GOALS AND STRATEGIES

This section presents the key priority areas of action, their associated goals and companion strategies and activities of the National Policy. All priority areas are reflective of distinctive needs, challenges and experiences inherent in the lives of various PWDs in Barbados. For each Policy Priority Area, an overarching **goal** is clearly specified, with the identification and presentation of a wide cross-section of generic and thematically relevant **strategies** (or strategic recommendations). Each strategy (or strategic recommendation) is further supported by an articulation of specific **initiatives, activities and/or actions** to be coordinated and performed over the seven-year lifecycle of the National Policy. The ensuing segments under this section reveal a comprehensive presentation and fuller discussion of the Policy’s priority areas, goals and strategies, and companion activities/actions for execution and their relationship with the main articles attached to the UNCRPD.

Table 1
Key Policy Priority Areas for The National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados

1. Accessibility	2. Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection	3. Awareness Building	4. Education, Training and Lifelong Learning
5. Employment, Work and Economic Participation	6. Health, Habilitation and Rehabilitation	7. Legal Recognition and Access to Justice	8. Participation in Society
9. Protection in Disasters and Emergencies	10. Protection of Right to Life, Integrity and Freedoms and Liberties	11. Regional and International Cooperation	12. Respect for Privacy, Home and Family Life
13. Statistics and Data-Collection on Disabilities		14. Women and Children with Disabilities	

1. ACCESSIBILITY

POLICY GOAL 1:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to housing and other accommodation, to information and communications, to technical aids and mobility resources, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public.

Strategy 1.1
Facilitating Access to The Built Environment

Strategy 1.2
Facilitating Access to Housing and other Forms of Accommodation

Strategy 1.4
Facilitating Access to Information and Communications

Strategy 1.3
Facilitating Access to Transportation

Strategy 1.5
Facilitating Access to Technical Aids, Equipment and Personal Mobility Resources

2. ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

POLICY GOAL 2:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have adequate standard of living and access to the necessary social protection to fully respond to and address their diverse needs in Barbados.

Strategy 2.1
Provision of Adequate Standard of Living

Strategy 2.2
Provision of Necessary Forms of Social Protection

3. AWARENESS BUILDING

POLICY GOAL 3:

To ensure that all persons in Barbados are sufficiently equipped with the needed awareness, education and knowledge about persons with disabilities (and diverse categories of disabilities) to foster positive societal attitudes and acceptance in the country and reduce the incidence of discrimination.

Strategy 3.1
Development and Implementation of National Awareness Building Campaign

Strategy 3.2
Design and Deployment of Targeted Awareness Building and Educational Programmes

4. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

POLICY GOAL 4:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the high quality, inclusive education, training and lifelong opportunities, programmes and resources to realise their fullest potential.

Strategy 4.1

Facilitating Access to Quality Education, Learning Support Services and Resources

Strategy 4.2

Facilitating Access to Training, Lifelong Learning Opportunities, and Other Developmental Programmes, Services and Resources

5. EMPLOYMENT, WORK AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

POLICY GOAL 5:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to opportunities to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to them.

Strategy 5.1

Provision of Employment Opportunities

Strategy 5.2

Provision of Opportunities for Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship

Strategy 5.3

Offering Decent, Accessible and Inclusive Work Experiences

6. HEALTH, HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION

POLICY GOAL 6:

To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care, habilitation and rehabilitation programmes and services (as well as those tailored to their specific needs) as provided to other persons.

Strategy 6.1

Provision of High-Quality and Accessible Health Care, Medical and Wellness Services, Products and Resources

Strategy 6.2

Provision of High-Quality and Accessible Habilitation and Rehabilitation Care and Related Services

7. LEGAL RECOGNITION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

POLICY GOAL 7:

To ensure that persons with disabilities are adequately recognised before the law, enjoy legal capacity and have effective access to justice on an equal basis with others.

Strategy 7.1

Provision of Legal Recognition and Capacity

Strategy 7.2

Provision of Access to Inclusive Justice with Fairness and Nondiscrimination

8. PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

POLICY GOAL 8:

To ensure that persons with disabilities actively engage and participate in various areas of Barbadian society including the participation in independent living and full inclusion in community life; and participation in political and public life, cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports.

Strategy 8.1

Facilitating Independent Living and Full Inclusion in Communities

Strategy 8.2

Facilitating Participation and Engagement in Political and Public Life

Strategy 8.3

Facilitating Participation and Engagement in Cultural Life

Strategy 8.4

Facilitating Participation and Engagement in Recreation, Leisure and Sports

9. PROTECTION IN DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

POLICY GOAL 9:

POLICY GOAL 9: To ensure the full protection and safety of persons with disabilities in diverse situations of risk - including disasters and emergency situations in Barbados.

Strategy 9.1

Strengthening Disaster and Emergency Plans and Responses

Strategy 9.2

Inclusion of PWDs in Disaster and Emergency Management and Responses

10. PROTECTION OF RIGHT TO LIFE, INTEGRITY, FREEDOMS AND LIBERTIES

POLICY GOAL 10:

To ensure that the right to life, integrity, and the various freedoms and liberties of persons with disabilities are sufficiently recognised and protected in Barbados.

Strategy 10.1 Protection of the Right to Life of PWDs	Strategy 10.3 Protection of Liberty and Security	Strategy 10.5 Protection of Freedom from Exploitation, Violence, and Abuse
Strategy 10.2 Protection of Liberty of Movement and Nationality	Strategy 10.4 Protection of Freedom from Torture or Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (and Protecting the Integrity of the Person)	Strategy 10.6 Protection of Freedom of Expression, Opinion and Access to Information

11. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

POLICY GOAL 11:

To ensure that regional and international cooperation is fully pursued and leveraged for the full enhancement of the lives and experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados.

<p>Strategy 11.1 Strengthening and Enhancing Regional and International Partnerships, Knowledge Sharing and Cooperation to Better Support PWDs</p>

12. RESPECT FOR PRIVACY, HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

POLICY GOAL 12:

To ensure the full recognition and protection of the right to privacy, home and family for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

Strategy 12.1 Protecting and Supporting the Right to Privacy	Strategy 12.2 Protecting and Supporting the Right to Home and Family Life
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13. STATISTICS AND DATA-COLLECTION ON DISABILITIES

POLICY GOAL 13:

To ensure that the diverse needs, inputs and wider experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados are fully considered and incorporated into the collection, collation and analysis of statistical and research data aimed at enhancing the lives and experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados.

Strategy 13.1

Prioritising the Needs of PWDs within Statistical and Research Data Management Systems in the Country

14. WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY GOAL 14:

To ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all women and children with disabilities in Barbados (*due to their being more vulnerable to abuses and violations of the rights*) on all human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to assure their full development, advancement and empowerment.

Strategy 14.1

Protecting and Supporting Women with Disabilities

Strategy 14.2

Protecting and Supporting Children with Disabilities

Table 2 (below) presents the direct connections between the main (operational) articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Articles 5 to 34) and the key policy priority areas and strategies that have been proposed under the 2023-2030 National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities.

Table 2
Relationship between UN Convention (Articles 5 to 34) and National Policy Areas and Strategies

Articles of UN Convention (relevant to National Policy)	Related Priority Areas of National Policy	Related Policy Strategies
Article 5: Equality and non-discrimination	All Priority Areas from 1 to 14	Strategies 1.1 to 14.2
Article 6: Women with disabilities	Policy Priority Area 14 (Women and Children with Disabilities)	Strategy 14.1
Article 7: Children with disabilities	Policy Priority Area 14 (Women and Children with Disabilities)	Strategy 14.2
Article 8: Awareness-raising	Policy Priority Area 3 (Awareness Building)	Strategies 3.1 to 3.2
Article 9: Accessibility	Policy Priority Area 1 (Accessibility)	Strategies 1.1 to 1.5
Article 10: Right to life	Policy Priority Area 10 (Protection of Right to Life, Integrity, and Freedoms and Liberties)	Strategy 10.1
Article 11: Situations of risk and humanitarian emergency	Policy Priority Area 9 (Protection in Disasters and Emergencies)	Strategies 9.1 to 9.2
Article 12: Equal recognition before the law	Policy Priority Area 7 (Legal Recognition and Access to Justice)	Strategy 7.1
Article 13: Access to justice	Policy Priority Area 7 (Legal Recognition and Access to Justice)	Strategy 7.2
Article 14: Liberty and security of the person	Policy Priority Area 10 (Protection of Right to Life, Integrity, and Freedoms and Liberties)	Strategy 10.3
Article 15: Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment	Policy Priority Area 10 (Protection of Right to Life, Integrity, and Freedoms and Liberties)	Strategy 10.4

Table 2 (cont'd)

Relationship between UN Convention (Articles 5 to 34) and National Policy Areas and Strategies

Articles of UN Convention (relevant to National Policy)	Related Priority Areas of National Policy	Related Policy Strategies
Article 16: Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse	Policy Priority Area 10 (Protection of Right to Life, Integrity, and Freedoms and Liberties)	Strategy 10.5
Article 17: Protecting the integrity of the person	Policy Priority Area 10 (Protection of Right to Life, Integrity, and Freedoms and Liberties)	Strategy 10.4
Article 18: Liberty of movement and nationality	Policy Priority Area 10 (Protection of Right to Life, Integrity, and Freedoms and Liberties)	Strategy 10.2
Article 19: Living independently and being included in the community	Policy Priority Area 8 (Participation in Society)	Strategy 8.1
Article 20: Personal Mobility	Policy Priority Area 1 (Accessibility)	Strategy 1.5
Article 21: Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information	Policy Priority Area 10 (Protection of Right to Life, Integrity, and Freedoms and Liberties)	Strategy 10.6
Article 22: Respect for privacy	Policy Priority Area 12 (Respect for Privacy, Home and Family Life)	Strategy 12.1
Article 23: Respect for home and the family	Policy Priority Area 12 (Respect for Privacy, Home and Family Life)	Strategy 12.2
Article 24: Education	Policy Priority Area 4 (Education, Training and Lifelong Learning)	Strategies 4.1 to 4.2
Article 25: Health	Policy Priority Area 6 (Health, Habilitation and Rehabilitation)	Strategy 6.1
Article 26: Habilitation and rehabilitation	Policy Priority Area 6 (Health, Habilitation and Rehabilitation)	Strategy 6.2

Table 2 (cont'd)

Relationship between UN Convention (Articles 5 to 34) and National Policy Areas and Strategies

Articles of UN Convention (relevant to National Policy)	Related Priority Areas of National Policy	Related Policy Strategies
Article 27: Work and Employment	Policy Priority Area 5 (Employment, Work and Economic Participation)	Strategies 5.1 to 5.3
Article 28: Adequate standard of living and social protection	Policy Priority Area 2 (Adequate Standard of Living and Social protection)	Strategies 2.1 to 2.2
Article 29: Participation in political and public life	Policy Priority Area 8 (Participation in Society)	Strategy 8.2
Article 30: Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports	Policy Priority Area 8 (Participation in Society)	Strategies 8.3 to 8.4
Article 31: Statistics and data-collection	Policy Priority Area 13 (Statistics and Data-collection on Disabilities)	Strategy 13.1
Article 32: International Cooperation	Policy Priority Area 11 (Regional and International Cooperation)	Strategy 11.1
Article 33: National Implementation and Monitoring	Both Articles 33 and 34 are relevant to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation phases of the work of the National Policy. These are operationalised in a discussion in later chapters on <u>Policy Implementation Considerations</u> and <u>Monitoring and Evaluation</u>.	
Article 34: Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities		

The following sections present the fuller details on the fourteen (14) priority areas of the 2023-2030 National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities (Priority Areas 1 to 14), including their overarching goals, strategic recommendations, and accompanying activities or actions for execution.

1. ACCESSIBILITY

POLICY GOAL 1: To ensure that persons with disabilities have access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to housing and other accommodation, to information and communications, to technical aids and mobility resources, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 1.1 FACILITATING ACCESS TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Conduct country-wide accessibility assessments of various forms of physical infrastructure across the country (including government/state-owned buildings, public buildings, outdoor and indoor facilities, roads/roadways, pathways, corridors, etc.) to identify and address key barriers and obstacles to accessibility affecting PWDs in the country;
- Based on country-wide accessibility assessments in public buildings, facilities and other physical infrastructure, eliminate key obstacles and barriers to accessibility in order to meet the diverse physical accessibility needs of PWDs; some of the main enhancements for accessibility should include:
 - Implementation of general universal design features within and outside public buildings and facilities;
 - Provision of ramps for access to wheelchairs and related mobility devices by PWDs as well as automatic operations for certain main entrance/exit doors;
 - Offering multiple visual and auditory systems/prompts on public crossroads and related building sites for those who are visually impaired, blind, hard of hearing and deaf; and
 - Enabling accessibility features within customer interfacing systems and equipment (e.g., ATM systems) present in commercial spaces.
- In collaboration with PWDs and relevant representative organisations/entities, develop and/or adopt best practice accessibility standards and supporting regulations for informing and guiding the design, construction and/or reconstruction of public buildings, facilities and other physical infrastructure across the country;
- Incorporate accessibility standards and regulations into the National Building Code(s) for the design and construction of various forms of public buildings, facilities and other physical infrastructure in the country (as well as incorporate these into monitoring and

evaluation mechanisms to continually ascertain compliance with implemented standards across the board);

- Expose those responsible for and tasked with the design, construction, maintenance and servicing of various forms of physical infrastructure to the range of best practice accessibility standards and practices through greater investments in national promotional/awareness building activities, educational and training opportunities, and other developmental initiatives; and
- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision of accessible physical infrastructure for PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 1.2 FACILITATING ACCESS TO HOUSING AND OTHER FORMS OF ACCOMMODATION

- Assess existing national-level and governmental policies and regulations on the provision of housing and other forms of accommodation to identify and address accessibility barriers and obstacles facing PWDs in the country;
- Review existing housing and other accommodations, constructed or provided, for PWDs to ensure compliance with adequate design specifications informing accessibility;
- Promote (and mandate) best practice accessibility standards associated with universal design principles in the development and management of housing and other accommodations to better meet the needs of PWDs in the country;
- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision of housing and accommodation for PWDs in the country;
- Provide more accessible and affordable housing programmes and opportunities for PWDs in the country through several arrangements and mechanisms including (but not limited to):
 - o Greater supply of subsidised housing arrangements (and rental assistance) for PWDs in need;
 - o Greater allocation and quotas for special housing arrangements available to PWDs in need;
 - o Greater supply of supportive housing, assisted and independent living facilities, and housing rehabilitation programmes for PWDs (inclusive of special residential provisions for PWDs who are unable to take care of themselves);

- o Greater supply of home purchase initiatives to better support PWDs seeking to purchase and own their own homes/properties;
- o Greater supply of home maintenance and repair services to better support PWDs seeking to maintain, upgrade and/or service their residential facilities/homes; and
- o Greater supply of socio-economic and financial support for residential living for PWDs in need to better assist them with meeting their housing-related (and other) expenses (e.g., utilities/rent; accessibility upgrades).

STRATEGY 1.3 FACILITATING ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

- Conduct country-wide accessibility assessments of public transportation services to identify and address key obstacles and barriers in accessibility facing PWDs in the country;
- Based on accessibility assessments, develop and promote accessibility standards for public transportation services that facilitate greater accessibility to PWDs inclusive of the following reforms:
 - o Incorporation of assistive devices and mechanisms on vehicles and transport-based facilities (e.g., stoplights, crosswalks, bus stop sites) to meet the needs of PWDs with mobility or orthopedic impairments (e.g., those with wheelchairs, canes and walking assistive tools); those who are blind and those with visual impairments (e.g., use of audio lights and systems); those who are deaf or hard of hearing (e.g., use of visual cues/systems and signage;); including alert system safety features for emergency situations, etc.;
 - o Provision of accessible and user-friendly public information about any transportation-related service or facility, in different formats (electronic; paper-based; visual and audio formats; Braille, etc.), and is supported by adaptive technology that can assist various groups of PWDs;
 - o Provision of specialised training of transportation service providers to better inform and support how they interact with, communicate and respond to PWDs in public settings (and within their vehicles) as well as managing and working with the various forms of accessibility equipment and devices on their transportation units; and
 - o Assist and support private sector providers of transportation with key accessibility modifications to their vehicles through a range of financial and technical incentives and resources.

- Provide an efficient, affordable (or free) and specialised National Public Transport Service with the capacity to better respond to and meet the transportation needs of various groups of PWDs in the country;
- Enhance the accessibility and supply of transportation vehicles and related services (that are typically used for PWDs) from government-owned and public service entities to better support the transportation needs of various groups of PWDs in the country;
- Introduce a disability parking permit system to ensure that disability parking is utilised only by PWDs as well as adequately enforce all disability parking arrangements in public spaces across the island;
- Introduce special exemptions, concessions and other incentives to better support PWDs in making their own transportation vehicles or units fully accessible to their needs;
- Facilitate greater accessibility in inter-country transport services and facilities (inclusive of airports/seaports) for PWDs engaging in inter-country travel; and
- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision of public transportation services for PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 1.4 FACILITATING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Assess existing systems and processes for the design, coordination and distribution of various forms of information and communications (at national, community and institutional levels) – inclusive of private sector driven and governmental ICT policies and practices - to identify and address key obstacles and barriers in accessibility facing PWDs in the country;
- Work closely with private sector, community-based entities and other public sector organisations (including corporate/commercial entities, government offices, educational institutions, essential service providers, among others) to adopt and implement appropriate accessibility standards, guidelines and practices to better support the provision of more accessible ICTs and related services for PWDs in the country;
- Incentivise and support private and public sector (and other entities) in their efforts to make their own information and communications (and related ICT practices) more accessible to PWDs in the country;

- Through the development of a *National Accessible Information and Communications Plan* (and consistent with provisions with international best practices and treaties of which Barbados is a signatory – e.g., Marrakesh Treaty), manage and support the implementation of all forms of accessibility in the information and communications inclusive of:
 - o Conversion of existing documents and other materials into diverse accessible formats for PWDs;
 - o Enhancing the accessibility of digital assets (including content, projects, digital services, apps, websites, etc) and provision of digital accessibility training to providers and stakeholders in various sectors;
 - o Provision of support for information and communications providers and users through the purchases (or via funding resources) of conversion and recording systems as well as other types of assistive technologies which convert, translate and disseminate information into more accessible ways as well as through the offering of the needed education and training for providers and consumers to interact with the same technologies and outputs;
 - o Provision of a range of communication disability training services for all key providers, stakeholders in various sectors, and general members of the public to enhance the ability to effectively communicate and interact with certain categories of persons with disabilities (e.g. those who deaf and hard of hearing as well as those with certain intellectual or cognitive disabilities);
 - o Provision of human resource support persons – *translators, interpreters, and other accessibility-trained professionals* – to better facilitate accessibility-type support in information and communications; and
 - o Development of protocols, regulations and standards for governing, monitoring and evaluating the use/consumption and management of accessible information among parties and institutions to better support PWDs
- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision and dissemination of information and communications for PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 1.5 FACILITATING ACCESS TO TECHNICAL AIDS, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL MOBILITY RESOURCES

- Conduct nation-wide needs assessments of PWDs in the country regarding their resource needs in terms of technical aids and equipment (as well as personal mobility resources) for better supporting their diverse disability-related needs;

- Expand (and modernise) the existing base or supply of technical aids and equipment as well as personal mobility resources at government-owned/public service entities to better support the diverse needs of PWDs in the country;
- Develop programmes and services in partnership with relevant agencies and stakeholders in both private and community-based sectors to procure and provide the needed technical aids and equipment, personal mobility resources, and related training, at a subsidised cost or affordable rate, to PWDs in the country;
- Offer ongoing training in mobility skills to PWDs (through partnerships with training institutions and related representative partners of PWDs) to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence;
- Provide tax exemptions (and other cost-based incentives) to PWDs seeking access to various types of technical aids and equipment to better support their disability-related needs – including disability-assistive and adaptive devices, personal mobility resources, software, training and other accompanying services;
- Work closely with suppliers/retailers of devices, aids, assistive technologies, and required devices for personal mobility to ensure that these resources are more affordable, accessible and agreeable to all PWDs in the country (accompanied by the application of suitable incentives to suppliers/retailers); and
- Expand the capacity of professionals/stakeholders involved in the provision of personal mobility skills and other technical aid services for PWDs through the increased/enhanced offering of needed human resource training, financial and other technical resources.

2. ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

POLICY GOAL 2: To ensure that persons with disabilities have adequate standard of living and access to the necessary social protection to fully respond to and address their diverse needs in Barbados.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 2.1 PROVISION OF ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

- Conduct comprehensive needs assessments of all PWDs in order to determine specific needs/gaps across social, physical, psychological, economic/financial, and other needs-based dimensions as well as ascertain their current standard of living in the country;
- Measure the results of comprehensive needs assessments of PWDs against a situational analysis of various categories of social (and other essential) services and institutional service providers within the country to determine limitations, capacity constraints and other shortfalls that need to be addressed to meet the demand for services by PWDs in the country;
- Develop and maintain a nation-wide registry/database (or National Registry) of PWDs, essential service providers, and representative organisations to aid in national policy- and decision-making and resultant programmes/initiatives to better meet the socio-economic needs of PWDs in the country;
- Enhance and expand key social and other essential services (within the government/public services sector) targeted at PWDs to better respond to and meet their diverse needs in the country in the following areas:
 - Poverty alleviation programmes and interventions for PWDs living without basic amenities (and those below an adequate standard of living);
 - Various national assistance grants, in-kind and monetary benefits (e.g., bill and utility payment assistance, food and clothing assistance, school supplies), and other financial assistance programmes for PWDs in need;
 - Necessary disability-related aids, tools and assistive equipment for PWDs in need of these resources;

- Special transportation services for PWDs in need;
 - Meals services (and delivery services) for PWDs in need;
 - Respite care services (in-home, out-of-home and emergency respite care) and other related special care services (e.g., day care facilities, recreational centres offering physical exercise and other recreational activities) for PWDs in need and for their caregivers;
 - Accessibility modifications/upgrade services made to their residential dwelling units.
- In light of the burden of care on informal caregivers of dependents with severe impairments across various communities, develop and coordinate a **‘Caregivers of the PWDs Support Programme (covering financial, technical, physical, educational/training and other resource support) which will include:**
 - (a) an assessment of informal caregivers’ needs and other demands associated with care of PWDs in homes and communities;
 - (b) a response plan/strategy articulating clear documentation of best practice responses/solutions aimed at supporting caregivers in need of assistance or resources; and
 - (c) an executable action plan for the deployment/allocation of the needed support, resources and other forms of assistance to informal caregivers of the PWDs in homes and communities.
- Review and consider the adoption of other legal mechanisms such as Legal Guardianship [and Enduring Power of Attorney] (complementary to the facility of Power of Attorney) to better enhance the care of PWDs with mental incapacity and other future planning instruments to support the different categories of PWDs in need of care in communities and institutions-
 - e.g., Supported Decision-Making which is used to provide decision-making support to certain types of PWDs without removing complete autonomy from them; and
 - Life Care plans to assist in the future care planning for PWDs even after the death of caregivers.
- Work closely with communities and households in which PWDs live and operate to develop and provide financial support programmes, services and resources to respond to diverse socio-economic needs of PWDs at the community level (inclusive of food and basic essential items, utility and rent payments, and other socio-economic provisions); and

- Work closely with representative organisations serving PWDs to support and bolster their capacities to respond to social and economic needs of PWDs in their membership and communities (through the provision and allocation of resources, programmes and other incentives to these organisations).

