



**DECLARATION  
OF  
MISSION BARBADOS**

# DECLARATION OF MISSION BARBADOS

## VISION

To transform Barbados into a sustainable, prosperous, inclusive and resilient society. Barbadians must shift mindsets and engage as citizens and stakeholders in collaborating, innovating, and investing to shape Barbados' future.

## 1. CHALLENGES

- 1.1 The Social Partners acknowledge that Barbados is facing a number of global and local challenges, which requires an innovative, and a mission-oriented approach to economic and social development that will deliver value to the people of Barbados while at the same time positioning Barbados as a global leader in implementing a new, more inclusive and sustainable form of growth.
- 1.2 The Social Partners, through consultations chaired by the Prime Minister of Barbados, identified the following challenges:
  - I. An unhealthy planet in crisis
  - II. A constantly changing value system, which threatens social cohesion
  - III. Food and water insecurity
  - IV. Deteriorating physical and mental health and pockets of social instability.
  - V. Development deficit that has spawned financial marginalization and worker vulnerability.
  - VI. Inequitable Digital Access and Slow Technological Conversion

### **An Unhealthy Planet in Crisis**

- 1.3 The planet Earth is unhealthy and facing a climate crisis. As a large-ocean island state, whose ocean size is 434 times its land areas, Barbados is particularly vulnerable to these environmental challenges and the resultant rise in sea levels, extreme weather events and changing ecosystems, which affect key sectors such as tourism and agriculture. It is also recognized that the majority of Barbados' population and its economic activities are located in the narrow coastal zone, thereby further increasing the likely impact of these risks from climate crisis. Our biodiversity needs attention. We have seen a loss of biodiversity on land and in our oceans. Additional risks are created by Barbados' heavy reliance on imported fuel products, spending \$1.122 billion in 2022 alone, which compromise the international competitiveness and economic resilience of the country.

### **Constantly Changing Value System, Which Threatens Social Cohesion**

- 1.4 Barbados' value system is constantly changing and has manifested, in too many

instances, poor attitudes and behaviours in the workplace, declining customer service, low productivity and insufficient innovation. There is low participation by citizens in building and nurturing families and communities, and in the governance of the country. A growing self-centredness, a lack of empathy and a lack of effective mentoring has resulted in increasing anti-social behaviour. The misplaced values and behavior that promote this individualism have eroded that strong sense of community, which previously characterized who we were as a people. Our national identity must not be allowed to fade due to the strong effects of cultural penetration, low self-esteem and a lack of purpose. In addition, our risk averse culture is an obstacle to our engaging the world to secure business to enhance our growth and development.

### **Food and Water Insecurity**

- 1.5 Barbados is at risk of food and water insecurity and there are segments of the population, in particular among vulnerable groups, such as persons from poor households and persons living with disabilities, who, without assistance, do not have sufficient access to safe, quality food and water to meet their basic needs. The long-term sustained decline in food production in Barbados has diminished its capacity to supply the population with enough domestically produced food. The country therefore relies heavily on imported food and imported inputs into agricultural production. This has made Barbados susceptible to international price shocks and disruptions to the global supply chain. High transportation costs and Barbados' limited economies of scale as a small island also contribute to high food prices. Additionally, some residents have faced disruptions to water supply. The water challenges are compounded by climate crisis-related developments such as drought conditions.

### **Deteriorating Physical and Mental Health and Pockets of Social Instability**

- 1.6 Sedentary lifestyles and unhealthy diets have contributed to the deterioration of the physical health of Barbadians. Chronic non-communicable diseases (CNCDs) are therefore more prevalent. Mental health and neurological disorders in Barbados must also be addressed. There are many persons who lack focus and purpose because of protracted unemployment. The costs of deteriorating physical and mental health in Barbados go beyond direct healthcare expenses. It also results in low productivity, high levels of absenteeism, higher labour costs and increased pressure on healthcare and social services. It therefore negatively affects every aspect of Barbadian life, from the family to the community and the workplace. Over the last few decades, the increasing prevalence of violent crimes, illegal drug trafficking, addiction, abuse and gang-related activity, particularly among the youth, are expressions of a bigger issue of Barbadians who do not feel valued, supported or engaged in the social and economic development of the country and suggests a broader issue of social decay. This impacts negatively on families and communities. Crime is also a public health issue. It shares common causes with ill health. The fear of violent crime is itself a major cause of anxiety.

### **Development Deficit That Has Spawned Financial Marginalization and Worker Vulnerability**

- 1.7 There are marginalized groups in Barbadian society, including but not limited to the youth, persons living with disabilities and low waged workers who do not have access to financial services and who lack financial literacy. The financial marginalization of these groups has created social exclusion, inter-generational poverty and enduring

wealth gaps. There are also segments of the population living below the poverty line and who are deprived of a decent standard of living. Failure to address poverty in Barbados will only widen the wealth gap and create conditions for further marginalization, increased pressure on social services and social instability. These marginalized groups are also more vulnerable to any negative economic shocks and this compromises the country's resilience. Our historical development has meant that the majority of our population are workers. Many are in vulnerable groups and lack opportunities to be involved in the socio-economic development of the country. These workers will continue to need access to affordable financial products and services, and the ability to participate meaningfully in economic activity. This inclusion has been and continues to be a key enabler to reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity – sharing the burden and sharing the bounty.