STRATEGY 2.2 PROVISION OF NECESSARY FORMS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Conduct a full review of the existing social protection programmes and services in government and public services sector alongside a comprehensive needs assessment of PWDs regarding their social protection needs in the country;
- Based on the review of existing social protection programmes/services and the comprehensive needs assessment of PWDs in the country, develop and implement a plan of action to enhance and expand these programmes/services within the government and public services sector (including National Insurance Scheme and other national assistance/welfare agencies) ensure that all PWDs in need have access to adequate forms and levels of social protection, inclusive of:
 - Ensuring adequate retirement and other social security benefits (old-age pensions, invalidity benefits/pensions, mobility grants, health insurance benefits) for PWDs in need (especially, addressing key barriers to eligibility to certain benefits or other social protection services based on disabilities);
 - Creating systems with social security mechanisms that allow for different categories of PWDs to be fairly assessed for certain types of benefits and have access to the most suitable benefits based on their needs;
 - Restructuring of the policy of the automatic discontinuation of invalidity benefits for PWDs who secure employment to allow for an alternative assessment criterion and mechanism that can be applied on case-by-case basis;
 - Provision of rehabilitation services to enable PWDs to resume employment (in cases where persons in the labour market become disabled during their life course); and
 - Enabling greater access to income support benefits and services for PWDs in need.
- Work closely with public, private and related essential services providers to review and augment their own social protection systems and other financial and insurance services targeted at PWDs in the country (based on current needs assessments); these enhancements to these systems and services should include:

- Eliminating accessibility constraints and barriers within the onerous application and other customer-facing processes (e.g., inaccessible over-the-counter/in-person transactions; inaccessible ATMs, inaccessible online banking services; processes requiring signatures in inaccessible formats) at insurance and financial institutions in Barbados;
- Reviewing and restructuring eligibility criteria and other requirements for accessing insurance and financial services by PWDs and removing unnecessary barriers in accessing essential insurance and financial services by PWDs in the country;
- Implementing disability awareness and sensitivity training for service providers in the financial and insurance sector and related personnel to better respond to and meet the needs of PWDs seeking services at their institutions/business sites;
- Supporting and incentivising the development of specific insurance and financial services and products specially designed for and targeted at PWDs to better respond their diverse needs; and
- Reviewing all banking, financial, and insurance practices, policies and procedures to ensure that all forms of discriminatory practices against PWDs are eliminated and that reasonable accommodations (where possible) are made to better accommodate them.

3. AWARENESS BUILDING

POLICY GOAL 3: To ensure that all persons in Barbados are sufficiently equipped with the needed awareness, education and knowledge about persons with disabilities (and diverse categories of disabilities) to foster positive societal attitudes and acceptance in the country and reduce the incidence of discrimination.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 3.1 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL AWARENESS BUILDING CAMPAIGN

- In collaboration with relevant private, public and community-based stakeholders, design and implement a nation-wide structured disability awareness campaign that will be conducted across all sectors of society; this national campaign will serve to (among other things):
 - Provide wider public awareness and education to the public on different categories of disabilities (including lesser known and invisible disabilities), PWDs, and their rights and freedoms of PWDs in the country;
 - Enhance public awareness and education about the National Policy and its core nature, strategies, and activities for implementation;
 - Raise public awareness on the diverse challenges, needs and related concerns and experiences of PWDs including accessibility barriers, experiences of prejudice and discrimination, violations of rights, and their lack of or limited access to essential services, opportunities and other resources; and
 - Increase general disability awareness and sensitivity training and education (including communication disability training – e.g. sign language, speech and language therapy techniques, lipreading/speechreading training) for members of the public to improve their attitudes, views and interactions with PWDs in the country.
- Develop and deploy a range of educational and informational materials and resources about PWDs and diverse categories of disabilities in various spaces (online and offline) to ensure all categories of the public can easily access and consume these materials/informational sources; and
- Work to create and execute a range of public awareness, educational and attitude change programmes, initiatives and related content via the traditional and new media (in

partnership with Media stakeholders) to enhance general public awareness and acceptance of PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 3.2 DESIGN AND DEPLOYMENT OF TARGETED NATIONAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

- Design and execute targeted awareness building and educational programming across residential communities (especially among those communities in which PWDs live) to promote general awareness and education regarding disabilities, PWDs, their rights and freedoms, and related Policy implementation matters in the country;
- Design and execute targeted programming at all levels of the educational system (pre-primary to tertiary levels) to promote general awareness regarding disabilities, PWDs, their rights and freedoms, and related Policy implementation matters in the country
- Design and execute targeted programming at all levels of the employment sector (across private, public and NGO sectors) to promote general awareness regarding disabilities, PWDs, their rights and freedoms, and related Policy implementation matters in the country;
- Sensitise the Media and related stakeholders in their industry on disability-related topics and the use of appropriate terms in the conduct of their work in the country; and
- Provide the necessary awareness building programming to build capacity among PWDs and their representative organisations.

4. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

POLICY GOAL 4: To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the high quality, inclusive education, training and lifelong opportunities, programmes and resources to realise their fullest potential.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 4.1 FACILITATING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION, LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES *IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE NATIONAL REFORM AGENDA FOR EDUCATION IN BARBADOS AND THE 2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING*

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive Registry or related data management system for gathering, storing and maintaining, and extracting essential information on all children and adult learners with disabilities in the country to better inform and guide educational planning, policy-making and interventions at the national level; this System should allow for the following:
 - Existence of clear standard definitions, descriptions and criteria on different types of disabilities (ranging from physical to intellectual and developmental in nature) with specified best practice treatments and interventions for educators/administrators;
 - Gathering and storing of essential information on different types of learners of disabilities across the educational system;
 - Gathering and storing of essential demographic, educational, and competency-based (including certifications/qualifications) information on all learners with disabilities across the educational system;
 - Gathering and storing of essential information on the various private and public educational institutions that cater to children and adult learners with disabilities in the country (including the state of their educational services and wider learning environment);
 - Gathering and storing of essential information on documented needs, challenges and other experiences of learners with disabilities across the educational system; and
 - Gathering and storing of key educational activities, interventions, support programmes, learning resources, and other relevant services that can be relayed to educators/administrators and learners with disabilities in the system.

- In partnership with the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training (METVT), conduct sector-wide assessments of the existing educational system (pre-

primary to tertiary levels; inclusive of learners with disabilities and the teaching/educational staff; legislation and related policies) to identify and eliminate barriers and obstacles facing children and adult learners with disabilities in the country - this assessment should involve the following strategic actions:

- o Review existing curricula – i.e., the accessibility of course materials (diversity of content), inclusivity of teaching and learning techniques/tools and environments, individualised lesson and specialised development plans and assessment methodologies as well as how these elements are delivered within the system from pre-primary to tertiary levels – to thoroughly assess and determine their overall accessibility, inclusivity and adequacy for accommodating children and adult learners with disabilities in the system;
 - o Review diagnostic and assessment (and special admissions) criteria, procedures and other processes for assessing children and other learners with disabilities at Ministry and school/institutional levels (including public and private schools) to identify any barriers/constraints;
 - o Assess the supply and allocation of appropriate and accessible teaching and learning resources (including the physical environments, ICTs and digital tools, audiobooks, accessible learning platforms, and other assistive tools) to ensure greater accommodation for and catering to children and adult learners with disabilities across the various levels of the educational system;
 - o Evaluate the existing supply and capacity of the various categories of human resources in the educational system (e.g., teachers, teacher aids, educational administrators, occupational therapists, disability support staff and other relevant staff) responsible for the design and delivery of education to children and adult learners with disabilities across the various levels of the educational system;
 - o Review of educational support (non-academic) services that complement the wider educational experiences of PWDs in the system (including security services, food and nutritional services, ICT services support, mental health support and counselling services, rehabilitative services, among others, within the system); and
 - o Nation-wide assessments of major educational/learning needs and disability-related challenges of the various categories of learners with disabilities across the system – ***this assessment will allow for a fuller understanding of the demand for special needs and disability-inclusive education in the country and types and levels of capacity and resource support that must be invested.***
- Strengthen and enhance the existing educational policies and regulations to better recognise and cater to diverse educational needs of different groups of children and adult learners with disabilities in the educational system (from pre-primary to tertiary levels), translating to:
 - o Policies and regulations that carefully define and cater to specific groups of disabilities with clear and explicit criteria for their measurements, diagnoses and assessments;

- o Policies and regulations that facilitate and mandate *inclusivity* and *equity* (as well as non-discriminatory practices) across the board for PWDs in the system; and
 - o Policies and regulations that inform and guide the equitable allocation of resources (financial, human, physical and technical resources) to better support PWDs in the system.
- Enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of the national curricula and general delivery of education to adequately cater to the diverse educational needs of different groups of children and adult learners with disabilities in the educational system (from pre-primary to tertiary levels), translating to the following (based on key best practices⁴):
 - o A fully renewed/upgraded Special Needs Education policy aligned with international best practices and the local realities/needs of PWDs throughout the system;
 - o Reformed curricula which are designed and delivered in accessible and inclusive ways and accommodative of diverse groups of PWDs in the educational system;
 - o Improved accessibility of classrooms/learning spaces (and related environments) to better accommodate diverse groups of children and adult learners with disabilities;
 - o Improved diagnostic assessment technologies and processes for detecting and assessing PWDs at earlier stages of educational systems;
 - o More improved Individualised Education Plans for PWDs in the system with inputs from and collaborations with parents/guardians;
 - o The incorporation of life and development skills, technical and vocational skills, peer and individualised support measures/systems to facilitate the holistic development of PWDs;
 - o The facilitation of the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, accessible means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
 - o The facilitation of the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the Deaf and hard of hearing community;
 - o Greater availability of contemporary disability-inclusive teaching and learning techniques and methodologies that are accessible to diverse groups of PWDs in the educational system; and
 - o Greater supply of availability of disability-inclusive educational/learning information, materials and resources to cater to a wide range of PWDs in the educational system.
 - Expand the supply of inclusive and accessible special needs and disability-friendly schools and educational institutions across the public service (and where possible, in the private sector) to ensure that all learners with PWDs have access to education in the country;

⁴ Some of these key proposals were informed by following source report: '**Special Needs/Inclusive Education Policy for the Caribbean – Report on the Status of SEN Services Delivered in Barbados**' –Spencer-Ernandez et al. (2022).

- Develop an expanded base of educational administrators, teachers/lecturers (including teacher aids for PWDs in classrooms/schools), and relevant support staff - at all levels of the educational system - through strengthening their capabilities/competencies to design and deliver high-quality, disability-inclusive education to adequately meet the demands and needs of the various populations of PWDs;
- Equip educational institutions (pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary/tertiary, technical/vocational) as well as the base of educational administrators, teachers/lecturers, and support staff with the necessary inclusive educational and teaching tools, equipment, software, and other financial, physical and technical/technological resources to adequately enhance and support the delivery of high-quality education to PWDs;
- Establish the needed disability awareness and sensitivity programmes in primary and secondary schools in order to promote more inclusive, positive and non-discriminatory attitudes and behaviours (e.g., alleviation of stigmatising and bullying behaviours) targeted at children with disabilities in the system;
- Review and modify the processes for accessing financial support services for the pursuit of educational opportunities locally, regionally and internationally – inclusive of scholarships and bursaries – to ensure equality of educational opportunities for PWDs in the country (beyond the freely supplied base of educational services in the country);
- Work closely with private schools and educational institutions to ensure that their educational programming and services are affordable and/or adequately subsidised for PWDs and their families; and
- Work closely with special needs schools and other private educational institutions that accommodate PWDs to support and bolster their capacity in meeting the diverse educational needs of PWDs in the country through the provision of programmes, services special incentives and other opportunities to strengthen their human, technical, technological, physical resources.

STRATEGY 4.2 FACILITATING ACCESS TO TRAINING, LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMMES, SERVICES AND RESOURCES

- Conduct nation-wide assessment of training needs of PWDs in the country to adequately inform the development and execute of appropriately aligned and meaningful training and development programmes for diverse groups of PWDs as well as a maintain a National

Registry (as outlined in Strategy 4.1, bullet 1) of these individuals and relevant training institutions/providers;

- Provide a greater supply of meaningful, accessible and high-quality training and development programmes, which are appropriately aligned to the training needs and competency profiles of various categories of PWDs, across a range of private and public training institutions for the benefit of PWDs in the country;
- Expand the provision of a wide cross-section of accessible and high-quality lifelong learning resources including essential assistive/adaptive tools, disability-friendly materials and other vital disability-related and learning technologies/equipment to diverse groups of PWDs to support their learning and other developmental needs over their life course;
- Work closely with private sector, community-based organisations, and other representative entities to improve their capacities to offer a wide range of accessible, inclusive, and high-quality training and development opportunities to meet the growing needs of PWDs in the country (including supporting their efforts to improve accessibility and inclusion in all of their learning environments as well as procuring the needed financial, human and technical resources);
- Encourage and incentivise various groups of PWDs to participate actively in wider range of training and development opportunities (locally, regionally and internationally) to better support their lifelong learning, career/occupational, and other developmental needs;
- Offer the necessary financial support and resources (e.g., grants, bursaries and scholarships) to provide greater access and opportunities for PWDs to pursue major training and lifelong learning programmes and activities aligned with their personal needs and the national development priorities;
- Offer a greater range of affordable training and development opportunities (with international or regional certifications in place) and accompanying incentives to current and prospective individual trainers, facilitators and related training personnel in area of special needs and disability-friendly training and lifelong learning programming to enhance their overall capabilities/competencies in designing and delivering high-quality training services to PWDs in the country; and
- Support the expansion of existing pool of individual and institutional training providers with the necessary capabilities and competencies in designing and delivering high-quality, accessible and inclusive training, lifelong learning and developmental programmes targeted at diverse groups of PWDs in the country.

5. EMPLOYMENT, WORK AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

POLICY GOAL 5: To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to opportunities to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive and accessible to them.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 5.1 PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- Review and revise the existing base of legislation, regulations, policies and general workplace/organisational practices relevant to employment to identify and eliminate all barriers and obstacles facing PWDs seeking employment opportunities in the country as well as ensure it is consistent with international best practices supporting full expression of economic participation of PWDs;
- Establish a national (or institutional) coordinating body with supporting mechanisms to provide oversight, support and guidance on the inclusion of PWDs in diverse areas of employment and economic participation in the country;
- Advocate and encourage affirmative actions to ensure that PWDs with the requisite skills and qualifications have fair and equal opportunities for employment – inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - o Establishment of regulatory systems and mechanisms (with built-in awareness building programmes) for guiding employers on making reasonable accommodations in their workplaces and minimum hiring requirements with respect to PWDs;
 - o Establishment of national-level support systems for assisting employers in advertising, recruiting and hiring PWDs based on fair and reasonable quotas;
 - o Supporting employers in developing an equal opportunity policy statement in their organisations that is inclusive and accommodating to PWDs; and
 - o Supporting employers in creating an overall inclusive and discrimination-free workplace culture and working environment for PWDs.
- Develop special partnership arrangements and collaborative initiatives with employers, their representative associations and labour unions across sectors in the country to ensure

that PWDs have equal access to fair and decent work opportunities that recognise and cater to their disabilities and related needs – these would involve:

- o Assisting employers in identifying barriers and obstacles to accessibility and inclusion of PWDs within the organisation;
 - o Assisting employers in meeting certain types of expenses/costs for making reasonable accommodations in their organisations to better cater to PWDs through access to various financing, concessions and other incentives; and
 - o Providing the needed disability awareness and sensitivity training to employers and their workforces.
- Strengthen and expand existing employment generation programmes (i.e., public, private or jointly funded programmes/initiatives that generate different forms of employment and jobs across the economy) that are specifically directed at PWDs seeking employment;
 - Strengthen and expand existing employment-related assistance services and programmes to better align PWDs seeking employment to appropriate job opportunities – these may manifest as labour market programmes coordinated by employment agencies designed specifically to assist PWDs in finding and maintaining jobs/employment (i.e., *Disability Employment Services*) such as:
 - o career counselling for PWDs,
 - o employment/job search guidance and related services and assistance for job seekers with disabilities,
 - o personnel placement services for PWDs,
 - o ongoing support within the workplace once PWDs secure a job or some form of employment in an organisational context.
 - Actively support and incentivise job creation efforts in different employment sectors that specifically accommodate or cater directly to PWDs seeking employment through a range of policy-based and economic incentives, investments and reforms (including exploring the option of providing tax incentives/subsidies for disability employment and reasonable accommodations of PWDs in workplaces).

STRATEGY 5.2 PROVISION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment into the common and unique barriers faced by PWDs which affect the development of their own businesses or facilitating their own income-generating activities or self-employment in the country;
- Based on the aforementioned comprehensive assessment, develop and execute an action plan to eliminate all barriers (structural, administrative, physical and others) affecting by PWDs pursuing entrepreneurship and self-employment in the country;
- Strengthen and expand the range of start-up or new venture schemes, programmes and opportunities for PWDs to access and transition into successful self-employment or entrepreneurship in the country;
- Provide greater supply of and access to various entrepreneurial/entrepreneurship-based training and development initiatives and other related opportunities for PWDs to develop and/or strengthen their entrepreneurial mindset/attitudes, competencies and activities;
- Offer PWDs the necessary accessible mentorship programmes to expose them to a range of best practices in entrepreneurial experiences, talents and capabilities to start, maintain and manage a successful business or entrepreneurial venture in the country;
- Provide a range of accessible and inclusive incubator and accelerator programmes to assist PWDs in entrepreneurship in developing and innovating their new ventures;
- Create a network of specially designed and accessible entrepreneurial support services and resources for self-employed and entrepreneurial PWDs to access (freely/subsidised) to support their prospective or existing business ventures; and
- Actively support and incentivise self-employed and entrepreneurial PWDs by providing them greater access to the necessary incentives, resources (financial, human, physical, technical and technological), and support systems to improve the quality of their businesses and overall livelihoods in the country.

STRATEGY 5.3 OFFERING DECENT, ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE WORK EXPERIENCES

- Conduct or support employers in conducting the necessary workplace assessments to identify and address all key barriers and obstacles affecting PWDs in the workplace and for facilitating decent, accessible and inclusive workplace environments and related employment experiences for PWDs in the country;
- Based on workplace assessments and established partnerships, work closely with employers, their representative associations, and labour unions in different sectors to create and maintain decent, healthy, safe, inclusive (non-discriminatory) and accessible work experiences for persons with disabilities inclusive of (but not limited to):
 - Non-discriminatory workplace policies – consistent with the legislation - that provide reasonable accommodation for recruiting, selection (restructuring selection/interviewing processes to be more accessible) and hiring (quota system), orienting/onboarding (e.g., special orientation programmes for persons with disabilities), assessing (performance assessments based on reasonable accommodations), and compensating PWDs seeking employment and within workplaces;
 - Established code of practice within the employment context for the accommodation of PWDs in the workplace (in collaboration with the Social Partnership);
 - Accessible physical work facilities (based on universal design principles) inclusive of reasonable accommodations, adjustments and adaptations to cater to diverse groups of PWDs in workplaces;
 - Accessible and assistive work-related equipment, technologies and tools to support the disability-related needs of PWDs within the workplaces;
 - Healthy and safe work environments consistent with the Occupational Safety and Health Act and other best practices (i.e., creating environments free from barriers, discrimination and other workplace hazards/risks) including accessible and disability-friendly work schedules and modified job duties for PWDs in the workplace (as well as the promotion/incorporation of flexible working arrangements/options [inclusive of remote working options] to better meet needs of different types of PWDs in employment);
 - Restructuring of policies and practices regarding the treatment of PWDs in the workplace who are no longer able to deliver work duties as outlined in their employment contract which takes into account the reassignment of these

individuals to other areas (or where reasonable adjustments to said contracts are possible) to maintain their income as opposed to medical onboarding;

- Provision of adequately trained supervision for supporting PWDs on the job;
 - Fair and equitable performance assessments/appraisals for PWDs performing various tasks and duties relevant to their job;
 - Accessible and equitable opportunities for training and development (including those vocational and rehabilitative in nature; assistive training tools and technologies specific to different persons with disabilities; and continuous workplace re-training initiatives), promotions and career advancement; and for self-actualisation; and
 - Fair and equitable remuneration and benefits for work performed.
- **Develop a Special Employer-based Programme for Improving Workplace Inclusion and Accessibility for PWDs** that will work closely with employers across sectors to identify and address existing and anticipated challenges, constraints and other difficulties that emerge in the efforts to make their workplaces fully accessible, inclusive and accommodating to diverse groups of PWDs in the country;
 - Provide different kinds of support (e.g., resources, services and incentives) to employers and their management representatives in providing meaningful, accessible and disability-friendly support systems, accessible employee resources, and other relevant services in the workplace that are consistent with (and essential to) the needs and preferences of PWDs in the workplace;
 - Actively encourage and incentivise employers in different sectors in designing and providing necessary education, training and other awareness building programmes (inclusive of disability sensitivity, etiquette, and accessibility training initiatives), for their general workforce populations on disabilities and PWDs to better facilitate and sustain more positive, accepting and non-discriminatory attitudes (and organisational cultures) towards PWDs in the employment context; and
 - Raise awareness and encourage employers on the development of return-to-work programmes and rehabilitative measures/initiatives to support more successful re-integration and job retention of persons (within the workplace) who acquire a disability while employed.

6. HEALTH, HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION

POLICY GOAL 6: To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same range, quality and standard of free or affordable health care, habilitation and rehabilitation programmes and services (as well as those tailored to their specific needs) as provided to other persons.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 6.1 PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE, MEDICAL AND WELLNESS SERVICES, PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

- Assess the existing base and range of health care and medical services to identify and eliminate all barriers and obstacles (including discriminatory practices and policies) affecting the rights of PWDs in accessing high-quality, affordable health and medical care and related resources – this strategic recommendation should allow for the following actions to ensue:
 - Establishing **National Guidelines/Protocols in Health/Medical Facilities/Sector** to guide and inform all medical and health professionals in the appropriate interfacing, treatment, management and care of PWDs in the country;
 - Maintaining a special and protected Registry comprising PWDs in the country and the various health and medical needs for assessment and intervention purposes;
 - Reviewing and improving existing early detection, assessment and intervention practices and measures for various forms of disabilities in infants and young children (or in adults who are in the early phases of developing a form of disability) as well as providing the necessary education and training for family members and caregivers in these practices/measures;
 - Expanding early detection and identification services in hospitals, public and private health care institutions, and community-based settings;
 - Developing a fast-track or prioritisation system (and designated spaces) that will expedite the servicing and processing of PWDs seeking care at health care facilities and institutions in the country;

- o Improving accessibility of the physical environments, health and medical equipment, technologies, and tools at health care facilities and institutions to better accommodate PWDs;
 - o Improving the accessibility of health-related communications and other informational systems and practices within the sector to better accommodate and cater to the needs of specific categories of PWDs (e.g., those who are blind and visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing, and those with other intellectual/developmental disabilities);
 - o Enhancing the preventative awareness programming and other public education and counselling programmes targeted at PWDs across the healthcare sector; and
 - o Promoting and expanding diverse range of person-centred health services with the active involvement of PWDs in the application/administration of these services within institutional and community-based settings.
- Provide technical, financial and other forms of support to various health care/medical institutions (public and private) to ensure that:
 - o Different groups of PWDs (and their disabilities) are fully recognised and accommodated within their institutional policies, practices and general operating environments (across the full range of medical and health services);
 - o Reasonable accommodations/adjustments are made to physical environment/settings (including the architectural accessibility in facilities and offices; accessible examination/diagnostic devices and other types of equipment; and assistive technologies) to ensure that they are consistent with the needs of diverse groups of PWDs at these facilities;
 - o Reasonable accommodations are made to specific health care/medical protocols regarding the treatment and management of PWDs in terms of admission (including pre-admission assessments), management of in-patient care and outpatient services, discharge planning, and follow-up care;
 - o Continuous training and development activities are conducted with different categories in health care staff in the management and treatment of diverse groups of PWDs in the system; and
 - o The bolstering of the needed disability-friendly, assistive and other accessible technologies, equipment and related supplies to better support the health care and medical needs of diverse groups of PWDs.

- Support the expansion and upgrading of the other private healthcare and medical facilities with the necessary incentives, resources (human, financial, technical and physical) and services to improve their capacities to better respond to and address the healthcare and medical needs of PWDs in the country;
- Expand the supply of and access to essential, accessible mental health and psychological support services for PWDs across the health system across public sector, private sector and community-based spaces;
- Expand supply of and access to essential, accessible sexual and reproductive health services for PWDs across the health system within public sector, private sector and community-based spaces;
- Expand supply of and access to essential pharmaceutical supplies (i.e., prescribed drugs/medication) for PWDs across the health system within public sector, private sector and community-based spaces;
- Expand supply of and access to essential medical and health care equipment/tools and other resources to better support PWDs with different health needs/conditions across the health system within public sector, private sector and community-based spaces;
- Expand supply of and access to various forms of essential health/medical and life insurance services (through the elimination of all forms/sources of discrimination and related access barriers against PWDs and the expansion of reasonable adjustments to criteria/standards) for PWDs in the country;
- Expand the range of training and development opportunities/initiatives accessible to formal and informal caregivers of PWDs within the institutional and community-based settings as well as other professional healthcare and medical providers to ensure that they are sufficiently equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications for managing the health care needs of PWDs in the country;
- Develop and execute health and wellness promotion strategies to enhance public awareness among PWDs, their family members and caregivers of challenges faced by PWDs and how best to support them in managing their conditions in communities; these health promotion efforts should focus on:
 - Food, diet and nutrition (and healthy feeding practices) in communities and institutions in which PWDs people reside;
 - Physical activity and exercise and sporting programmes for PWDs; and
 - Mental health support and related services for PWDs.

- Work closely with community-based stakeholders, healthcare providers/wellness services providers, private sector entities and other agencies to develop and expand a range of physical and mental health programmes and other essential community-centred healthcare and wellness services (including habilitation, physical therapy/rehabilitation, physical sports-related training, mental health counselling, among others) to support the diverse needs of the PWDs in homes and communities.

STRATEGY 6.2 PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION CARE AND RELATED SERVICES

- Assess the existing base of habilitation and rehabilitation care services and programmes currently being offered to PWDs across private and public sectors (at institutional and community levels) with the intent of identifying and eliminating current structural and other barriers affecting access, quality and equitable delivery of both habilitation and rehabilitation care services for PWDs;
- Ensure that those responsible for the provision of habilitation and rehabilitation care services operate under policies, protocols and regulations that are compliant with contemporary disability-related legislation and best practices in the country;
- Work closely with private and public providers of habilitation and rehabilitation care services for PWDs to expand the supply of and access to the following:
 - In-home and community-based habilitation and rehabilitation programmes and services (including day, school, child-care and family support services);
 - Residential or institutional-based habilitation and rehabilitation programmes and services;
 - Supported living services in provider-controlled environments (for PWDs experiences with challenges occasioned by developmental and intellectual disabilities);
- Equip the various categories of human resources (technical professionals, administrative and other service support personnel) involved in the provision of habilitation and rehabilitation care services and programmes with the necessary skills/competencies to respond to and meet the diverse needs of PWDs in the country; and
- Provide the needed resource support (human, financial and technical resources) to private and public providers of habilitation and rehabilitation care services in the country in order to bolster their capacities to effectively and efficiently deliver the highest quality of care to PWDs.

7. LEGAL RECOGNITION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

POLICY GOAL 7: To ensure that persons with disabilities are adequately recognised before the law, enjoy legal capacity and have effective access to justice on an equal basis with others.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 7.1 PROVISION OF LEGAL RECOGNITION AND CAPACITY

- Amend existing legislation to remove all barriers and obstacles affecting the rights of access to legal recognition and justice of PWDs across all sectors and spaces of operation within the national context;
- Establish a functioning and multi-stakeholder legal body/entity (at the national level) equipped with the powers and capacity for addressing the diversity of legal matters/issues confronting PWDs in the country;
- Conduct a comprehensive accessibility assessment of existing legal services, service environments, and related processes (both online and offline) alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs seeking legal services to identify key barriers and obstacles affecting accessibility and inclusion among PWDs in the country;
- Offer the necessary education/information, resources and other support systems for PWDs to actively engage and exercise their legal capacity consistent with their rights, will and preferences as recognised by the laws of the country;
- Provide PWDs with legal matters/issues with accessible, affordable (or free), and high-quality legal services, including legal representation, to address their presenting legal matters/issues in the country (inclusive of the expansion or modification of Legal Aid Services);
- Modify, as needed, the portfolio of legal services currently being offered to reflect the diverse needs and experiences being presented (oftentimes uniquely) by PWDs in the country (inclusive of the improving the accessibility of Legal Aid Services); and
- Equip the legal professionals (e.g., attorneys-at-law) and other relevant members of the legal community with necessary education/training (disability sensitivity and awareness training, communication disability training), resources (financial, human and technical) and support systems to better cater to the legal needs and demands of PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 7.2 PROVISION OF ACCESS TO INCLUSIVE JUSTICE WITH FAIRNESS AND NONDISCRIMINATION

- Amend existing legislation to ensure full and equal opportunity for participation in the justice system at all levels for PWDs in the country;
- Conduct a comprehensive accessibility assessment of existing judicial services, service environments, and related processes (both online and offline) alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs within justice system to identify key barriers and obstacles affecting accessibility and inclusion among PWDs in the country;
- Modify, as needed, policies, protocols and practices across the justice system to ensure that all PWDs (including those accused or in conflict with the law) receive equitable and non-discriminatory treatment at all levels of the system; these modifications should include:
 - Creation and enforcement of the standard guidelines/protocols for guiding the appropriate treatment and handling of PWDs within the justice system (from law enforcement contact to correctional or rehabilitative facilities including minors and those with severe cognitive impairments);
 - Development and implementation of the accessibility standards and resultant modifications for application to the physical facilities and environments (police stations, court facilities, detention/prison facilities) across the justice system, transportation services, resources of interpreters/translators, information and communication systems, and other processes related to the justice system;
 - Removal of all discriminatory practices that infringe on the natural rights and freedoms of PWDs in the justice system; and
 - The engagement of reasonable accommodations to cater to and accommodate PWDs seeking employment into various sub-sectors of the justice system (as employees or participants in the system inclusive of witnesses, expert witnesses or jurors).
- Equip the various agents and agencies of the justice system – including law enforcement officers, judicial officers (judges and magistrates), officers of the correctional facilities, among others - with necessary education/training disability sensitivity and awareness training, communication disability training), resources (financial, human and technical) and support systems to better respond to, treat and interact with PWDs in the system in equitable, humane and inclusive ways (inclusive of responding to disability discrimination issues); these activities for equipping the agents and agencies of the system include:

- Creation of institutional policies and codes for informing and guiding officers across the justice system in their interaction with and treatment of PWDs in the system;
 - Conducting the needed training on all human resources within the system to improving disability awareness, sensitivity and the treatment of PWDs in the system;
 - Provision of the needed assistive and disability-friendly equipment, tools and technologies to facilitate the processing of cases involving PWDs in the justice system (from law enforcement settings to correctional and rehabilitative service facilities); and
 - Implementation of needed accessible and inclusive systems, processes and assistive technologies within the justice system are in place to better support and adjudicate on cases involving PWDs within the system.
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- Work with relevant stakeholders in public, private and community-based sectors to develop and execute alternative restorative practices (and diversion programmes) for PWDs in the justice system to avoid unnecessary custodial sentences and resultant imprisonment for these individuals; and
 - Work with relevant stakeholders in public, private and community-based sectors to develop and execute sustainable and accessible rehabilitative and reintegration programmes for PWDs in the justice system to produce improved rehabilitation and societal reintegration outcomes.

8. PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

POLICY GOAL 8: To ensure that persons with disabilities actively engage and participate in various areas of Barbadian society including the participation in independent living and full inclusion in community life; and participation in political and public life, cultural life, recreation, leisure and sports.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 8.1 FACILITATING INDEPENDENT LIVING AND FULL INCLUSION IN COMMUNITIES

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of barriers and obstacles within community settings adversely affecting full independent living and inclusion of PWDs, alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs in these settings;
- Work closely with various residential communities to develop community development programmes and related services (e.g., in-home, residential and other community support services) that are fully accessible to PWDs to facilitate fuller community inclusion and independent living in these same communities;
- Actively involve PWDs in community development programmes to assist these and other PWDs in becoming more empowered to live independent lives;
- To better facilitate independent living of PWDs in the communities, expand access to various accessible living and residential facilities (e.g., transitional housing facilities and related amenities/facilities) for PWDs across various settings;
- Work closely with community-based stakeholders to provide a range of daily living skills and other skills development programmes targeting PWDs to support independent living needs in their communities; and
- Provide ongoing support to PWDs, through a range of professional services and related human and technical resources, to better support their needs in independent living in their communities.

STRATEGY 8.2 FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of barriers and obstacles within the wider environment, system and spaces of political and public life adversely affecting full inclusion of PWDs, alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs in these settings;
- Develop standard guidelines/protocols for the treatment and inclusion of PWDs in various aspects of political and public life, covering their participation in voting and interacting with electoral processes and systems as well as serving as candidates/elected representatives (in political parties and government), electoral officers, political and public officials, parliamentarians/senators, among other roles/positions;
- Modify, as needed, electoral regulations, procedures and policies within the wider system to allow for greater physical and informational access of PWDs to the electoral process and other public roles in society;
- Develop and/or enhance existing procedures for supporting accessible independent voting to facilitate the full electoral participation of voters with different disabilities;
- Provide greater supply of and access to various disability-friendly/assistive technologies, equipment and other technical aids to better enhance the involvement of PWDs in the voting process (with limited third-party involvement);
- Provide all necessary formats of information and documentation regarding electoral/political participation to ensure full accessibility to PWDs;
- Facilitate disability-sensitive/awareness training for election officers and related support staff to facilitate a fully accessible and inclusive voting process for PWDs;
- Provide adequate support services (including human assistance) to facilitate a fully accessible and inclusive voting process for PWDs;
- Improve the accessibility of physical access to polling districts, representative offices and venues for political events for PWDs;
- Ensure that PWDs have full access and equal opportunity to participate in political and public office through the following mechanisms/actions:
 - Removal of any discriminatory barriers and obstacles to the inclusion of PWDs in various political and public offices in Barbados;
 - Training and further incentivisation/empowerment of PWDs interested in or operating in political and public roles;

- Disability-related sensitisation of political parties and other public officers responsible for recruiting and selecting PWDs for various political and public positions/roles;
- Provision of necessary aids/assistive technologies and other resources to support the full participation of PWDs in political and public roles
- Develop and enact more inclusive policies that facilitate greater inclusion of suitably qualified and experienced PWDs on statutory boards, school boards, and other related committees of government and wider public sector; and
- Improve the accessibility of the physical facilities of parliament, senate and other political/public spaces for PWDs functioning in political and public roles.

STRATEGY 8.3 FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL LIFE

- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of PWDs who are active or interested in the cultural and creative sectors to determine and address key barriers and obstacles affecting their full participation and inclusion;
- In partnership with cultural and other creative industries stakeholders (including the National Cultural Foundation), provide greater opportunities for PWDs to be involved in the decision-making bodies/committees which are responsible for designing and implementing a wide range of cultural activities in the country;
- Increase the access of PWDs to a wide range of cultural programmes and activities in which they can fully participate - socially, economically and developmentally;
- Incentivise PWDs to actively participate and develop in the creative and cultural sectors through a range of incentives, programmes and other collaborative initiatives;
- Support PWDs active in the creative and cultural sectors in the monetisation of their cultural and creative products and services through the creation of the incentives, programmes and other collaborative initiatives across sectors (locally, regionally and internationally);
- Expose PWDs to a wider range of accessible training and development initiatives to better develop their skills to fully participate in a range of cultural activities in the country;
- Equip PWDs with a range of financial and technical resources (and support services/systems) to ensure that they can fully participate in a range of cultural activities in the country; and

- Increase the physical accessibility of the cultural/creative spaces/sites and information to ensure that PWDs can fully participate in a range of cultural activities in the country.

STRATEGY 8.4 FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN RECREATION, LEISURE AND SPORTS (IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE NATIONAL SPORTS POLICY OF BARBADOS)

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of barriers and obstacles within the wider environment, system and spaces of recreation, leisure and sports in the country adversely affecting full inclusion of PWDs, alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs in these settings;
- Increase the accessibility of recreational and leisure-based facilities (e.g., community parks/playgrounds, beaches, and other places of entertainment), equipment and related information/communications for PWDs to participate fully in recreational and leisure activities in the country;
- Increase the supply of and access to opportunities for PWDs to fully participate in mainstream sporting activities in the country;
- Incentivise PWDs to actively participate and develop in the various sporting fields and careers through a range of incentives, programmes and other collaborative initiatives;
- Promote and support an expanded development and integration of inclusive sports and recreational activities in schools/educational institutions and in other related public and privately funded programmes and institutions;
- Support the creation and expansion of more accessible sporting clubs, teams and associations that are inclusive and accommodating of PWDs who are active or interested in sports in the country;
- Expose sports trainers, coaches and sporting personnel/professionals to the necessary disability awareness and sensitivity training to better interface and work with PWDs who are active or interested in sports in the country;
- Increase the appeal, attractiveness and viability of Special Olympics events and activities in the country (including attracting similar events to Barbados to earn greater revenues);
- Increase the accessibility of sporting facilities (including stadia, in-door sporting facilities in communities and schools), equipment and related information/communications for PWDs to fully participate in a range of sporting activities;

- Increase the level of support (and financial and technical resources) for athletes with disabilities participating in special Olympic and Paralympic competitions; and
- Work closely with recreational, leisure and sporting entities and operators to ensure that their facilities, activities and information are fully accessible to PWDs in the country.

9. PROTECTION IN DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

POLICY GOAL 9: To ensure the full protection and safety of persons with disabilities in diverse situations of risk - including disasters and emergency situations in Barbados.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 9.1 STRENGTHENING DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PLANS AND RESPONSES

- Conduct assessments of existing disaster and emergency preparedness plans, systems and mechanisms to identify and eliminate all barriers facing the protection of PWDs during various disaster and emergency situations in the country - these assessments should result in the following:
 - Establishment of inter-entity committees, with guiding protocols and mechanisms, to properly identify risks/needs and respond to the needs of PWDs before, during and after a disaster and emergency situation;
 - Information from risk assessments, at the various community-levels, to determine and inform the diverse risk-related/reduction strategies to meet the needs of PWDs in the case of a disaster or emergency event;
 - Design and Deployment of a National Registry of PWDs to access relevant information for effective use of disaster and emergency preparedness and response scenarios;
 - Increase in the accessibility of disaster and emergency preparedness information and communications to PWDs before, during and after a disaster and emergency situation;
 - Improvements in (expansions of) existing (and new) infrastructure and facilities (including shelters and related alternative accommodations) as well as disaster and emergency safety procedures to ensure full accessibility of PWDs facing a disaster and emergency situation in the country;
 - The bolstering of needed disability-friendly, accessible and assistive resources (e.g., technical aids, equipment and other personal mobility devices) for PWDs facing a disaster and emergency situation in the country; and

- The deployment of needed disaster/emergency relief services and resources (physical, technical, socio-economic, psychosocial, etc.) in a way that is fully accessible to PWDs who have faced a disaster and emergency situation in the country.
- Work closely with community members and other representative stakeholders to expand and develop the pool of volunteers and other support personnel (as part of the national surveillance and response system for disaster and emergency risk management) as a means of improving the national capacity for responding to the needs of PWDs in a disaster and emergency situation;
- Ensure that PWDs have the necessary social protection services and mechanisms to protect them against various disaster and emergency events inclusive (but not limited to):
 - Adequate property, social security and other health-related insurance coverage (covering damage, injury or loss) in disaster and emergency crises;
 - Adequate health and safety equipment, materials and first aid and medical supplies in place (in their homes and in community centres);
 - Access to functioning communications and related devices (e.g., mobile and landline devices, batteries, and other ICTs) and relevant contact channels to essential services agencies/entities; and
 - Access to community policing groups and other security arrangements (ahead of a national disaster or emergency event) to protect them from violence, crime and other forms of abuse during disaster and emergency crises.

STRATEGY 9.2 INCLUSION OF PWDs IN DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSES

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the key barriers and obstacles adversely affecting the full inclusion and participation of PWDs in national and community-level disaster preparedness and emergency response activities, programmes and initiatives in the country;
- Develop **standard guidelines and protocols** for guiding the full inclusion and participation of PWDs in national and community-level disaster preparedness and emergency response activities, programmes and initiatives in the country; these guidelines/protocols should address the following:

- Improving the accessibility of environments (including the physical facilities, equipment, technologies, tools and information/communications) in which PWDs would operate, interface and work with other stakeholders/agents within the disaster preparedness and emergency response programmes and contexts;
 - Eliminating attitudinal and cultural barriers (and related forms of discrimination) that had historically prevented or blocked the full inclusion and participation of PWDs in being actively involved in disaster preparedness and emergency responses programmes and contexts; and
 - Providing the needed disability awareness and sensitivity training for all professionals, agents and service providers working in disaster preparedness and emergency response contexts to improve their overall attitudes, interactions and relationships with PWDs in the same work settings.
- Include and engage PWDs across communities on the National Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Committee(s) and supporting subcommittees/action teams as key representatives of their target communities;
 - Expose PWDs to a range of educational and training programmes to strengthen their capabilities and readiness to meaningfully and fully participate in national and community-level disaster preparedness and emergency response activities, programmes and initiatives in the country;
 - Involve PWDs in relevant community surveillance and response systems and programmes in at-risk communities to better support other at-risk PWDs in disaster and emergency situations; and
 - Promote a growing network of *resilient PWDs* in communities to assist relevant agencies/entities in the provision of needed essential services (including training) and resources to other at-risk PWDs and other vulnerable groups in disaster and emergency situations.

10. PROTECTION OF RIGHT TO LIFE, INTEGRITY, FREEDOMS AND LIBERTIES

POLICY GOAL 10: To ensure that the right to life, integrity, and the freedoms and liberties of persons with disabilities are sufficiently recognised and protected in Barbados.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 10.1 PROTECTION OF RIGHT TO LIFE OF THE PWDs

- Review and amend all relevant legislation, regulations and policies to sufficiently recognise and protect:
 - The right of PWDs to life-saving treatments or interventions as needed (removal of any barriers and related forms of discriminations that restricts or denies these treatments/interventions on the basis of their disability)
 - Establishment of progressive policies and measures that prevent or alleviate the risk of premature deaths and unnatural deaths (linked to poor health care and nutrition, living conditions, emergencies, suicides, ‘assisted dying’, etc.)
- Develop necessary and strict investigative guidelines and protocols for addressing the loss of life with PWDs in various settings, including measures against preventable deaths and practices requiring full investigations into loss of life for PWDs in both public and private facilities.

STRATEGY 10.2 PROTECTION OF LIBERTY OF MOVEMENT AND NATIONALITY

- Review and amend all immigration-related legislation, regulations and policies to identify and address key barriers and obstacles (inclusive of discriminatory screening and assessment processes) affecting different groups of PWDs; this review should focus on:
 - Review of any discriminatory restrictions, based on disabilities, that affect the right of PWDs to their right to acquire citizenship or nationality (or related status) on an equal basis with others (and not be deprived of the same on the basis on their disability);

- Review of naturalisation, residency and citizenship processes to allow for reasonable accommodations for PWDs; and
- Review of the regular mode of interactions of officers within the sector (e.g., immigration and related officers) concerning their treatment and handling of PWDs.
- Modify, as needed, the various application, registration and other processes and related systems for attaining and maintaining travel documents (and for attaining some residential, migrant or citizenship status within the country) to ensure full accessibility for PWDs;
- Provide ongoing disability awareness and sensitivity training for the various officers employed at the various ports of entry (e.g., sensitively handling and interacting with passengers with disabilities including those with prostheses/prosthetic items or wheelchairs) and for personnel involved in the facilitation of travel documents and travel-related materials/documents (and other related immigration matters); and
- Modify immigration offices and existing facilities within the various ports of entry with suitable design features and systems to permit full accessibility to PWDs.

STRATEGY 10.3 PROTECTION OF LIBERTY AND SECURITY

- Review and reform existing legislation that directly or indirectly allows for any kind of deprivation of the liberty of PWDs on the basis of actual or perceived impairment or disability as well as any related barriers and obstacles restricting their rights to liberty and security;
- Establish systems within institutions (detention centres, prisons, psychiatric institutions, residential institutions, etc.) in which PWDs reside that prevent arbitrary detention of persons with disabilities in the country as well as the prohibition of seclusion, restraints, and the administration of restrictive, coercive or forced treatments of PWDs; and
- Design and provide mechanisms and related support services within (and outside of) the justice system that adequately protect persons with mental health conditions (or related impairments) who are detained.

STRATEGY 10.4 PROTECTION OF FREEDOM FROM TORTURE OR CRUEL INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (AND PROTECTING THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON)

- Amend and/or enact appropriate legislation and related regulations to ensure that PWDs are fully protected from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment across various sectors of society; these amendments and changes should ensure the following:
 - Prohibition of any kind of non-consensual medical, scientific or social experimentation, treatment or intervention (of any kind) and other related violations to the physical and mental integrity of PWDs in any setting;
 - Protection of children with disabilities from any kind of corporal punishment, invasive therapies and/or forced treatment or intervention; and
 - Full recognition of the rights of PWDs to free and informed consent to medical treatment, and the right to refuse treatment or any medical-based or other experimentation.
- Provide and manage systematic channels for anonymous reporting of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment of PWDs across all sectors of society;
- Establish an Inspectorate body/entity and/or National System responsible for the investigation/inspection, assessment and reporting on all care facilities/settings in which PWDs live and operate;
- Provide ongoing training for all care workers – including formal and informal caregivers of PWDs (including security-related officers) – to enhance their competencies/capabilities in investigating, reporting and intervening in cases of mistreatment of PWDs in various settings; and
- Provide special measures and systems for surveilling and protecting homeless PWDs in order to protect them from cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment.

STRATEGY 10.5 PROTECTION OF FREEDOM FROM EXPLOITATION, VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

- Amend and/or enact legislation, regulations and other administrative measures that will lead to the protection of PWDs from exploitation, violence and various forms of abuse; these amendments and changes should ensure the following:

- Establishment of legislation, regulations and policies to safeguard and protect PWDs from all forms of abuse in any private and public setting (physical, sexual, emotional, financial, etc.); and
 - Establishment of national-level regulations and measures that require the appointment of independent authorities to monitor, investigate/inspect, and respond to cases of abuse, violence and exploitation in all private and public facilities (especially, in which PWDs are at risk).
- Establish appropriate systems and processes at a national level (inclusive of documented protocols and supporting monitoring bodies) for PWDs to ensure that all instances of abuse and violence against PWDs are identified, investigated, reported and addressed;
 - Deploy specially designed victim support services and programmes for PWDs who have been victims of violence and abuse within communities and institutions to assist in their recovery and rehabilitation (inclusive of psycho-social support services); and
 - Develop diverse outreach, educational and awareness-building programmes for the public (including community residents, caregivers, social and healthcare workers and law enforcement personnel) to assist in their identification and reporting of suspected cases of abuse and violence involving PWDs across various sectors of society.

STRATEGY 10.6 PROTECTION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, OPINION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- Develop and enact legislation and regulations formally recognising sign language, Braille, Easy to Read format, captioning, tactile communication, support persons for communication, and any other accessible means, modes or formats of communication used by PWDs;
- Establish mandatory standards on the accessibility of information and communications for PWDs as provided by private and public entities for the general public;
- Provide specially designed empowerment and support programmes to incentivise and empower PWDs to engage in greater self-advocacy/self-representation across various sectors of the society;

- Work closely with representative organisations serving PWDs to create community-based, institutional and national channels, platforms and avenues for PWDs to actively communicate and express opinions on key issues of national significance affecting the country; and
- Ensure that all public institutions can facilitate information queries, complaints and suggestions from diverse groups of PWDs regarding their experiences, concerns and needs via modes and formats that are most accessible to them.

11. REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

POLICY GOAL 11: To ensure that regional and international cooperation is fully pursued and leveraged for the full enhancement of the lives and experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 11.1 STRENGTHENING AND ENHANCING REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COOPERATION TO BETTER SUPPORT PWDs

- In partnership with local representative organisations serving PWDs in Barbados, work to strengthen and enhance collaborative relationships with other regional and international representative organisations to lead to:
 - Improved resource, knowledge and information sharing, sharing of best practices and training programmes, and improved capacity-building among these entities for the betterment of PWDs in the country;
 - Expanded mechanisms for advocacy at regional and international forums surrounding disability issues and rights of PWDs in the country;
 - Increased development of and access to a range of regional and international development programmes and interventions that are essential to the needs of PWDs in the country; and
 - Increased access to appropriate technical, economic/financial and other technological assistance (including the accessible and assistive technologies) for supporting PWDs in the country.
- Foster greater (or expand) collaborative arrangements and agreements with regional and international nations to further advance the cause of PWDs in the country;
- Provide ongoing support to regional and international initiatives that address key issues, concerns and challenges of PWDs in the country; and
- Create environments in which PWDs can actively attend and participate in various regional and international forums, discussions, and programmes addressing issues surrounding disabilities.

12. RESPECT FOR PRIVACY, HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

POLICY GOAL 12: To ensure the full recognition and protection of the right to privacy, home and family for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 12.1 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

- Engage in public education programmes on rights of PWDs with respect to the protection of their personal life from intrusion by others and the protection of information about oneself (targeted at diverse groups of residential communities, families, caregivers and institutions);
- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the right to privacy of PWDs is adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Confidential collection, storage and treatment of personal identifying information of PWDs (especially those collected by public service organisations, the National Registry of PWDs, and other databases gathered in private and NGO spaces);
 - Protection of private health-related and medical data on PWDs and their disabilities;
 - Protection of rehabilitation information on PWDs; and
 - Need for consent from PWDs prior to sharing of personal and sensitive data.
- Provide ongoing training on the right to privacy of PWDs, and the treatment and handling of personal, confidential data of PWDs, targeted at public service officers (e.g., social workers, care and health workers, emergency workers, administrative officers) whose responsibility is to gather, manage and interface with critical and sensitive data on PWDs in the country;
- Work closely with employers in different sectors (including sectors in which representative entities for PWDs exist) to ensure the right to privacy of PWDs in their organisations/employment context is properly recognised and protected through the:

- Crafting of relevant workplace policies/regulations governing the protection of personal information of PWDs (customers/clients and employees of organisations);
- Continuous training for workplace staff in the handling and management of information of PWDs; and
- Development of properly secured ICT systems used for gathering, storing and retrieving personal or confidential information of PWDs.

STRATEGY 12.2 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

- Engage in public education programmes to promote and educate PWDs, their families/caregivers, and the general public on the rights of PWDs in family life and relationships (including equal access to sexual and reproductive health care services; marriage, and building families, etc) and to combat related negative attitudes and stereo types;
- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the right to family and home life of PWDs is adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure equal access of PWDs to sexual and reproductive health-care services and family planning services;
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure parents with disabilities are provided with the necessary support and resources to engage in proper child-rearing responsibilities (e.g., family counselling, financial support, and personal assistance services), especially to prevent family separation; and
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the removal of discriminatory practices and other barriers facing PWDs seeking to adopt children or participate in foster care programmes/service.
- Provide ongoing training, on the right to home and family life of PWDs and on non-discrimination on the basis of disability, targeted at judicial officers, notaries, health care professionals, social workers and related professionals who work in sectors connected to and/or interface with home and family services, issues and related matters facing PWDs and other citizens.

13. STATISTICS AND DATA-COLLECTION ON DISABILITIES

POLICY GOAL 13: To ensure that the diverse needs, inputs and wider experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados are fully considered and incorporated into the collection, collation and analysis of statistical and research data aimed at enhancing the lives and experiences of persons with disabilities in Barbados.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 13.1 PRIORITISING THE NEEDS OF PWDs WITHIN STATISTICAL AND RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE COUNTRY

- Review and amend relevant legislation, regulations and supporting policies to ensure that existing national statistics, data-collection, and related projects and systems allow for:
 - Full inclusion and participation of PWDs in the country (including the national census, poverty assessments and standard of living surveys);
 - Full accessibility for PWDs (organised and executed in diverse accessible formats or modes); and
 - Confidentiality, respect for the rights of PWDs, and non-discrimination in the gathering, storing and use of information provided by PWDs.
- Prioritise gathering, collating, analysing and reporting of data and statistics on disabilities and PWDs to adequately inform policies, programmes and services for supporting PWDs in the country;
- Ensure a structured and standard system of guidelines and protocols, at the national and operational levels, that provide clear and full guidance on the appropriate use of statistical and data management processes and practices that take into account PWDs and their disabilities in the country;
- Provide ongoing training (including disability awareness and sensitivity training) to all statisticians, enumerators, and other research personnel on the treatment of and interfacing with PWDs in the field as well as the handling and management of their data;

- **Ensure that the national research and statistical data reporting on disabilities and PWDs is adequately disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant socio-economic categorisations; and**
- **Work closely with key organisations for and of PWDs to ensure a representative and wide reach of participation of PWDs in data-collection, statistical and research projects in the country.**

14. WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

POLICY GOAL 14: To ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all women and children with disabilities in Barbados (*due to their being more vulnerable to abuses and violations of their rights*) on all human rights and fundamental freedoms in order to assure their full development, advancement and empowerment.

PROPOSED POLICY STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

STRATEGY 14.1 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

- Engage in ongoing public education programmes, **targeting communities, families, institutions (especially those providing services to women), individuals and especially women with disabilities**, on the protection of all rights and freedoms of women with disabilities as well as their peculiar vulnerabilities in society inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Women with disabilities being more disproportionately disadvantaged in the cases of poverty, socio-economic deprivation, low or unequal pay, and unemployment (and underemployment);
 - Women with disabilities being more disproportionately represented in cases of sexual violence, abuse, exploitation, as well as gender-specific and disability-specific discrimination; and
 - Women with disabilities being more disproportionately affected by mental health risk factors (including depression), increased burden of care (with respect to children and caregiving responsibilities in family settings), and increased risk of physical disease (including both chronic illness and sexually transmitted infections).
- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedoms of women with disabilities are adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the explicit identification of and references to women with disabilities as a specific, vulnerable category of PWDs in Barbadian society;

- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure women with disabilities are specially targeted/reached within wider national action plans and strategies which seek to allocate/deploy socio-economic, sexual and reproductive health, and other psychosocial resources as well as eliminate risks associated with discrimination, abuse and violence facing women; and
- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the removal of discriminatory practices and other barriers facing women with disabilities seeking employment (or self-employment); sexual and reproductive health services; participation in certain types of occupations/careers; advancement (or more senior positions) in public or private organisations/settings; and fair and equitable remuneration.
- Work closely with representative organisations of PWDs and with women’s organisations to better guide the development of supporting policies and systems and the procurement of resources (human, financial, and technical) that specifically address the diverse and unique needs of women with disabilities as well as promote greater gender equality and women’s empowerment and participation in the country.

STRATEGY 14.2 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

- Engage in ongoing public education programmes, **targeting communities, families, institutions (especially those providing services to children), individuals, and especially children with disabilities**, on the protection of all rights and freedoms of children with disabilities as well as their peculiar vulnerabilities in society inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Children with disabilities (like women with disabilities) being more disproportionately represented as victims in cases of exploitation and discrimination;
 - Children with disabilities being more vulnerable to physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse as well as neglect in both private and public spaces;
 - Children with disabilities being more likely to end up in residential or institutionalised care settings due to the aforementioned vulnerabilities and increased burden of care being placed on ill-equipped parents/guardians; and
 - Children with disabilities being more disproportionately represented in cases of educational/academic exclusion, school-based underperformance (especially

among boys with disabilities), and are more likely to drop out of schools prematurely.

- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedoms of children with disabilities are adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the explicit identification of and references to children with disabilities as a specific, vulnerable category of PWDs in Barbadian society;
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure children with disabilities are specially targeted/reached within wider national action plans and strategies which seek to allocate/deploy socio-economic, sexual and reproductive health, and other psychosocial resources as well as eliminate risks associated with discrimination, abuse and violence facing children; and
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the removal of discriminatory practices and other barriers facing children and other youth with disabilities in need of proper family and child-care services; sexual and reproductive, and other related health care services (in cases of youth reaching the age of sexual consent); access to sound and inclusive educational/training opportunities (up to tertiary education); access to alternative family and community care (especially for those children without a conventional parental care system); and access to fair legal and justice outcomes, socio-economic and psychosocial support, and other resources, especially in cases in which poverty, abuse, violence and discrimination are evident.
- Work closely with representative organisations of PWDs and with children- and youth-based organisations to better guide the development of supporting policies and systems and the procurement of resources (human, financial, and technical) that specifically address the diverse and unique needs of children with disabilities as well as promote the respect, protection and fulfilment of the rights of children with disabilities in the country.

V. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Implementation Considerations and Recommendations

In order to ensure that the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities is implemented and executed to produce the desired results for all stakeholders, several facilitating conditions must be in place. These include but are not limited to:

- adequate and effective procurement and use of resources of all kinds;
- effective coordination, collaboration and communication with and between stakeholders;
- aggressive, timely and effective messaging of the Policy to ensure public support;
- strong partnerships between and among critical agencies and important stakeholders;
- a strong political will and commitment;
- a working consensus regarding the objectives to be accomplished;
- well-developed action plans and performance indicators;
- a strong coordinating body and an appropriate institutional framework within which decisions are made and action taken to realise the goals and strategies of the policy.

In light of the aforementioned, the following recommendations (which are consistent with Article 33 of the UNCRPD) are being made for serious consideration in guiding primary stakeholders of this Policy in the implementation process:

- Upon approval of the Policy, the establishment and active mobilisation of a mutually acceptable governance structure and institutional framework, comprising different tiers of oversight and working (sub)committees, action teams and relevant stakeholders for the coordination, management and operational rollout of the Policy and its strategies and activities;
- The development of formal reporting and operating protocols and standards governing collaborative relationships among the key implementing entities within the overall governance structure to inform and support successful implementation, monitoring and evaluation activities and ongoing transparency and accountability throughout the process;

- The establishment and publication of the appropriate, timely and clear channels of communication and information-sharing for the effective coordination (and collaborations) of the work of the different implementing mechanisms and other participating stakeholders in the Policy implementation process (especially for appropriate resource sharing and the elimination of duplication of efforts);
- The design and development of supporting implementation protocols, action plans and key performance indicators (KPIs) to guide the measurement, operationalisation and execution of the various policy strategies and activities on the ground;
- The adequate procurement and effective utilisation and allocation of critical resources (financial, technical, technological, and human) to various segments and phases of the implementation process to ensure sustainability and continuity of the various activities, programmes and interventions and important developments for the PWDs as informed by the Policy;
- The development of clear and transparent standards and protocols informing fair and equitable resource sharing practices among implementing and participating stakeholder entities and groups, on the ground, throughout the implementation process; and
- The assurance of the commitment and will of all involved and participating stakeholders, especially that of the political establishment, to the successful completion of the work of the Policy and the fulfilment of the key Policy objectives.

While the MPEA will be required to source and allocate the necessary resources to support the overall implementation effort over the next seven years, best practice recommendations warrant the need to leverage the collaborative and joint working arrangements with various stakeholders across various sectors of society. These collaborative arrangements and multi-sectoral partnerships will aid in pooling the needed resources in ways that facilitate the most effective and efficient coordination of the work of the Policy. **Appendix A** presents a list of best practice standards that underpins and guides the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluating **2023-2030 National Policy on Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities**. **Appendix B** provides a tentative implementation schedule to guide the implementing parties of this Policy concerning the aforementioned policy strategies and supporting activities/actions (across the fourteen thematic policy areas) over its seven-year life course (2023-2030).

Proposed Governance Structure and Mechanisms for Policy Implementation

The implementation of the Policy strategies and supporting activities, programmes and interventions is best coordinated and fulfilled using a multiple stakeholder/intersectoral approach involving several levels of execution. To permit successful coordination and implementation of this National Policy, a multi-tiered governance structure has been proposed below.

Tier 1: Coordinating and Implementing (Oversight) Committee

At the highest (or national) level, the MPEA will serve as the key oversight agency for guiding, coordinating and managing the total execution, monitoring and evaluation of work involved in the National Policy. However, given the competing and demanding responsibilities of the MPEA to manage other major policies and programmes within its remit, it is proposed that a multi-stakeholder entity or body be established to focus exclusively on the implementation work of the Policy's strategies, activities and related programmes to better serve the needs of the communities of PWDs in the country. Hence, upon formal approval of the Policy, this Oversight Body or Committee, supported by or consisting of key members of the **Barbados National Commission for Persons with Disabilities** (BNCPWD; consistent with Article 34 of UNCRPD), at the strategic level, will work closely with the Ministry to assume the responsibility of coordinating and overseeing the performance of a number of *top tier activities* inherent in the Policy's execution including (but not limited to):

- Defining and operationalising the broad policy strategies into specific, measurable and actionable programmes and activities under the various thematic headings;
- Identifying and recruiting of participating stakeholder entities and individuals who will be crucial implementing parties including different governmental ministries and agencies, private sector bodies and entities, civil society, community-based organisations and non-governmental organisations, families and communities, and PWDs;
- Identifying and clarifying the areas/units of responsibility for the various policy strategies and activities, timelines for execution, reporting lines and obligations of various implementing parties, and resource needs assessments and allocations;
- Locating and attracting the needed financial, technical, human and other resources, through approved government channels and mechanisms, to support the full implementation effort of the Policy; and

- Determining and establishing the necessary mechanisms, protocols and regulations for the operational and action planning work on the ground including those governing the operation of collaborative working arrangements among all parties and how they agree on the various priority programmes and activities and their execution, reporting responsibilities for different stakeholders, and the establishment of monitoring and evaluation procedures and plans for the implementation activities being conducted.

It is recommended that the Oversight Committee will have a committed Chairperson and supporting members who will meet on a monthly (or quarterly) basis to engage in the necessary planning, coordinating, and monitoring and evaluation activities of the Policy's rollout phase. Further articulation of the specifics of the overall mandate and operations of this Committee will be made clear upon final approval of the Policy.

Tiers 2 and 3: The Development and Execution of Collaborative Working Committees and Operational Action Teams for the National Policy for its Operational Rollout

To accompany the strategic oversight of the aforementioned Committee, the actual rollout of the Policy across its different policy dimensions and strategies has to be undertaken and supported by a well-functioning and dedicated operational structure. At the **middle or functional level** of the governance structure, a number of *inter-stakeholder, collaborative working subcommittees* will be established involving selected members from various government entities (departments, agencies, statutory bodies, and ministries), private sector, and other community-based organisations (including those directly connected with PWDs) and other sectors to support implementation across the different thematic or priority areas of the Policy (Tier 2). Each subcommittee, chaired by a member of the overarching Committee, will be responsible for a set of key policy priority areas and their companion objectives, strategies and activities. These inter-entity subcommittees will work directly with the relevant *on-the-ground action teams/groups, stakeholder communities and the targeted PWDs* (Tier 3 or the lowest level of implementation) to perform the operational or on-the-ground work including, but not limited to, the following:

- Finalising the specific action and resource allocation plans and remaining implementation activities for execution with key stakeholders and target audiences across short-term, medium-term and long-term phases;
- Mobilising and implementing the needed resources, mechanisms, and procedures for the execution of the various programmes, activities and interventions matched to key policies objectives and strategies;
- Working closely with the specific stakeholders and target audiences including PWDs and their representative organisations to ensure that implementation of programmes and activities is being conducted and coordinated effectively and efficiently;
- Gathering the needed monitoring and evaluation data to assess the success of the various programmes and activities on the ground as well as record and respond to any challenges/issues as needed; and
- Reporting to the overarching or oversight committee(s) in place on project execution activities, challenges and impacts.

Figure 1 shows a graphical representation of the proposed three-tier structure for the implementation and governance of the 2023-2030 National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities, spanning from the strategic to the operational levels. Figure 2 shows a more detailed breakdown of Tier 2 – **Functional Level or Subcommittee Structure** – which reports directly to the Oversight Committee. Tier 2 is represented by four (4) subcommittees, working horizontally with each other, to address a cross-section of thematic areas from the fourteen (14) policy priority areas (and their corresponding strategic recommendations and activities).

Figure 1

Proposed Implementation and Governance Structure for the Implementation of National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados

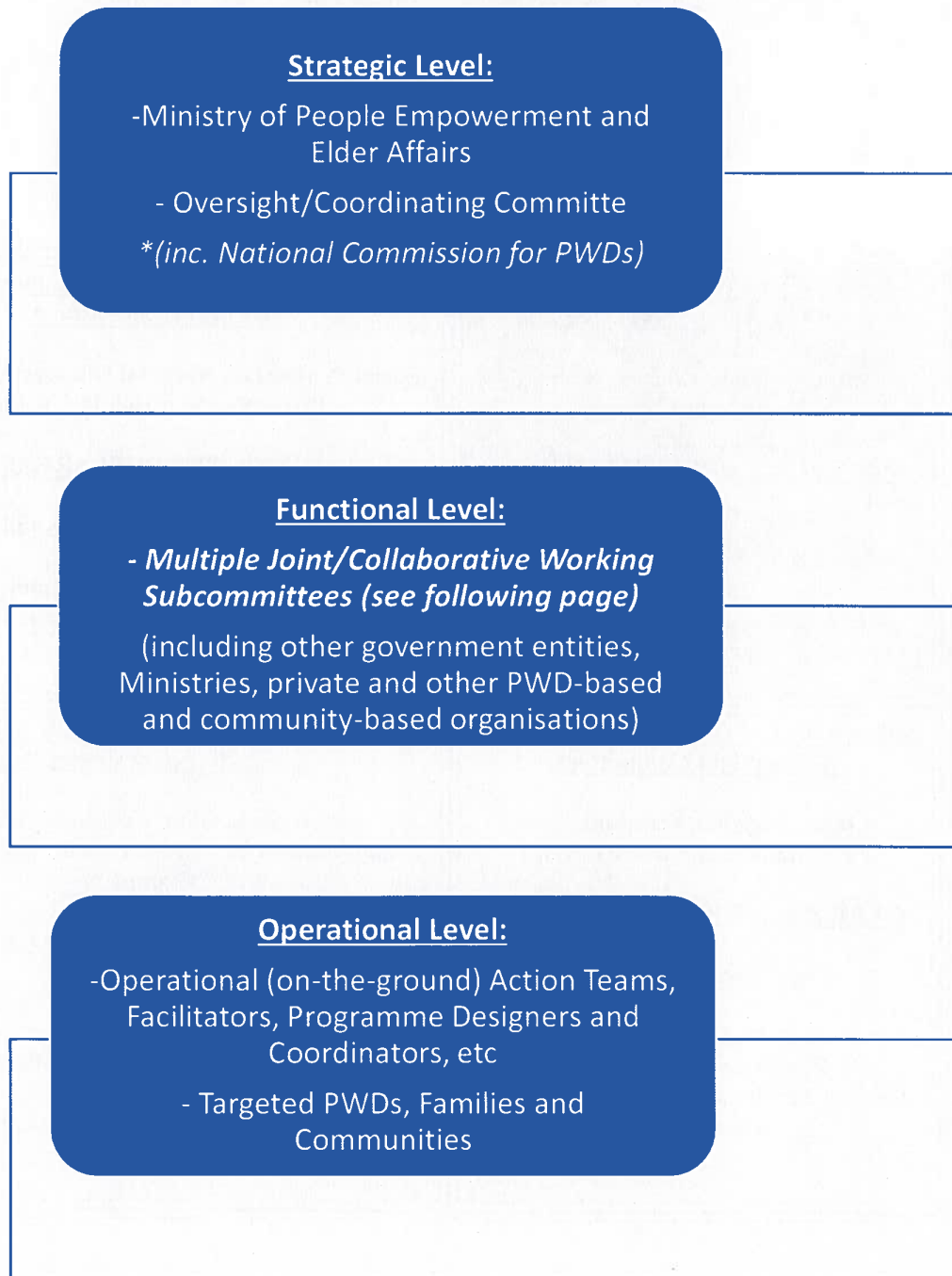


Figure 2

Further Breakdown of Functional-Level Subcommittee Structure

Proposed Breakdown of
Functional Level
(Working Subcommittees)

Subcommittee 1 (Chaired by a member of Oversight Committee)

(Accessibility, Education and Employment Group)

OVER POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

OF:

- Accessibility
- Education, Training and Lifelong Learning
- Employment, Work and Economic Participation

Subcommittee 2 (Chaired by a member of Oversight Committee)

(Social Protection, National Disaster/Emergency Protection and Health Group)

OVER PRIORITY AREAS

OF:

- Adequate Standard of Living and Social Protection
- Protection in Disasters and Emergencies
- Health, Habilitation and Rehabilitation

Subcommittee 3 (Chaired by a member of Oversight Committee)

(Justice, Rights, Freedoms and Participation in Society Group)

OVER POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

OF:

- Legal Recognition and Access to Justice
- Protection of Right to Life, Integrity and Freedoms and Liberties
- Respect for Privacy, Home and Family
- Participation in Society

Subcommittee 4 (Chaired by a member of Oversight Committee)

(Awareness, Data, Cooperative Relations, and Women and Children with Disabilities Group)

OVER PRIORITY AREA

OF:

- Awareness Building
- Regional and International Cooperation
- Statistics and Data-Collection on Disabilities
- Women and Children with Disabilities

VI. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Based on the implementation schedule presented in **Appendix B**, a comprehensive action plan with a monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed, upon final approval of this Policy, to ensure the successful monitoring and evaluation of the work and impacts of the Policy implementation effort. This plan will pay particular attention to the various priority areas of attention, with clearly articulated and specific proposed activities and programmes for execution (matched to key policy goals and strategies), timelines, implementing groups responsible for said activities and programmes, resource requirements, and expected deliverables or outputs. Using this action planning framework and supporting key performance indicators, the Oversight Committee (the central Ministry and the BNCPWD) will focus on the following activities:

- Monitoring and evaluating the implementation work and various phases of the execution of Policy and its impacts – i.e., the extent to which the policy has holistically responded to or addressed the critical needs of PWDs across the various priority areas of attention;
- Recording and documenting all actions and results emanating from the work of the policy implementation effort;
- Assessing and responding to anticipated and newly identified challenges and needs emerging from the implementation efforts;
- Re-evaluating the Policy, its core vision, policy goals, strategies and supporting programmes and activities over the next seven years; and
- Reviewing and revising of roles and responsibilities and accompanying mechanisms and resources associated with the various participating committees, structures and action teams actively involved in the implementation effort.

Key Monitoring and Evaluation Questions and Objectives for the National Policy

A guide of questions and objectives for assisting the execution of the monitoring and evaluation phase for the Policy is presented below. Figure 3 shows a general set of criteria for the monitoring and evaluation phase.

- To what extent were policy interventions (activities and programmes supporting policy strategies) implemented in flexible, practical and accessible ways that meet the diverse needs of PWDs?
- To what extent did diverse groups of PWDs actively participate and engage in the various policy interventions across the priority areas of attention within the Policy?
- How satisfied/dissatisfied were PWDs and other stakeholders with the overall implementation effort and the results of these interventions?
- Over the short-, medium-, and long-term, did the policy interventions and strategies meet their established objectives in producing the benefits and outcomes under the various priority areas of attention?
- What were key challenges and shortcomings of the implementation effort and the resultant policy interventions that require treatment and enhancement?

Figure 3
Evaluation Criteria for the 2023-2030 National Policy⁵



Table 3, below, draws a distinction between the monitoring and evaluation functions for those responsible for these activities in supporting the overall implementation of the National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities in Barbados. The information within this table should guide the relevant monitoring and evaluation professionals, officers and their supporting teams in the performance of their responsibilities and duties over the life course of the Policy execution effort.

⁵ **Source:** The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation - <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Table 3
Comparison and Contrast of Monitoring and Evaluation for the National Policy for Improving the Lives of PWDs

	Monitoring	Evaluation
Timing: When is it done for the Policy?	Continuous basis; over the lifetime of the implementation	Periodically; end of implementation; can be done annually (or at the end of seven-year cycle of the Policy)
Scope: What information is gathered?	Day-to-day implementation activities; resource usage; outputs and progress indicators	Assessment of overall impacts and outputs in relation to policy objectives for different priority areas
Main participants: Who will be involved in execution?	Policy implementation members/groups; involved PWDs; governance and action committees	External and internal evaluators; facilitators; programme and project staff and users
Process: How will it be carried out?	Regular meetings (monthly or quarterly), interviews/surveys and other primary data-gathering activities	Periodic meetings (at the end of major implementation phases), interviews/surveys, secondary data and other data gathering activities
Written outputs: What is produced?	Regular progress reports/updates to management/committees	Written evaluation reports on outcomes (successful vs. unsuccessful) and key reasons; oral presentation on the results and recommendations for enhancement
Results: How are results used?	To improve the implementation effectiveness and efficiency; to make appropriate changes to the planning and implementation efforts; used as input to evaluation	To determine the success of impacts on targeted populations; adjust policy objectives and strategies; and make decisions about the future of the Policy

VII. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The National Policy for Improving the Lives of Persons with Disability requires much work for the successful implementation of its embedded strategies, programmes and activities. The execution of the same must be undertaken in a decentralised and collaborative fashion, permitting the respective implementing parties to channel their energies and attention on matters specific to executing and monitoring key strategies and companion activities on the ground. Participating stakeholder groups must be given clear statements about their portfolio of activities, associated roles and responsibilities, as well as the outcomes they are expected to deliver.

Further to the aforementioned, there is a need for a clear and robust institutional framework that mandates and provides for effective leadership and coordination of the national effort as a strategic response to the challenges inherent in managing projects and programmes of this nature, especially where resources are constrained or limited. Effective leadership and coordination are therefore critical to the task of minimising incompatible courses of action by different participating organisations, and providing course direction and redirection as might be required. All implementing parties tied to this Policy are required to avoid duplication of effort, promote coherence and resource sharing among the different participating organisations and agencies, while supporting them as they take action to meet their respective remits and obligations to the Policy execution effort.

The MPEA, in partnership with its oversight bodies, will be required to mobilise the effort necessary for the successful rollout of the different implementation strategies and activities and ensure that suitable resources and mechanisms are in place to promote meaningful collaboration with and among all relevant participating and target stakeholders. Best practice requires the Ministry to provide adequate and timely information to all stakeholders about the types of mechanisms it will employ to achieve the above outcomes. Effective and ongoing communication with key stakeholders, including targeted PWDs in the country, throughout the entire process from formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation to periodic reporting is essential.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the implementation of the strategies and resultant activities proposed in this Policy depends on the availability of resources – human, physical, financial, technical and technological. Adequate budgetary arrangements for these categories of resources should therefore be made for this purpose. The Ministry may wish to work closely with other organisations involved in the implementation process to obtain and sustain other levels of resource support as might be required for the implementation process.

In line with best practices on policy development and execution exercises of this nature, periodic reviews are recommended for evaluating the extent to which the Policy and its implementation activities are fulfilling its overall goals and objectives, and thereby creating opportunities for taking needed corrective action. These reviews also enable policy makers and stakeholders to reflect on emerging developments within the dynamic environments in which PWDs live and function as well as to take appropriate action to accommodate them if these said developments or changes threaten or undermine goal accomplishment, or otherwise offer opportunities not hitherto foreseen or contemplated.

In conclusion, a country-wide effort is required for the successful execution of this Policy over the next seven years (and beyond). This effort also warrants the full commitment and participation of several public, community-based and private sector entities and stakeholders. Their involvement in the process will produce the desired outcomes if there is ongoing dialogue between and among them, if activities are well coordinated and if there is genuine collaboration among them. Most importantly, all groups of PWDs must be engaged at all levels and stages as primary agents in this entire process in ways that allow them to meaningfully inform and shape the decisions, strategies and activities that directly affect them, their communities, and their futures.

APPENDIX A: BEST PRACTICES CHECKLIST FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

The checklist below was taken directly and modified from an international best practice report (**Key elements for developing ageing [and other types of] policies in Asia and the Pacific, 2021**)⁶ and identifies key criteria/elements for guiding successful policymaking and implementation processes targeting different kinds of vulnerable or at-risk populations (e.g., the elderly, persons with disabilities) at a national level. It should serve to guide the execution efforts connected with the present **National Policy on Improving the Lives of Persons with Disabilities (2023-2030)**.

1. Establishing institutional arrangements

Actions

- ✓ Individuals, government ministries and/or other bodies responsible for persons with disabilities within the country and for leading on policy and its implementation are set out
- ✓ Responsibilities and functions of the above are clearly outlined alongside how coordination between them will be managed
- ✓ Clear lines of accountability for the above are established
- ✓ Persons with Disabilities and key stakeholders are represented within institutional arrangements, ensuring they have voice and influence in the policy process
- ✓ Human and financial resources for the functioning of institutional arrangements are secured

2. Leadership and planning for the policy development process

Actions

- ✓ Roles and key tasks of individuals, ministries and other bodies in the policy-making process are set-out
- ✓ Leadership for the policy-development process is clear
- ✓ How coordination will be managed both across relevant institutions (horizontal coordination) and between different levels of government (vertical coordination) is established
- ✓ Timeline for each stage of the policy development process is set-out and agreed
- ✓ Funding and human resources for the policy development process are identified and agreed
- ✓ Plans for securing political support from the highest levels, alongside human and financial resources for policy implementation are identified

3. Engaging key stakeholders in the policy-making process

Actions

- ✓ Stakeholder mapping conducted considering both primary and secondary stakeholders

⁶https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/knowledge-products/SDD_working_paper_key_elements_ageing_20211222.pdf

- ✓ A plan for how you will engage key stakeholders throughout the policy-making process is agreed, and mechanisms identified
- ✓ Responsibility for the inclusion and engagement of stakeholders throughout the process is assigned
- ✓ The roles of different stakeholder groups in the policy-making process re outlined
- ✓ Resources to support meaningful engagement of stakeholders, including more marginalised groups of persons with disabilities, are secured

4. Reviewing and mapping existing legal and policy frameworks

Actions

- ✓ Existing policy and legislation related to disabilities and persons with disabilities and development are reviewed and mapped, noting lines of responsibilities for law and policy
- ✓ Overlaps, gaps and synergies across policy and legislation are identified
- ✓ Rights framework in country is mapped and gaps in relation to persons with disabilities are identified

5. Conducting situational analysis on persons with disabilities

Actions

- ✓ Working with stakeholders, existing data is reviewed and mapped, with information on the level of disaggregation available indicated.
- ✓ Data gaps/data needed to support a comprehensive situational analysis on disabilities and persons with disabilities are identified in consultation with stakeholders, considering current and future needs, trends, and both qualitative and quantitative data
- ✓ Plans for obtaining missing data are identified, as possible.
- ✓ Human and financial resources to support the collection and analysis of the required data is identified and agreed, ensuring age, sex, gender, disability, socio-economic group and geography disaggregation as a minimum.
- ✓ Clear processes and principles for how data will inform policy development are agreed
- ✓ All data is made publicly available

6. Identifying policy instruments: laws, policies and action plans/strategies

Actions

- ✓ National policy, plan/strategy, and legislation is considered and necessary instruments are identified
- ✓ How policy will be mainstreamed into population-wide development processes is considered

7. Agreeing principles and vision for society for persons with disabilities

Actions

- ✓ Principles and vision for a society dedicated to improving the lives of persons with disabilities are agreed in line with national, regional and international legal and policy frameworks

- ✓ Definitions of ‘disability’ and ‘person with disability’ are agreed
- ✓ Target group(s) for policy is agreed
- ✓ How policy will protect and promote human rights of persons with disabilities is outlined
- ✓ The shared aspirations for persons with disabilities are agreed and outlined
- ✓ How responsibility for the wellbeing of persons with disabilities will be shared among the state, the individual, the family and communities is considered
- ✓ The role of different sectors in the Policy is outlined
- ✓ Ambitions for promoting equality, nondiscrimination, accessibility and inclusion are articulated

8. Developing strategic and holistic policy

Actions

- ✓ The results of the legal and policy framework mapping, the situational analysis and the vision and principles for persons with disabilities are used to support the identification of policy goals/objectives
- ✓ Issues affecting persons with disabilities are considered holistically to inform integrated approaches/interventions, and are informed by national, regional and international frameworks
- ✓ Policy adopts a life-course approach to the treatment of persons with disabilities
- ✓ Policy is underpinned by the commitment to nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, to support security, health and wellbeing across the life-course
- ✓ Policy adopts a gender sensitive and transformative approach and promotes gender equality at all ages, including in later life
- ✓ Policy is mainstreamed and integrated with population-wide policy, including national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, disaster risk reduction plans, disability strategies, health and care policies, and social protection plans.
- ✓ Policy takes a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to responding to the needs of persons with disabilities, identifying opportunities for synergy and joint action to be leveraged between population-wide policy and disability-specific policy
- ✓ Policies adopted are coherent and streamlined with wider policy processes, ensuring they collectively contribute to the achievement of overall goals

9. Planning for implementation

Actions

- ✓ A policy implementation plan is developed and includes:
- ✓ Actions needed to achieve the policy goals and objectives, and timeline for achieving them
- ✓ Roles of different stakeholders in policy implementation (local, national, public sector, private section, voluntary sector etc)
- ✓ Details of who has overall responsibility for policy implementation and accountability mechanisms
- ✓ Financial and human resources to be made available to support policy implementation
- ✓ Activity to raise awareness of the policy goals, objectives and actions
- ✓ Details on coordination mechanisms

- ✓ Methods for securing political will at highest levels
- ✓ Outlines additional instruments needed (legislation, regulation, guidance)
- ✓ Details of transparency and accountability mechanisms for policy implementation

10. Establishing monitoring and evaluation frameworks and processes

Actions

- ✓ Responsibility for data collection and knowledge and information management is agreed and details of how accountability and oversight of this function will be managed are outlined
- ✓ A plan for the regular review of implementation and impact of policy is in place, outlining the roles and responsibilities of different actors and how stakeholders will participate
- ✓ The data needed to provide a baseline and to regularly monitor the impact of policy in different areas and on different groups of persons with disabilities is agreed, including specific output and outcome measures for each policy objective/goals.
- ✓ Transparency and accountability mechanisms are agreed for monitoring and evaluation, including participatory and consultative mechanisms that include key stakeholders, information on how the outcomes of monitoring and evaluation and related data will be made publicly available and widely disseminated, and mechanisms to ensure that learnings are captured and fed-into policy-making and practice to ensure improvement.
- ✓ Human and financial resources to support the monitoring and evaluation process are secured.

11. Finalising and communicating policy

Actions

- ✓ The process for finalising the policy is agreed at the beginning of the policy development process, ensuring estimates of the time this will take are taken into account, leaving room for possible delays
- ✓ Those with responsibilities for the policy implementation are well informed and prepared for what happens when the policy is finalised.
- ✓ The policy document includes information on the policy-making process, including stakeholder engagement, the situation analysis, vision and principles design, etc.
- ✓ The public is well informed about the policy and the measures that it includes. Public consultation process and/or communications have raised awareness of the policy and disseminate information at all levels.
- ✓ Policy launched by or endorsed at the highest possible level to help secure political will
- ✓ Key stakeholders are actively engaged in communications planning.

APPENDIX B: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: SHORT-, MEDIUM- AND LONG-TERM SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

Appendix B provides a tentative implementation schedule for the initiation and execution of all strategic recommendations and accompanying activities, across the fourteen (14) policy priority areas of the National Policy over its seven-year life cycle. This Implementation Schedule was designed to operate in phases based on following criteria/classification:

- **Short-Term:** Strategic recommendations and activities that are initiated within the first two years of the National Policy being approved (i.e., within the period of 2023-2025; Years 1 and 2);
- **Medium-Term:** Strategic recommendations and activities that are initiated within the period of three to five years of the National Policy being approved (i.e., within the period of 2026-2028; Years 3, 4 and 5)
- **Long-Term:** Strategic recommendations and activities that are initiated within the period of five to seven years of the National Policy being approved (i.e., within the period of 2028-2030; Year 5, 6 and 7)

(N.B: The actual duration of activities and whether activities will be ongoing priorities will be decided on by implementing parties and stakeholders)

After the presentation of the Implementation Schedule (below), an Action Planning Template Form (on the final Page of this Policy Document) is presented (for future population by implementing subcommittees/parties) to support the initiation of the execution phase of the strategic activities of the National Policy.

ACCESSIBILITY

STRATEGY 1.1 FACILITATING ACCESS TO THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct country-wide accessibility assessments of various forms of physical infrastructure across the country (including government/state-owned buildings, public buildings, outdoor and indoor facilities, roads/roadways, pathways, corridors, etc) to identify key barriers and obstacles to accessibility affecting PWDs in the country
- In collaboration with PWDs and relevant representative organisations/entities, develop and/or adopt best practice accessibility standards and supporting regulations for informing and guiding the design, construction and/or reconstruction of public buildings, facilities and other physical infrastructure across the country
- Expose those responsible for and tasked with the design, construction, maintenance and servicing of various forms of public buildings, facilities and other physical infrastructure to the range of best practice accessibility standards and practices through greater investments in national promotional/awareness building activities, educational and training opportunities, and other developmental initiatives

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Based on country-wide accessibility assessments in public buildings, facilities and other physical infrastructure, eliminate key obstacles and barriers to accessibility in order to meet the diverse physical accessibility needs of PWDs; some of the main enhancements for accessibility should include:
 - Implementation of general universal design features within and outside public buildings and facilities;
 - Provision of ramps for access to wheelchairs and related mobility devices by PWDs as well as automatic operations for certain main entrance/exit doors;
 - Offering multiple visual and auditory systems/prompts on public crossroads and related building sites for those who are visually impaired, blind, hard of hearing and deaf; and
 - Enabling accessibility features within customer interfacing systems and equipment (e.g., ATM systems) present in commercial spaces.

- Incorporate accessibility standards and regulations into the National Building Code(s) for the design and construction of physical infrastructure in the country (as well as incorporate these into monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to continually ascertain compliance with implemented standards across the board)

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision of accessible physical infrastructure for PWDs in the country

STRATEGY 1.2 FACILITATING ACCESS TO HOUSING AND OTHER FORMS OF ACCOMMODATION

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Assess existing national-level and governmental policies and regulations on the provision of housing and other forms of accommodation to identify and eliminate accessibility barriers and obstacles facing PWDs in the country
- Review existing housing and other accommodations, constructed or provided, for PWDs to ensure compliance with adequate design specifications informing accessibility
- Promote (and mandate) best practice accessibility standards associated with universal design principles in the development and management of housing and other accommodations to better meet the needs of PWDs in the country
- Provide more accessible and affordable housing programmes and opportunities for PWDs in the country through several arrangements and mechanisms including (but not limited to):
 - o Greater supply of subsidised housing arrangements (and rental assistance) for PWDs in need;
 - o Greater allocation and quotas for special housing arrangements available to PWDs in need;
 - o Greater supply of supportive housing, assisted and independent living facilities, and housing rehabilitation programmes for PWDs (inclusive of special residential provisions for PWDs who are unable to take care of themselves);
 - o Greater supply of home purchase initiatives to better support PWDs seeking to purchase and own their own homes/properties;
 - o Greater supply of home maintenance and repair services to better support PWDs seeking to maintain, upgrade and/or service their residential facilities/homes;
 - o Greater supply of socio-economic and financial support for residential living for PWDs in need to better assist them with meeting their housing-related (and other) expenses (e.g., utilities/rent; accessibility updates).

MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM (MAY START 3 TO 5 YEARS OR 5 TO 7 YEARS)

- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision of housing and accommodation for PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 1.3 FACILITATING ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct country-wide accessibility assessments of public transportation services to identify and address key obstacles and barriers in accessibility facing PWDs in the country
- Introduce a disability parking permit system to ensure that disability parking is utilised only by PWDs as well as adequately enforce all disability parking arrangements in public spaces across the island

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Based on accessibility assessments, develop and promote accessibility standards for public transportation services that facilitate greater accessibility to PWDs inclusive of the following reforms:
 - o Incorporation of assistive devices and mechanisms on vehicles and transport-based facilities (e.g., stoplights, crosswalks, bus stop sites) to meet the needs of PWDs with mobility or orthopedic impairments (e.g., those with wheelchairs, canes and walking assistive tools); those who are blind and those with visual impairments (e.g., use of audio lights and systems); those who are deaf or hard of hearing (e.g., use of visual cues/systems and signage;); including alert system safety features for emergency situations; etc
 - o Provision of accessible and user-friendly public information about any transportation-related service or facility, in different formats (electronic; paper-based; visual and audio formats; Braille, etc), and is supported by adaptive technology that can assist various groups of PWDs;
 - o Provision of specialised training of transportation service providers to better inform and support how they interact with, communicate and respond to PWDs in public settings (and within their vehicles) as well as managing and working with the various forms of accessibility equipment and devices on their transportation units; and
 - o Assist and support private sector providers of transportation with key accessibility modifications to their vehicles through a range of financial and technical incentives and resources.

- Provide an efficient, affordable (or free) and specialised National Public Transport Service with the capacity to better respond to and meet the transportation needs of various groups of PWDs in the country
- Enhance the accessibility and supply of transportation vehicles and related services (that are typically used for PWDs) from government-owned and public service entities to better support the transportation needs of various groups of PWDs in the country
- Facilitate greater accessibility in inter-country transport services and facilities (inclusive of airports/seaports) for PWDs engaging in inter-country travel

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Introduce special exemptions, concessions and other incentives to better support PWDs in making their own transportation vehicles or units fully accessible to their needs
- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision of public transportation services for PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 1.4 FACILITATING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Assess existing systems and processes for the design, coordination and distribution of various forms of information and communications (at national, community and institutional levels) – inclusive of private sector driven and governmental ICT policies and practices - to identify and address key obstacles and barriers in accessibility facing PWDs in the country
- Work closely with private sector, community-based entities and other public sector organisations (including corporate/commercial entities, government offices, educational institutions, essential service providers, among others) to adopt and implement appropriate accessibility standards, guidelines and practices to better support the provision of more accessible ICTs and related services for PWDs in the country

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Through the development of a *National Accessible Information and Communications Plan* (and consistent with provisions with international best practices and treaties of which Barbados is a signatory – e.g., Marrakesh Treaty), manage and support the implementation of all forms of accessibility in the information and communications inclusive of:
 - Conversion of existing documents and other materials into diverse accessible formats for PWDs
 - Enhancing the accessibility of digital assets (including content, projects, digital services, apps, websites, etc) and provision of digital accessibility training to providers and stakeholders in various sectors;
 - Provision of support for information and communications providers and users through the purchases (or via funding resources) of conversion and recording systems as well as other types of assistive technologies which convert, translate and disseminate information into more accessible ways as well as through the offering of the needed education and training for providers and consumers to interact with the same technologies and outputs

- o Provision of a range of communication disability training services for all key providers, stakeholders in various sectors, and general members of the public to enhance the ability to effectively communicate and interact with certain categories of persons with disabilities (e.g. those who deaf and hard of hearing as well as those with certain intellectual or cognitive disabilities)

- o Provision of human resource support persons – *translators, interpreters, and other accessibility-trained professionals* – to better facilitate accessibility-type support in information and communications

- o Development of protocols, regulations and standards for governing, monitoring and evaluating the use/consumption and management of accessible information among parties and institutions to better support PWDs

- Incentivise and support private and public sector (and other entities) in their efforts to make their own information and communications (and related ICT practices) more accessible to PWDs in the country

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Enforce nation-wide compliance with accessibility standards in the provision and dissemination of information and communications for PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 1.5 FACILITATING ACCESS TO TECHNICAL AIDS, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONAL MOBILITY RESOURCES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct nation-wide needs assessments of PWDs in the country regarding their resource needs in terms of technical aids and equipment (as well as personal mobility resources) for better supporting their diverse disability-related needs
- Expand (and modernise) the existing base or supply of technical aids and equipment as well as personal mobility resources at government-owned/public service entities to better support the diverse needs of PWDs in the country
- Offer ongoing training in mobility skills to PWDs (through partnerships with training institutions and related representative partners of PWDs) to ensure personal mobility with the greatest possible independence

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Develop programmes and services in partnership with relevant agencies and stakeholders in both private and community-based sectors to procure and provide the needed technical aids and equipment, personal mobility resources, and related training, at a subsidised cost or affordable rate, to PWDs in the country
- Work closely with suppliers of devices, aids, assistive technologies, and required devices for personal mobility to ensure that these resources are more affordable, accessible and agreeable to all PWDs in the country (accompanied by the application of suitable incentives to suppliers/retailers)
- Provide tax exemptions (and other cost-based incentives) to PWDs seeking access to various types of technical aids and equipment to better support their disability-related needs – including disability-assistive and adaptive devices, personal mobility resources, software, training and other accompanying services
- Expand the capacity of professionals/stakeholders involved in the provision of personal mobility skills and other technical aid services for PWDs through the increased/enhanced offering of needed human resource training, financial and other technical resources.

ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

STRATEGY 2.1 PROVISION OF ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct comprehensive needs assessments of all PWDs in order to determine specific needs/gaps across social, physical, psychological, economic/financial, and other needs-based dimensions as well as ascertain their current standard of living in the country
- Measure the results of comprehensive needs assessments of PWDs against a situational analysis of various categories of social (and other essential) services and institutional service providers within the country to determine limitations, capacity constraints and other shortfalls that need to be addressed to meet the demand for services by PWDs in the country
- Develop and maintain a nation-wide registry/database (or National Registry) of PWDs, essential service providers, and representative organisations to aid in national policy- and decision-making and resultant programmes/initiatives to better meet the socio-economic needs of PWDs in the country
- Enhance and expand key social and other essential services (within the government/public services sector) targeted at PWDs to better respond to and meet their diverse needs in the country in the following areas:
 - Poverty alleviation programmes and interventions for PWDs living without basic amenities (and those below an adequate standard of living);
 - Various national assistance grants, in-kind and monetary benefits (e.g., bill and utility payment assistance, food and clothing assistance, school supplies), and other financial assistance programmes for PWDs in need;
 - Necessary disability-related aids, tools and assistive equipment for PWDs in need of these resources;
 - Special transportation services for PWDs in need;
 - Meals services (and delivery services) for PWDs in need;
 - Respite care services (in-home, out-of-home and emergency respite care) and other related special care services (e.g., day care facilities, recreational centres offering physical exercise and other recreational activities) for PWDs in need and for their caregivers;

- Accessibility modifications/upgrade services made to their residential dwelling units.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Work closely with communities and households in which PWDs live and operate to develop and provide financial support programmes, services and resources to respond to diverse socio-economic needs of PWDs at the community level (inclusive of food and basic essential items, utility and rent payments, and other socio-economic provisions);
- In light of the burden of care on informal caregivers of dependents with severe impairments across various communities, develop and coordinate a **‘Caregivers of the PWDs Support Programme (covering financial, technical, physical, educational/training and other resource support)** which will include:
 - (a) an assessment of informal caregivers’ needs and other demands associated with care of PWDs in homes and communities;
 - (b) a response plan/strategy articulating clear documentation of best practice responses/solutions aimed at supporting caregivers in need of assistance or resources; and
 - (c) an executable action plan for the deployment/allocation of the needed support, resources and other forms of assistance to informal caregivers of the PWDs in homes and communities.
- Review and consider the adoption of other legal mechanisms such as Legal Guardianship [and Enduring Power of Attorney] (complementary to the facility of Power of Attorney) to better enhance the care of PWDs with mental incapacity and other future planning instruments to support the different categories of PWDs in need of care in communities and institutions-
 - e.g., Supported Decision-Making which is used to provide decision-making support to certain types of PWDs without removing complete autonomy from them; and
 - Life Care plans to assist in the future care planning for PWDs even after the death of caregivers.
- Work closely with representative organisations serving PWDs to support and bolster their capacities to respond to social and economic needs of PWDs in their membership and communities (through the provision and allocation of resources, programmes and other incentives to these organisations).

STRATEGY 2.2 PROVISION OF NECESSARY FORMS OF SOCIAL PROTECTION

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM (MAY START WITHIN 2 YEARS OR 3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Conduct a full review of the existing social protection programmes and services in government and public services sector alongside a comprehensive needs assessment of PWDs regarding their social protection needs in the country;
- Based on the review of existing social protection programmes/services and the comprehensive needs assessment of PWDs in the country, develop and implement a plan of action to enhance and expand these programmes/services within the government and public services sector (including National Insurance Scheme and other national assistance/welfare agencies) ensure that all PWDs in need have access to adequate forms and levels of social protection, inclusive of:
 - Ensuring adequate retirement and other social security benefits (old-age pensions, invalidity benefits/pensions, mobility grants, health insurance benefits) for PWDs in need (especially, addressing key barriers to eligibility to certain benefits or other social protection services based on disabilities);
 - Creating systems with social security mechanisms that allow for different categories of PWDs to be fairly assessed for certain types of benefits and have access to the most suitable benefits based on their needs;
 - Restructuring of the policy of automatic discontinuation of invalidity benefits for PWDs who secure employment to allow for an alternative assessment criterion and mechanism that can be applied on case-by-case basis;
 - Provision of rehabilitation services to enable PWDs to resume employment (in cases where persons in the labour market become disabled during their life course); and
 - Enabling greater access to income support benefits and services for PWDs in need.
- Work closely with public, private and community-based stakeholders and related essential services providers to review and augment their own social protection systems and other financial and insurance services targeted at PWDs in the country (based on current needs assessments); these enhancements to these systems and services should include:
 - Eliminating accessibility constraints and barriers within the onerous application and other customer-facing processes (e.g., inaccessible over-the-counter/in-person transactions; inaccessible ATMs, inaccessible online banking services; processes

requiring signatures in inaccessible formats) at insurance and financial institutions in Barbados;

- Reviewing and restructuring eligibility criteria and other requirements for accessing insurance and financial services by PWDs and removing unnecessary barriers in accessing essential insurance and financial services by PWDs in the country;
- Implementing disability awareness and sensitivity training for service providers in the financial and insurance sector and related personnel to better respond to and meet the needs of PWDs seeking services at their institutions/business sites;
- Supporting and incentivising the development of specific insurance and financial services and products specially designed for and targeted at PWDs to better respond their diverse needs; and
- Reviewing all banking, financial, and insurance practices, policies and procedures to ensure that all forms of discriminatory practices against PWDs are eliminated and that reasonable accommodations (where possible) are made to better accommodate them.

AWARENESS BUILDING

STRATEGY 3.1 DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL AWARENESS BUILDING CAMPAIGN

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS) – TO BE ONGOING

- In collaboration with relevant private, public and community-based stakeholders, design and implement a nation-wide structured disability awareness campaign that will be conducted across all sectors of society; this national campaign will serve to (among other things):
 - Provide wider public awareness and education to the public on different categories of disabilities (including lesser known and invisible disabilities), PWDs, and their rights and freedoms of PWDs in the country;
 - Enhance public awareness and education about the National Policy and its core nature, strategies, and activities for implementation;
 - Raise public awareness on the diverse challenges, needs and related concerns and experiences of PWDs including accessibility barriers, experiences of prejudice and discrimination, violations of rights, and their lack or limited access to essential services, opportunities and other resources; and
 - Increase general disability awareness and sensitivity training and education (including communication disability training – e.g. sign language, speech and language therapy techniques, lipreading/speechreading training) for members of the public to improve their attitudes, views and interactions with PWDs in the country.
- Develop and deploy a range of educational and informational materials and resources about PWDs and diverse categories of disabilities in various spaces (online and offline) to ensure all categories of the public can easily access and consume these materials/informational sources; and
- Work to create and execute a range of public awareness, educational and attitude change programmes, initiatives and related content via the traditional and new media (in partnership with Media stakeholders) to enhance general public awareness and acceptance of PWDs in the country.

STRATEGY 3.2 DESIGN AND DEPLOYMENT OF TARGETED NATIONAL AWARENESS AND EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS) – TO BE ONGOING

- Design and execute targeted awareness building and educational programming across residential communities (especially among those communities in which PWDs live) to promote general awareness and education regarding disabilities, PWDs, their rights and freedoms, and related Policy implementation matters in the country;
- Design and execute targeted programming at all levels of the educational system (pre-primary to tertiary levels) to promote general awareness regarding disabilities, PWDs, their rights and freedoms, and related Policy implementation matters in the country
- Design and execute targeted programming at all levels of the employment sector (across private, public and NGO sectors) to promote general awareness regarding disabilities, PWDs, their rights and freedoms, and related Policy implementation matters in the country;
- Sensitise the Media and related stakeholders in their industry on disability-related topics and the use of appropriate terms in the conduct of their work in the country; and
- Provide the necessary awareness building programming to build capacity among PWDs and their representative organisations.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

STRATEGY 4.1 FACILITATING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION, LEARNING SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES (IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE NATIONAL REFORM AGENDA FOR EDUCATION IN BARBADOS AND THE 2022-2027 STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGICAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING)

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Develop and maintain a comprehensive Registry or related data management system for gathering, storing and maintaining, and extracting essential information on all children and adult learners with disabilities in the country to better inform and guide educational planning, policy-making and interventions at the national level; this System should allow for the following:
 - o Existence of clear standard definitions, descriptions and criteria on different types of disabilities (ranging from physical to intellectual and developmental in nature) with specified best practice treatments and interventions for educators/administrators;
 - o Gathering and storing of essential information on different types of learners of disabilities across the educational system;
 - o Gathering and storing of essential demographic, educational, and competency-based (including certifications/qualifications) information on all learners with disabilities across the educational system;
 - o Gathering and storing of essential information on the various private and public educational institutions that cater to children and adult learners with disabilities in the country (including the state of their educational services and wider learning environment);
 - o Gathering and storing of essential information on documented needs, challenges and other experiences of learners with disabilities across the educational system; and
 - o Gathering and storing of key educational activities, interventions, support programmes, learning resources, and other relevant services that can be relayed to educators/administrators and learners with disabilities in the system.

- Develop an expanded base of educational administrators, teachers/lecturers (including teacher aids for PWDs), and relevant support staff - at all levels of the educational system - through strengthening their capabilities/competencies to design and deliver high-quality, disability-inclusive education to adequately meet the demands and needs of the various populations of PWDs

- Strengthen and enhance the existing educational policies and regulations to better recognise and cater to diverse educational needs of different groups of children and adult learners with disabilities in the educational system (from pre-primary to tertiary levels), translating to:
 - Policies and regulations that carefully define and cater to specific groups of disabilities with clear and explicit criteria for their measurements, diagnoses and assessments
 - Policies and regulations that facilitate and mandate *inclusivity* and *equity* (as well as non-discriminatory practices) across the board for PWDs in the system
 - Policies and regulations that inform and guide the equitable allocation of resources (financial, human, physical and technical resources) to better support PWDs in the system

- In partnership with the Ministry of Education, Technological and Vocational Training (METVT), conduct sector-wide assessments of the existing educational system (pre-primary to tertiary levels; inclusive of learners with disabilities and the teaching/educational staff; legislation and related policies) to identify and eliminate barriers and obstacles facing children and adult learners with disabilities in the country - this assessment should involve the following strategic actions:
 - Review existing curricula – i.e., the accessibility of course materials (diversity of content), inclusivity of teaching and learning techniques/tools and environments, individualised lesson and specialised development plans and assessment methodologies as well as how these elements are delivered within the system from pre-primary to tertiary levels – to thoroughly assess and determine their overall accessibility, inclusivity and adequacy for accommodating children and adult learners with disabilities in the system
 - Review diagnostic and assessment (and special admissions) criteria, procedures and other processes for assessing children and other learners with disabilities at Ministry and school/institutional levels (including public and private schools) to identify any barriers/constraints
 - Assess the supply and allocation of appropriate and accessible teaching and learning resources (including the physical environments, ICTs and digital tools, audiobooks, accessible learning platforms, and other assistive tools) to ensure

- greater accommodation for and catering to children and adult learners with disabilities across the various levels of the educational system
 - o Evaluate the existing supply and capacity of the various categories of human resources in the educational system (e.g., teachers, teacher aids, educational administrators, occupational therapists, disability support staff and other relevant staff) responsible for the design and delivery of education to children and adult learners with disabilities across the various levels of the educational system
 - o Review of educational support (non-academic) services that complement the wider educational experiences of PWDs in the system (including security services, food and nutritional services, ICT services support, mental health support and counselling services, rehabilitative services, among others, within the system)
 - o Nation-wide assessments of major educational/learning needs and disability-related challenges of the various categories of learners with disabilities across the system – *this assessment will allow for a fuller understanding of the demand for special needs and disability-inclusive education in the country and types and levels of capacity and resource support that must be invested.*
- Establish the needed disability awareness and sensitivity programmes in primary and secondary schools in order to promote greater inclusive, positive and non-discriminatory attitudes and behaviours (e.g., alleviation of bullying behaviours) targeted at children with disabilities in the system

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Enhance the accessibility and inclusivity of the national curricula and general delivery of education to adequately cater to the diverse educational needs of different groups of children and adult learners with disabilities in the educational system (from pre-primary to tertiary levels), translating to:
 - o A fully renewed/upgraded Special Needs Education policy aligned with international best practices and the local realities/needs of PWDs throughout the system;
 - o Reformed curricula which are designed and delivered in accessible and inclusive ways and accommodative of diverse groups of PWDs in the educational system;
 - o Improved accessibility of classrooms/learning spaces (and related environments) to better accommodate diverse groups of children and adult learners with disabilities;
 - o Improved diagnostic assessment technologies and processes for detecting and assessing PWDs at earlier stages of educational systems;
 - o More improved Individualised Education Plans for PWDs in the system with support and collaborations with parents/guardians;

- o The incorporation of life and development skills, technical and vocational skills, peer and individualised support measures/systems to facilitate the holistic development of PWDs;
 - o The facilitation of the learning of Braille, alternative script, augmentative and alternative modes, accessible means and formats of communication and orientation and mobility skills, and facilitating peer support and mentoring;
 - o The facilitation of the learning of sign language and the promotion of the linguistic identity of the Deaf and hard of hearing community;
 - o Greater availability of contemporary disability-inclusive teaching and learning techniques and methodologies that are accessible to diverse groups of PWDs in the educational system; and
 - o Greater supply of availability of disability-inclusive educational/learning information, materials and resources to cater to a wide range of PWDs in the educational system
- Equip educational institutions (pre-primary, primary, secondary, post-secondary/tertiary, technical/vocational) as well as the base of educational administrators, teachers/lecturers, and support staff with the necessary inclusive educational and teaching tools, equipment, software, and other financial, physical and technical/technological resources to adequately enhance and support the delivery of high-quality education to PWDs
 - Review and modify the processes for accessing financial support services for the pursuit of educational opportunities locally, regionally and internationally – inclusive of scholarships and bursaries – to ensure equality of educational opportunities for PWDs in the country (beyond the freely supplied base of educational services in the country)
 - Work closely with private schools and educational institutions to ensure that their educational programming and services are affordable and/or adequately subsidised for PWDs and their families
 - Work closely with special needs schools and other private educational institutions that accommodate PWDs to support and bolster their capacity in meeting the diverse educational needs of PWDs in the country through the provision of programmes, services special incentives and other opportunities to strengthen their human, technical, technological, physical resources.

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Expand the supply of inclusive and accessible special needs and disability-friendly schools and educational institutions across the public service (and where possible, in the private sector) to ensure that all learners with PWDs have access to education in the country

STRATEGY 4.2 FACILITATING ACCESS TO TRAINING, LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAMMES, SERVICES AND RESOURCES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct nation-wide assessment of training needs of PWDs in the country to adequately inform the development and execute of appropriately aligned and meaningful training and development programmes for diverse groups of PWDs as well as a maintain a National Registry (as outlined in Strategy 4.1, bullet 1) of these individuals and relevant training institutions/providers
- Work closely with private sector, community-based organisations, and other representative entities to improve their capacities to offer a wide range of accessible, inclusive, and high-quality training and development opportunities to meet the growing needs of PWDs in the country (including supporting their efforts to improve accessibility and inclusion in all of their learning environments as well as procuring the needed financial, human and technical resources)
- Encourage and incentivise various groups of PWDs to participate actively in wider range of training and development opportunities (locally, regionally and internationally) to better support their lifelong learning, career/occupational, and other developmental needs

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Provide a greater supply of meaningful, accessible and high-quality training and development programmes, which are appropriately aligned to the training needs and competency profiles of various categories of PWDs, across a range of private and public training institutions for the benefit of PWDs in the country
- Expand the provision of a wide cross-section of accessible and high-quality lifelong learning resources including essential assistive/adaptive tools, disability-friendly materials and other vital disability-related and learning technologies/equipment to diverse groups of PWDs to support their learning and other developmental needs over their life course
- Offer the necessary financial support and resources (e.g., grants, bursaries and scholarships) to provide greater access and opportunities for PWDs to pursue major training and lifelong learning programmes and activities aligned with their personal needs and the national development priorities

- Offer a greater range of affordable training and development opportunities (with international or regional certifications in place) and accompanying incentives to current and prospective individual trainers, facilitators and related training personnel in area of special needs and disability-friendly training and lifelong learning programming to enhance their overall capabilities/competencies in designing and delivering high-quality training services to PWDs in the country

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Support the expansion of existing pool of individual and institutional training providers with the necessary capabilities and competencies in designing and delivering high-quality, accessible and inclusive training, lifelong learning and developmental programmes targeted at diverse groups of PWDs in the country.

EMPLOYMENT, WORK AND ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

STRATEGY 5.1 PROVISION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Review and revise the existing base of legislation, regulations, policies and general workplace/organisational practices relevant to employment to identify and eliminate all barriers and obstacles facing PWDs seeking employment opportunities in the country as well as ensure it is consistent with international best practices supporting full expression of economic participation of PWDs;

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Establish a national (or institutional) coordinating body with supporting mechanisms to provide oversight, support and guidance on the inclusion of PWDs in diverse areas of employment and economic participation in the country;
- Advocate and encourage affirmative actions to ensure that PWDs with the requisite skills and qualifications have fair and equal opportunities for employment – inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Establishment of regulatory systems and mechanisms (with built-in awareness building programmes) for guiding employers on making reasonable accommodations in their workplaces and minimum hiring requirements with respect to PWDs;
 - Establishment of national-level support systems for assisting employers in advertising, recruiting and hiring PWDs based on fair and reasonable quotas;
 - Supporting employers in developing an equal opportunity policy statement in their organisations that is inclusive and accommodating to PWDs; and
 - Supporting employers in creating an overall inclusive and discrimination-free workplace culture and working environment for PWDs.
- Develop special partnership arrangements and collaborative initiatives with employers (employers' associations and labour unions) across sectors in the country to ensure that PWDs have equal access to fair and decent work opportunities that recognise and cater to their disabilities and related needs – these would involve:

- o Assisting employers in identifying barriers and obstacles to accessibility and inclusion of PWDs within the organisation;
- o Assisting employers in meeting certain types of expenses/costs for making reasonable accommodations in their organisations to better cater to PWDs through access to various financing, concessions and other incentives; and
- o Providing the needed disability awareness and sensitivity training to employers and their workforces.

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Strengthen and expand existing employment generation programmes (i.e., public, private or jointly funded programmes/initiatives that generate different forms of employment and jobs across the economy) that are specifically directed at PWDs seeking employment;
- Strengthen and expand existing employment-related assistance services and programmes to better align PWDs seeking employment to appropriate job opportunities – these may manifest as labour market programmes coordinated by employment agencies designed specifically to assist PWDs in finding and maintaining jobs/employment (i.e., ***Disability Employment Services***) such as:
 - o career counselling for PWDs,
 - o employment/job search guidance and related services and assistance for job seekers with disabilities,
 - o personnel placement services for PWDs,
 - o ongoing support within the workplace once PWDs secure a job or some form of employment in an organisational context.
- Actively support and incentivise job creation efforts in different employment sectors that specifically accommodate or cater directly to PWDs seeking employment through a range of policy-based and economic incentives, investments and reforms (including exploring the option of providing tax incentives/subsidies for disability employment and reasonable accommodations of PWDs in workplaces).

STRATEGY 5.2 PROVISION OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment into the common and unique barriers faced by PWDs which affect the development of their own businesses or facilitating their own income-generating activities or self-employment in the country
- Based on the comprehensive assessment, develop and execute an action plan to eliminate all barriers (structural, administrative, physical and others) affecting by PWDs pursuing entrepreneurship and self-employment in the country
- Actively support and incentivise self-employed and entrepreneurial PWDs by providing them greater access to the necessary incentives, resources (financial, human, physical, technical and technological), and support systems to improve the quality of their businesses and overall livelihoods in the country.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Strengthen and expand the range of start-up or new venture schemes, programmes and opportunities for PWDs to access and transition into successful self-employment or entrepreneurship in the country
- Provide greater supply of and access to various entrepreneurial/entrepreneurship-based training and development initiatives and other related opportunities for PWDs to develop and/or strengthen their entrepreneurial mindset/attitudes, competencies and activities
- Offer PWDs the necessary accessible mentorship programmes to expose them to a range of best practices in entrepreneurial experiences, talents and capabilities to start, maintain and manage a successful business or entrepreneurial venture in the country
- Provide a range of accessible and inclusive incubator and accelerator programmes to assist PWDs in entrepreneurship in developing and innovating their new ventures
- Create a network of specially designed and accessible entrepreneurial support and business development services (and related resources) for self-employed and entrepreneurial PWDs to access (freely/subsidised) to support their prospective or existing business ventures;

STRATEGY 5.3 OFFERING DECENT, ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE WORK EXPERIENCES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct or support employers in conducting the necessary workplace assessments to identify and address all key barriers and obstacles affecting PWDs in the workplace and for facilitating decent, accessible and inclusive workplace environments and related employment experiences for PWDs in the country

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Based on workplace assessments and established partnerships, work closely with employers, their representative associations and labour unions in different sectors to create and maintain decent, healthy, safe, inclusive (non-discriminatory) and accessible work experiences for persons with disabilities inclusive of (but not limited to):
 - Non-discriminatory workplace policies – consistent with the legislation - that provide reasonable accommodation for recruiting, selection (restructuring selection/interviewing processes to be more accessible) and hiring (quota system), orienting/onboarding (e.g., special orientation programmes for persons with disabilities), assessing (performance assessments based on reasonable accommodations), and compensating PWDs seeking employment and within workplaces
 - Established code of practice within the employment context for the accommodation of PWDs in the workplace (in collaboration with the Social Partnership)
 - Accessible physical work facilities (based on universal design principles) inclusive of reasonable accommodations, adjustments and adaptations to cater to diverse groups of PWDs in workplaces
 - Accessible and assistive work-related equipment, technologies and tools to support the disability-related needs of PWDs within the workplaces
 - Healthy and safe work environments (i.e., free from barriers, discrimination and other workplace hazards/risks) including accessible and disability-friendly work schedules and modified job duties for PWDs in the workplace (as well as the promotion/incorporation of flexible working arrangements/options [inclusive of

remote working options] to better meet needs of different types of PWDs in employment)

- Restructuring of policies and practices regarding the treatment of PWDs in the workplace who are no longer able to deliver work duties as outlined in their employment contract which takes into account the reassignment of these individuals to other areas (or where reasonable adjustments to said contracts are possible) to maintain their income as opposed to medical onboarding
 - Fair and equitable performance assessments/appraisals
 - Accessible and equitable opportunities for training and development (including those vocational and rehabilitative in nature; assistive training tools and technologies specific to different persons with disabilities; and continuous workplace re-training initiatives), promotions and career advancement; and for self-actualisation
 - Fair and equitable remuneration and benefits for work performed.
- **Develop a Special Employer-based Programme for Improving Workplace Inclusion and Accessibility for PWDs** that will work closely with employers across sectors to identify and address existing and anticipated challenges, constraints and other difficulties that emerge in the efforts to make their workplaces fully accessible, inclusive and accommodating to diverse groups of PWDs in the country
 - Actively encourage and incentivise employers in different sectors in designing and providing necessary education, training and other awareness building programmes (inclusive of disability sensitivity, etiquette, and accessibility training initiatives), for their general workforce populations on disabilities and PWDs to better facilitate and sustain more positive, accepting and non-discriminatory attitudes (and organisational cultures) towards PWDs in the employment context

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Provide different kinds of support (e.g., resources, services and incentives) to employers and their management representatives in providing meaningful, accessible and disability-friendly support systems, employee resources, and other relevant services in the workplace that are consistent with (and essential to) the needs and preferences of PWDs in the workplace
- Raise awareness and encourage employers on the development of return-to-work programmes and rehabilitative measures/initiatives to support more successful re-integration and job retention of persons (within the workplace) who acquire a disability while employed

HEALTH, HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION

STRATEGY 6.1 PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE HEALTHCARE, MEDICAL AND WELLNESS SERVICES, PRODUCTS AND RESOURCES

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM (MAY START WITHIN 2 YEARS OR 3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Assess the existing base and range of health care and medical services to identify and eliminate all barriers and obstacles (including discriminatory practices and policies) affecting the rights of PWDs in accessing high-quality, affordable health and medical care and related resources – this strategic recommendation should allow for the following actions to ensue:
 - o Establishing **National Guidelines/Protocols in Health/Medical Facilities/Sector** to guide and inform all medical and health professionals in the appropriate interfacing, treatment, management and care of PWDs in the country;
 - o Maintaining a special and protected Registry comprising PWDs in the country and the various health and medical needs for assessment and intervention purposes;
 - o Reviewing and improving existing early detection, assessment and intervention practices and measures for various forms of disabilities in infants and young children (or in adults who are in the early phases of developing a form of disability) as well as providing the necessary education and training for family members and caregivers in these practices/measures;
 - o Expanding early detection and identification services in hospitals, public and private health care institutions, and community-based settings;
 - o Developing a fast-track or prioritisation system (and designated spaces) that will expedite the servicing and processing of PWDs seeking care at health care facilities and institutions in the country;
 - o Improving accessibility of the physical environments, health and medical equipment, technologies, and tools at health care facilities and institutions to better accommodate PWDs;
 - o Improving the accessibility of health-related communications and other informational systems and practices within the sector to better accommodate and cater to the needs of specific categories of PWDs (e.g., those who are blind and

visually impaired, deaf and hard of hearing, and those with other intellectual/developmental disabilities);

- o Enhancing the preventative awareness programming and other public education and counselling programmes targeted at PWDs across the healthcare sector; and
 - o Promoting and expanding diverse range of person-centred health services with the active involvement of PWDs in the application/administration of these services within institutional and community-based settings.
- Expand the supply of and access to essential, accessible mental health and psychological support services for PWDs across the health system across public sector, private sector and community-based spaces;
 - Expand supply of and access to essential, accessible sexual and reproductive health services for PWDs across the health system within public sector, private sector and community-based spaces;
 - Develop and execute health and wellness promotion strategies to enhance public awareness among PWDs, their family members and caregivers of challenges faced by PWDs and how best to support them in managing their conditions in communities; these health promotion efforts should focus on:
 - o Food, diet and nutrition (and healthy feeding practices) in communities and institutions in which PWDs people reside;
 - o Physical activity and exercise and sporting programmes for PWDs; and
 - o Mental health support and related services for PWDs.

MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM (MAY START 3 TO 5 YEARS OR 5 TO 7 YEARS)

- Provide technical, financial and other forms of support to various health care/medical institutions (public and private) to ensure that:
 - o Different groups of PWDs (and their disabilities) are fully recognised and accommodated within their institutional policies, practices and general operating environments (across the full range of medical and health services);
 - o Reasonable accommodations/adjustments are made to physical environment/settings (including the architectural accessibility in facilities and offices; accessible examination/diagnostic devices and other types of equipment;

and assistive technologies) to ensure that they are consistent with the needs of diverse groups of PWDs at these facilities;

- o Reasonable accommodations are made to specific health care/medical protocols regarding the treatment and management of PWDs in terms of admission (including pre-admission assessments), management of in-patient care and outpatient services, discharge planning, and follow-up care;
 - o Continuous training and development activities are conducted with different categories in health care staff in the management and treatment of diverse groups of PWDs in the system; and
 - o The bolstering of the needed disability-friendly, assistive and other accessible technologies, equipment and related supplies to better support the health care and medical needs of diverse groups of PWDs.
- Expand the range of training and development opportunities/initiatives accessible to formal and informal caregivers of PWDs within the institutional and community-based settings as well as other professional healthcare and medical providers to ensure that they are sufficiently equipped with the necessary skills and qualifications for managing the health care needs of PWDs in the country;
 - Support the expansion and upgrading of the other private healthcare and medical facilities with the necessary incentives, resources (human, financial, technical and physical) and services to improve their capacities to better respond to and address the healthcare and medical needs of PWDs in the country
 - Expand supply of and access to essential pharmaceutical supplies (i.e., prescribed drugs/medication) for PWDs across the health system within public sector, private sector and community-based spaces
 - Expand supply of and access to essential medical and health care equipment/tools and other resources to better support PWDs with different health needs/conditions across the health system within public sector, private sector and community-based spaces
 - Expand supply of and access to various forms of essential health/medical and life insurance services (through the elimination of all forms/sources of discrimination and related access barriers against PWDs and the expansion of reasonable adjustments to criteria/standards) for PWDs in the country
 - Work closely with community-based stakeholders, healthcare providers/wellness services providers, private sector entities and other agencies to develop and expand a range of physical and mental health programmes and other essential community-centred healthcare

and wellness services (including habilitation, physical therapy/rehabilitation, physical sports-related training, mental health counselling, among others) to support the diverse needs of the PWDs in homes and communities.

STRATEGY 6.2 PROVISION OF HIGH-QUALITY AND ACCESSIBLE HABILITATION AND REHABILITATION CARE AND RELATED SERVICES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Assess the existing base of habilitation and rehabilitation care services and programmes currently being offered to PWDs across private and public sectors (at institutional and community levels) with the intent of identifying and eliminating current structural and other barriers affecting access, quality and equitable delivery of both habilitation and rehabilitation care services for PWDs

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Ensure that those responsible for the provision of habilitation and rehabilitation care services operate under policies, protocols and regulations that are compliant with contemporary disability-related legislation in the country
- Work closely with private and public providers of habilitation and rehabilitation care services for PWDs to expand the supply of and access to the following:
 - In-home and community-based habilitation and rehabilitation programmes and services (including day, school, child-care and family support services)
 - Residential or institutional-based habilitation and rehabilitation programmes and services
 - Supported living services in provider-controlled environments (for PWDs experiences with challenges occasioned by developmental and intellectual disabilities)
- Equip the various categories of human resources (technical professionals, administrative and other service support personnel) involved in the provision of habilitation and rehabilitation care services and programmes with the necessary skills/competencies to respond to and meet the diverse needs of PWDs in the country
- Provide the needed resource support (human, financial and technical resources) to private and public providers of habilitation and rehabilitation care services in the country in order to bolster their capacities to effectively and efficiently deliver the highest quality of care to PWDs

LEGAL RECOGNITION AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

STRATEGY 7.1 PROVISION OF LEGAL RECOGNITION AND CAPACITY

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Amend existing legislation to remove all barriers and obstacles affecting the rights of access to legal recognition and justice of PWDs across all sectors and spaces of operation within the national context
- Offer the necessary education/information, resources and other support systems for PWDs to actively engage and exercise their legal capacity consistent with their rights, will and preferences as recognised by the laws of the country
- Conduct a comprehensive accessibility assessment of existing legal services, service environments, and related processes (both online and offline) alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs seeking legal services to identify key barriers and obstacles affecting accessibility and inclusion among PWDs in the country
- Provide PWDs with legal matters/issues with accessible, affordable (or free), and high-quality legal services, including legal representation, to address their presenting legal matters/issues in the country (inclusive of the expansion or modification of Legal Aid Services)
- Equip the legal professionals (e.g., attorneys-at-law) and other relevant members of the legal community with necessary education/training (disability sensitivity and awareness training, communication disability training), resources (financial, human and technical) and support systems to better cater to the legal needs and demands of PWDs in the country.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Establish a functioning and multi-stakeholder legal body/entity (at the national level) equipped with the powers and capacity for addressing the diversity of legal matters/issues confronting PWDs in the country
- Modify, as needed, the portfolio of legal services currently being offered to reflect the diverse needs and experiences being presented (oftentimes uniquely) by PWDs in the country (inclusive of the improving the accessibility of Legal Aid Services)

STRATEGY 7.2 PROVISION OF ACCESS TO INCLUSIVE JUSTICE WITH FAIRNESS AND NONDISCRIMINATION

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Amend existing legislation to ensure full and equal opportunity for participation in the justice system at all levels for PWDs in the country
- Conduct a comprehensive accessibility assessment of existing judicial services, service environments, and related processes (both online and offline) alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs within justice system to identify key barriers and obstacles affecting accessibility and inclusion among PWDs in the country
- Equip the various agents and agencies of the justice system – including law enforcement officers, judicial officers (judges and magistrates), officers of the correctional facilities, among others - with necessary education/training (disability sensitivity and awareness training, communication disability training), resources (financial, human and technical) and support systems to better respond to, treat and interact with PWDs in the system in equitable, humane and inclusive ways (inclusive of responding to disability discrimination issues); these activities for equipping the agents and agencies of the system include:
 - Creation of institutional policies and codes for informing and guiding officers across the justice system in their interaction with and treatment of PWDs in the system
 - Conducting the needed training on all human resources within the system to improving disability awareness, sensitivity and the treatment of PWDs in the system
 - Provision of the needed assistive and disability-friendly equipment, tools and technologies to facilitate the processing of cases involving PWDs in the justice system (from law enforcement settings to correctional and rehabilitative service facilities)
 - Implementation of needed accessible and inclusive systems, processes and assistive technologies within the justice system are in place to better support and adjudicate on cases involving PWDs within the system.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- **Modify, as needed, policies, protocols and practices across the justice system to ensure that all PWDs (including those accused or in conflict with the law) receive equitable and non-discriminatory treatment at all levels of the system; these modifications should include:**
 - **Creation and enforcement of the standard guidelines/protocols for guiding the appropriate treatment and handling of PWDs within the justice system (from law enforcement contact to correctional or rehabilitative facilities including minors and those with severe cognitive impairments)**
 - **Development and implementation of the accessibility standards and resultant modifications for application to the physical facilities and environments (police stations, court facilities, detention/prison facilities) across the justice system, transportation services, resources of interpreters/translators, information and communication systems, and other processes related to the justice system**
 - **Removal of all discriminatory practices that infringe on the natural rights and freedoms of PWDs in the justice system**
 - **The engagement of reasonable accommodations to cater to and accommodate PWDs seeking employment into various sub-sectors of the justice system (as employees or participants in the system inclusive of witnesses, expert witnesses or jurors).**
- **Work with relevant stakeholders in public, private and community-based sectors to develop and execute alternative restorative practices (and diversion programmes) for PWDs in the justice system to avoid unnecessary custodial sentences and resultant imprisonment for these individuals**
- **Work with relevant stakeholders in public, private and community-based sectors to develop and execute sustainable and accessible rehabilitative and reintegration programmes for PWDs in the justice system to produce improved rehabilitation and societal reintegration outcomes**

PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

STRATEGY 8.1 FACILITATING INDEPENDENT LIVING AND FULL INCLUSION IN COMMUNITIES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of barriers and obstacles within community settings adversely affecting full independent living and inclusion of PWDs, alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs in these settings;
- Actively involve PWDs in community development programmes to assist these and other PWDs in becoming more empowered to live independent lives;
- Provide ongoing support to PWDs, through a range of professional services and related human and technical resources, to better support their needs in independent living in their communities.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Work closely with community-based stakeholders to provide a range of daily living skills and other skills development programmes targeting PWDs to support independent living needs in their communities
- Work closely with various residential communities to develop community development programmes and related services (e.g., in-home, residential and other community support services) that are fully accessible to PWDs to facilitate fuller community inclusion and independent living in these same communities
- To better facilitate independent living of PWDs in the communities, expand access to various accessible living and residential facilities (e.g., transitional housing facilities and related amenities/facilities) for PWDs across various settings

STRATEGY 8.2 FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC LIFE

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of barriers and obstacles within the wider environment, system and spaces of political and public life adversely affecting full inclusion of PWDs, alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs in these settings
- Develop standard guidelines/protocols for the treatment and inclusion of PWDs in various aspects of political and public life, covering their participation in voting and interacting with electoral processes and systems as well as serving as candidates/elected representatives (in political parties and government), electoral officers, political and public officials, parliamentarians/senators, among other roles/positions
- Develop and enact more inclusive policies that facilitate greater inclusion of suitably qualified and experienced PWDs on statutory boards, school boards, and other related committees of government and wider public sector
- Improve the accessibility of physical access to polling districts, representative offices and venues for political events for PWDs

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Modify, as needed, electoral regulations, procedures and policies within the wider system to allow for greater physical and informational access of PWDs to the electoral process and other public roles in society
- Develop and/or enhance existing procedures for supporting *accessible* independent voting to facilitate the full electoral participation of voters with different disabilities;
- Provide adequate support services (including human assistance) to facilitate a fully accessible and inclusive voting process for PWDs
- Ensure that PWDs have full access and equal opportunity to participate in political and public office through the following mechanisms/actions
 - Removal of any discriminatory barriers and obstacles to the inclusion of PWDs in various political and public offices in Barbados

- Training and further incentivisation/empowerment of PWDs interested in or operating in political and public roles
- Disability-related sensitisation of political parties and other public officers responsible for recruiting and selecting PWDs for various political and public positions/roles
- Provision of necessary aids/assistive technologies and other resources to support the full participation of PWDs in political and public roles
- Provide all necessary formats of information and documentation regarding electoral/political participation to ensure full accessibility to PWDs
- Provide greater supply of and access to various disability-friendly/assistive technologies, equipment and other technical aids to better enhance the involvement of PWDs in the voting process (with limited third-party involvement)
- Facilitate disability-sensitive/awareness training for election officers and related support staff to facilitate a fully accessible and inclusive voting process for PWDs
- Improve the accessibility of the physical facilities of parliament, senate and other political/public spaces for PWDs functioning in political and public roles

STRATEGY 8.3 FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN CULTURAL LIFE

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of PWDs who are active or interested in the cultural and creative sectors to determine and address key barriers and obstacles affecting their full participation and inclusion
- In partnership with cultural and other creative industries stakeholders (including the National Cultural Foundation), provide greater opportunities for PWDs to be involved in the decision-making bodies/committees which are responsible for designing and implementing a wide range of cultural activities in the country
- Increase the access of PWDs to a wide range of cultural programmes and activities in which they can fully participate - socially, economically and developmentally
- Expose PWDs to a wider range of accessible training and development initiatives to better develop their skills to fully participate in a range of cultural activities in the country

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Incentivise PWDs to actively participate and develop in the creative and cultural sectors through a range of incentives, programmes and other collaborative initiatives;
- Support PWDs active in the creative and cultural sectors in the monetisation of their cultural and creative products and services through the creation of the incentives, programmes and other collaborative initiatives across sectors (locally, regionally and internationally)

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Equip PWDs with a range of financial and technical resources (and support services/systems) to ensure that they can fully participate in a range of cultural activities in the country
- Increase the physical accessibility of the cultural/creative spaces/sites and information to ensure that PWDs can fully participate in a range of cultural activities in the country

**STRATEGY 8.4 FACILITATING PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN
RECREATION, LEISURE AND SPORTS (IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE NATIONAL
SPORTS POLICY OF BARBADOS)**

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct comprehensive assessments of barriers and obstacles within the wider environment, system and spaces of recreation, leisure and sports in the country adversely affecting full inclusion of PWDs, alongside a detailed needs assessment of PWDs in these settings
- Increase the supply of and access to opportunities for PWDs to fully participate in mainstream sporting activities in the country

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Incentivise PWDs to actively participate and develop in the various sporting fields and careers through a range of incentives, programmes and other collaborative initiatives
- Promote and support an expanded development and integration of inclusive sports and recreational activities in schools/educational institutions and in other related public and privately funded programmes and institutions
- Support the creation and expansion of more accessible sporting clubs, teams and associations that are inclusive and accommodating of PWDs who are active or interested in sports in the country
- Expose sports trainers, coaches and sporting personnel/professionals to the necessary disability awareness and sensitivity training to better interface and work with PWDs who are active or interested in sports in the country
- Increase the appeal, attractiveness and viability of Special Olympics events and activities in the country (including attracting similar events to Barbados to earn greater revenues);
- Increase the level of support (and financial and technical resources) for athletes with disabilities participating in special Olympic and Paralympic competitions
- Work closely with recreational, leisure and sporting entities and operators to ensure that their facilities, activities and information are fully accessible to PWDs in the country

LONG-TERM (5 YEARS TO 7 YEARS)

- Increase the accessibility of recreational and leisure-based facilities (e.g., community parks/playgrounds, beaches, and other places of entertainment), equipment and related information/communications for PWDs to participate fully in recreational and leisure activities in the country
- Increase the accessibility of sporting facilities (including stadia, in-door sporting facilities in communities and schools), equipment and related information/communications for PWDs to fully participate in a range of sporting activities;

PROTECTION IN DISASTERS AND EMERGENCIES

STRATEGY 9.1 STRENGTHENING DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PLANS AND RESPONSES

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM (MAY START WITHIN 2 YEARS OR 3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- **Conduct assessments of existing disaster and emergency preparedness plans, systems and mechanisms to identify and eliminate all barriers facing the protection of PWDs during various disaster and emergency situations in the country - these assessments should result in the following:**
 - **Establishment of inter-entity committees, with guiding protocols and mechanisms, to properly identify risks/needs and respond to the needs of PWDs before, during and after a disaster and emergency situation;**
 - **Information from risk assessments, at the various community-levels, to determine and inform the diverse risk-related/reduction strategies to meet the needs of PWDs in the case of a disaster or emergency event;**
 - **Design and Deployment of a National Registry of PWDs to access relevant information for effective use of disaster and emergency preparedness and response scenarios;**
 - **Increase in the accessibility of disaster and emergency preparedness information and communications to PWDs before, during and after a disaster and emergency situation;**
 - **Improvements in (expansions of) existing (and new) infrastructure and facilities (including shelters and related alternative accommodations) as well as disaster and emergency safety procedures to ensure full accessibility of PWDs facing a disaster and emergency situation in the country;**
 - **The bolstering of needed disability-friendly, accessible and assistive resources (e.g., technical aids, equipment and other personal mobility devices) for PWDs facing a disaster and emergency situation in the country; and**
 - **The deployment of needed disaster/emergency relief services and resources (physical, technical, socio-economic, psychosocial, etc) in a way that is fully accessible to PWDs who have faced a disaster and emergency situation in the country.**

- Work closely with community members and other representative stakeholders to expand and develop the pool of volunteers and other support personnel (as part of the national surveillance and response system for disaster and emergency risk management) as a means of improving the national capacity for responding to the needs of PWDs in a disaster and emergency situation;
- Ensure that PWDs have the necessary social protection services and mechanisms to protect them against various disaster and emergency events inclusive (but not limited to):
 - Adequate property, social security and other health-related insurance coverage (covering damage, injury or loss) in disaster and emergency crises;
 - Adequate health and safety equipment, materials and first aid and medical supplies in place (in their homes and in community centres);
 - Access to functioning communications and related devices (e.g., mobile and landline devices, batteries, and other ICTs) and relevant contact channels to essential services agencies/entities; and
 - Access to community policing groups and other security arrangements (ahead of a national disaster or emergency event) to protect them from violence, crime and other forms of abuse during disaster and emergency crises.

STRATEGY 9.2 INCLUSION OF PWDs IN DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the key barriers and obstacles adversely affecting the full inclusion and participation of PWDs in national and community-level disaster preparedness and emergency response activities, programmes and initiatives in the country;
- Develop **standard guidelines and protocols** for guiding the full inclusion and participation of PWDs in national and community-level disaster preparedness and emergency response activities, programmes and initiatives in the country; these guidelines/protocols should address the following:
 - Improving the accessibility of environments (including the physical facilities, equipment, technologies, tools and information/communications) in which PWDs would operate, interface and work with other stakeholders/agents within the disaster preparedness and emergency response programmes and contexts;
 - Eliminating attitudinal and cultural barriers (and related forms of discrimination) that had historically prevented or blocked the full inclusion and participation of PWDs in being actively involved in disaster preparedness and emergency responses programmes and contexts; and
 - Providing the needed disability awareness and sensitivity training for all professionals, agents and service providers working in disaster preparedness and emergency response contexts to improve their overall attitudes, interactions and relationships with PWDs in the same work settings.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Include and engage PWDs across communities on the National Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Response Committee(s) and supporting subcommittees/action teams as key representatives of their target communities;
- Expose PWDs to a range of educational and training programmes to strengthen their capabilities and readiness to meaningfully and fully participate in national and community-level disaster preparedness and emergency response activities, programmes and initiatives in the country;

- **Involve PWDs in relevant community surveillance and response systems and programmes in at-risk communities to better support other at-risk PWDs in disaster and emergency situations; and**
- **Promote a growing network of *resilient PWDs* in communities to assist relevant agencies/entities in the provision of needed essential services (including training) and resources to other at-risk PWDs and other vulnerable groups in disaster and emergency situations.**

**PROTECTION OF RIGHT TO LIFE, INTEGRITY, FREEDOMS AND
LIBERTIES**

STRATEGY 10.1 PROTECTION OF RIGHT TO LIFE OF THE PWDs

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM (MAY START WITHIN 2 YEARS OR 3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Review and amend all relevant legislation, regulations and policies to sufficiently recognise and protect:
 - The right of PWDs to life-saving treatments or interventions as needed (removal of any barriers and related forms of discrimination that restrict or deny these treatments/interventions on the basis of their disability)
 - Establishment of progressive policies and measures that prevent or alleviate the risk of premature deaths and unnatural deaths (linked to poor health care and nutrition, living conditions, emergencies, suicides, ‘assisted dying’, etc)
- Develop necessary and strict investigative guidelines and protocols for addressing the loss of life with PWDs in various settings, including measures against preventable deaths and practices requiring full investigations into loss of life for PWDs in both public and private facilities.

STRATEGY 10.2 PROTECTION OF LIBERTY OF MOVEMENT AND NATIONALITY

SHORT- TO MEDIUM-TERM (MAY START WITHIN 2 YEARS OR 3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Review and amend all immigration-related legislation, regulations and policies to identify and address key barriers and obstacles (inclusive of discriminatory screening and assessment processes) affecting different groups of PWDs; this review should focus on:
 - Review of any discriminatory restrictions, based on disabilities, that affect the right of PWDs to their right to acquire citizenship or nationality (or related status) on an equal basis with others (and not be deprived of the same on the basis on their disability)
 - Review of naturalisation, residency and citizenship processes to allow for reasonable accommodations for PWDs
 - Review of the regular mode of interactions of officers within the sector (e.g., immigration and related officers) concerning their treatment and handling of PWDs
- Provide ongoing disability awareness and sensitivity training for the various officers employed at the various ports of entry (e.g., sensitively handling and interacting with passengers with disabilities including those with prostheses/prosthetic items or wheelchairs) and for personnel involved in the facilitation of travel documents and travel-related materials/documents (and other related immigration matters)

MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM (MAY START 3 TO 5 YEARS OR 5 TO 7 YEARS)

- Modify, as needed, the various application, registration and other processes and related systems for attaining and maintaining travel documents (and for attaining some residential, migrant or citizenship status within the country) to ensure full accessibility for PWDs
- Modify immigration offices and existing facilities within the various ports of entry with suitable design features and systems to permit full accessibility to PWDs.

STRATEGY 10.3 PROTECTION OF LIBERTY AND SECURITY

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Review and reform existing legislation that directly or indirectly allows for any kind of deprivation of the liberty of PWDs on the basis of actual or perceived impairment or disability as well as any related barriers and obstacles restricting their rights to liberty and security

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Establish systems within institutions (detention centres, prisons, psychiatric institutions, residential institutions, etc) in which PWDs reside that prevent arbitrary detention of persons with disabilities in the country as well as the prohibition of seclusion, restraints, and the administration of restrictive, coercive or forced treatments of PWDs
- Design and provide mechanisms and related support services within (and outside of) the justice system that adequately protect persons with mental health conditions (or related impairments) who are detained

**STRATEGY 10.4 PROTECTION OF FREEDOM FROM TORTURE OR CRUEL
INHUMAN OR DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT (AND PROTECTING
THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON)**

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Amend and/or enact appropriate legislation and related regulations to ensure that PWDs are fully protected from all forms of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment across various sectors of society; these amendments and changes should ensure the following:
 - Prohibition of any kind of non-consensual medical, scientific or social experimentation, treatment or intervention (of any kind) and other related violations to the physical and mental integrity of PWDs in any setting;
 - Protection of children with disabilities from any kind of corporal punishment, invasive therapies and/or forced treatment or intervention; and
 - Full recognition of the rights of PWDs to free and informed consent to medical treatment, and the right to refuse treatment or any medical-based or other experimentation.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Provide and manage systematic channels for anonymous reporting of cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment of PWDs across all sectors of society;
- Establish an Inspectorate body/entity and/or National System responsible for the investigation/inspection, assessment and reporting on all care facilities/settings in which PWDs live and operate;
- Provide ongoing training for all care workers – including formal and informal caregivers of PWDs (including security-related officers) – to enhance their competencies/capabilities in investigating, reporting and intervening in cases of mistreatment of PWDs in various settings; and
- Provide special measures and systems for surveilling and protecting homeless PWDs in order to protect them from cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment.

STRATEGY 10.5 PROTECTION OF FREEDOM FROM EXPLOITATION, VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Amend and/or enact legislation, regulations and other administrative measures that will lead to the protection of PWDs from exploitation, violence and various forms of abuse; these amendments and changes should ensure the following:
 - Establishment of legislation, regulations and policies to safeguard and protect PWDs from all forms of abuse in any private and public setting (physical, sexual, emotional, financial, etc)
 - Establishment of national-level regulations and measures that require the appointment of independent authorities to monitor, investigate/inspect, and respond to cases of abuse, violence and exploitation in all private and public facilities (especially, in which PWDs are at risk)

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Establish appropriate systems and processes at a national level (inclusive of documented protocols and supporting monitoring bodies) for PWDs to ensure that all instances of abuse and violence against PWDs are identified, investigated, reported and addressed
- Deploy specially designed victim support services and programmes for PWDs who have been victims of violence and abuse within communities and institutions to assist in their recovery and rehabilitation (inclusive of psycho-social support services)
- Develop diverse outreach, educational and awareness-building programmes for the public (including community residents, caregivers, social and healthcare workers and law enforcement personnel) to assist in their identification and reporting of suspected cases of abuse and violence involving PWDs across various sectors of society

STRATEGY 10.6 PROTECTION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, OPINION AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Work closely with representative organisations serving PWDs to create community-based, institutional and national channels, platforms and avenues for PWDs to actively communicate and express opinions on key issues of national significance affecting the country
- Develop and enact legislation and regulations formally recognising sign language, Braille, Easy to Read format, captioning, tactile communication, support persons for communication, and any other accessible means, modes or formats of communication used by PWDs

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Establish mandatory standards on the accessibility of information and communications for PWDs as provided by private and public entities for the general public;
- Provide specially designed empowerment and support programmes to incentivise and empower PWDs to engage in greater self-advocacy/self-representation across various sectors of the society
- Work closely with representative organisations serving PWDs to create community-based, institutional and national channels, platforms and avenues for PWDs to actively communicate and express opinions on key issues of national significance affecting the country
- Ensure that all public institutions can facilitate information queries, complaints and suggestions from diverse groups of PWDs regarding their experiences, concerns and needs via modes and formats that are most accessible to them

REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

STRATEGY 11.1 STRENGTHENING AND ENHANCING REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS, KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND COOPERATION TO BETTER SUPPORT PWDs

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- In partnership with local representative organisations serving PWDs in Barbados, work to strengthen and enhance collaborative relationships with other regional and international representative organisations to lead to:
 - Improved resource, knowledge and information sharing, sharing of best practices and training programmes, and improved capacity-building among these entities for the betterment of PWDs in the country
 - Expanded mechanisms for advocacy at regional and international forums surrounding disability issues and rights of PWDs in the country
 - Increased development of and access to a range of regional and international development programmes and interventions that are essential to the needs of PWDs in the country
 - Increased access to appropriate technical, economic/financial and other technological assistance (including the accessible and assistive technologies) for supporting PWDs in the country.
- Provide ongoing support to regional and international initiatives that address key issues, concerns and challenges of PWDs in the country.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Foster greater (or expand) collaborative arrangements and agreements with regional and international nations to further advance the cause of PWDs in the country
- Create environments in which PWDs can actively attend and participate in various regional and international forums, discussions, and programmes addressing issues surrounding disabilities

RESPECT FOR PRIVACY, HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

STRATEGY 12.1 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Engage in public education programmes on rights of PWDs with respect to the protection of their personal life from intrusion by others and the protection of information about oneself (targeted at diverse groups of residential communities, families, caregivers and institutions)
- Provide ongoing training, on the right to privacy of PWDs, and the treatment and handling of personal, confidential data of PWDs, targeted at public service officers (e.g., social workers, care and health workers, emergency workers, administrative officers) whose responsibility is to gather, manage and interface with critical and sensitive data on PWDs in the country

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the right to privacy of PWDs is adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Confidential collection, storage and treatment of personal identifying information of PWDs (especially those collected by public service organisations, the National Registry of PWDs, and other databases gathered in private and NGO spaces);
 - Protection of private health-related and medical data on PWDs and their disabilities;
 - Protection of rehabilitation information on PWDs; and
 - Need for consent from PWDs prior to sharing of personal and sensitive data.
- Work closely with employers in different sectors (including sectors in which representative entities for PWDs exist) to ensure the right to privacy of PWDs in their organisations/employment context is properly recognised and protected through the:

- Crafting of relevant workplace policies/regulations governing the protection of personal information of PWDs (customers/clients and employees of organisations);
- Continuous training for workplace staff in the handling and management of information of PWDs; and
- Development of properly secured ICT systems used for gathering, storing and retrieving personal or confidential information of PWDs.

STRATEGY 12.2 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING THE RIGHT TO HOME AND FAMILY LIFE

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Engage in public education programmes to promote and educate PWDs, their families/caregivers, and the general public on the rights of PWDs in family life and relationships (including equal access to sexual and reproductive health care services; marriage, and building families, etc) and to combat related negative attitudes and stereotypes

- Provide ongoing training on the right to home and family life of PWDs and on non-discrimination on the basis of disability, targeted at judicial officers, notaries, health care professionals, social workers and related professionals who work in sectors connected to and/or interface with home and family services, issues and related matters facing PWDs and other citizens.

- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the right to family and home life of PWDs is adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure equal access of PWDs to sexual and reproductive health-care services and family planning services

 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure parents with disabilities are provided with the necessary support and resources to engage in proper child-rearing responsibilities (e.g., family counselling, financial support, and personal assistance services), especially to prevent family separation

 - Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the removal of discriminatory practices and other barriers facing PWDs seeking to adopt children or participate in foster care programmes/services

STATISTICS AND DATA-COLLECTION ON DISABILITIES

STRATEGY 13.1 PRIORITISING THE NEEDS OF PWDs WITHIN STATISTICAL AND RESEARCH DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE COUNTRY

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Review and amend relevant legislation, regulations and supporting policies to ensure that existing national statistics, data-collection, and related projects and systems allow for :
 - Full inclusion and participation of PWDs in the country (including the national census, poverty assessments and standard of living surveys);
 - Full accessibility for PWDs (organised and executed in diverse accessible formats or modes); and
 - Confidentiality, respect for the rights of PWDs, and non-discrimination in the gathering, storing and use of information provided by PWDs.
- Ensure a structured and standard system of guidelines and protocols, at the national and operational levels, that provide clear and full guidance on the appropriate use of statistical and data management processes and practices that take into account PWDs and their disabilities in the country
- Prioritise gathering, collating, analysing and reporting of data and statistics on disabilities and PWDs to adequately inform policies, programmes and services for supporting PWDs in the country
- Ensure that the national research and statistical data reporting on disabilities and PWDs is adequately disaggregated by sex, age and other relevant socio-economic categorisations
- Work closely with key organisations for and of PWDs to ensure a representative and wide reach of participation of PWDs in data-collection, statistical and research projects in the country

WOMEN AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

STRATEGY 14.1 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Engage in ongoing public education programmes, **targeting communities, families, institutions (especially those providing services to women), individuals and especially women with disabilities**, on the protection of all rights and freedoms of women with disabilities as well as their peculiar vulnerabilities in society inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Women with disabilities being more disproportionately disadvantaged in the cases of poverty, socio-economic deprivation, low or unequal pay, and unemployment (and underemployment)
 - Women with disabilities being more disproportionately represented in cases of sexual violence, abuse, exploitation, as well as gender-specific and disability-specific discrimination; and
 - Women with disabilities being more disproportionately affected by mental health risk factors (including depression), increased burden of care (with respect to children and caregiving responsibilities in family settings), and increased risk of physical disease (including both chronic illness and sexually transmitted infections).
- Work closely with representative organisations of PWDs and with women's organisations to better guide the development of supporting policies and systems and the procurement of resources (human, financial, and technical) that specifically address the diverse and unique needs of women with disabilities as well as promote greater gender equality and women's empowerment and participation in the country.

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedoms of women with disabilities are adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:

- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the explicit identification of and references to women with disabilities as a specific, vulnerable category of PWDs in Barbadian society;
- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure women with disabilities are specially targeted/reached within wider national action plans and strategies which seek to allocate/deploy socio-economic, sexual and reproductive health, and other psychosocial resources as well as eliminate risks associated with discrimination, abuse and violence facing women; and
- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the removal of discriminatory practices and other barriers facing women with disabilities seeking employment (or self-employment); sexual and reproductive health services; participation in certain types of occupations/careers; advancement (or more senior positions) in public or private organisations/settings; and fair and equitable remuneration.

STRATEGY 14.2 PROTECTING AND SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN FIRST 2 YEARS)

- Engage in ongoing public education programmes, **targeting communities, families, institutions (especially those providing services to children), individuals, and especially children with disabilities**, on the protection of all rights and freedoms of children with disabilities as well as their peculiar vulnerabilities in society inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:
 - Children with disabilities (like women with disabilities) being more disproportionately represented as victims in cases of exploitation and discrimination
 - Children with disabilities being more vulnerable to physical, sexual, emotional and verbal abuse as well as neglect in both private and public spaces
 - Children with disabilities being more likely to end up in residential or institutionalised care settings due to the aforementioned vulnerabilities and increased burden of care being placed on ill-equipped parents/guardians
 - Children with disabilities being more disproportionately represented in cases of educational/academic exclusion, school-based underperformance (especially among boys with disabilities), and are more likely to drop out of schools prematurely
- Work closely with representative organisations of PWDs and with children- and youth-based organisations to better guide the development of supporting policies and systems and the procurement of resources (human, financial, and technical) that specifically address the diverse and unique needs of children with disabilities as well as promote the respect, protection and fulfilment of the rights of children with disabilities in the country

MEDIUM-TERM (3 YEARS TO 5 YEARS)

- Modify and strengthen, as needed, legislation and supporting regulations at the national level to ensure that the fundamental rights and freedoms of children with disabilities are adequately and sufficiently recognised and protected across all sectors of society, inclusive of, but not limited to, the following:

- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the explicit identification of and references to children with disabilities as a specific, vulnerable category of PWDs in Barbadian society
- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure children with disabilities are specially targeted/reached within wider national action plans and strategies which seek to allocate/deploy socio-economic, sexual and reproductive health, and other psychosocial resources as well as eliminate risks associated with discrimination, abuse and violence facing children
- Adoption and enactment of legislation, regulations and policies that ensure the removal of discriminatory practices and other barriers facing children and other youth with disabilities in need of proper family and child-care services; sexual and reproductive, and other related health care services (in cases of youth reaching the age of sexual consent); access to sound and inclusive educational/training opportunities (up to tertiary education); access to alternative family and community care (especially for those children without a conventional parental care system); and access to fair legal and justice outcomes, socio-economic and psychosocial support, and other resources, especially in cases in which poverty, abuse, violence and discrimination are evident

EXAMPLE OF BLANK ACTION TABLE FOR SUBCOMMITTEES FOR POPULATING STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES, STARTING TIMELINES (YEAR OF INITIATION), RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS, EXPECTED OUTPUTS, AND STAKEHOLDER ENTITIES/AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR EXECUTION

POLICY PRIORITY AREA:				
POLICY GOAL:				
ACTIVITIES	TIMELINES (PROPOSED START)	RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS (OR PREREQUISITES)	EXPECTED OUTPUTS	RESPONSIBILITY (INSTITUTION/DEPT/STAKEHOLDER)