### **Inequitable Digital Access and Slow Technological Conversion**

- 1.8 While Barbados has an advanced information and communication technology infrastructure, there are segments of the population that do not have access to technology such as computers and the internet. They also lack the digital literacy to effectively utilize technology for their advancement and to contribute meaningfully to the country's development. Doing business in Barbados remains cumbersome in part due to the slow uptake of modern digital technology across the public and private sectors. High transactional costs, the inefficiency of manual processes and dated technology have constrained investment growth, innovation and productivity; thereby compromising international competitiveness in the global digital economy. We simply cannot run an analogue Barbados in a digital, 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

## **2. MISSION OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The Social Partners acknowledge that achieving the aforementioned vision and addressing the agreed challenges require bold missions that direct economic and social development by catalysing cross-sectoral investment and innovation, fundamentally reimagining the role of the state as a market shaper and aligning economic growth with critical inclusion, climate, health, social and culture goals. To be successful, the missions must inspire economy-wide actions, new forms of collaboration, and the incorporation of new technologies, while engaging government, business, labour and civil society.
- 2.2 The Social Partners therefore agree to the following mission objectives:
- I. By 2030, become a clean and beautiful large-ocean state, championing sustainable development locally and globally – with the goal of all domestic activities becoming 100% sustainable by 2035.
  - II. By 2030, transform Barbados into a country of active, involved citizens. All Barbadians will feel empowered and engaged in the social, economic, and cultural development of the country as confident, creative, compassionate and entrepreneurial citizens.
  - III. By 2030, ensure that every Barbadian has equitable and reliable access to clean water and nutritious food that are affordable.
  - IV. By 2030, create a society that prioritizes wellness and happiness. Improve public

health and safety, leading to a 50% reduction in new cases of non-communicable diseases and a 50% reduction in crime.

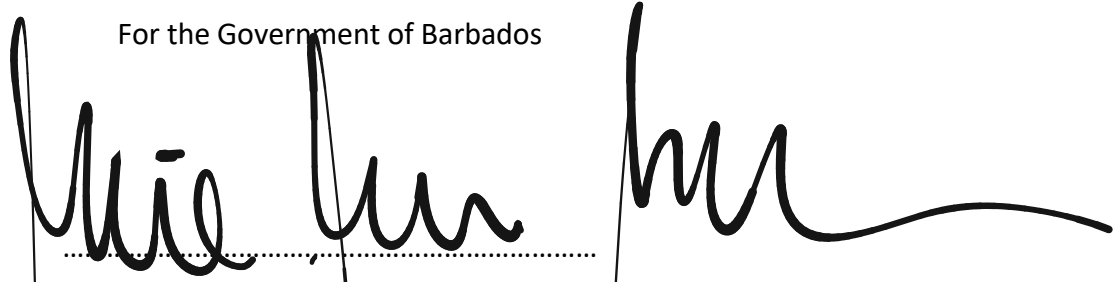
- V. By 2030, empower and enfranchise all Barbadian workers and families by creating opportunities for ownership and wealth creation that enable Barbadians to take better care of themselves and each other and reduce the rate of poverty by 50%.
- VI. By 2030, transform Barbados to be a high-functioning, resilient society with seamless access to services and meaningful digital inclusion for all Barbadians.

### **3. IMPLEMENTATION OF MISSION BARBADOS**

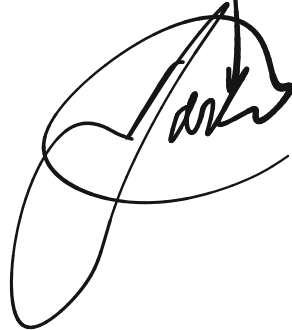
- 3.1 The Social Partners acknowledge that the Declaration of Mission Barbados serves as a social compact that establishes tripartite consensus on the missions among government, industry and labour that fosters commitment, distributes leadership and shares responsibility for achieving the missions.
- 3.2 The Social Partners also acknowledge that the mission-oriented approach allows stakeholders to design the missions collectively and to implement and govern the missions collaboratively. The Social Partners therefore agree that this Declaration of Mission Barbados must be followed by more concise action planning among all stakeholders.
- 3.3 The Social Partners agree to seek the “buy in” of all Barbadians for Mission Barbados and to promote the missions to their membership and other key stakeholders.
- 3.4 The Social Partners also agree that any action planning must be conducted within the context of voluntarism, as conceptualised and applied to industrial relations in Barbados, and particularly through those conventions and practices, which have been carefully developed and followed over the years. This remains critical to the success of any continued tripartite endeavours.
- 3.5 The Social Partners reaffirm their commitment to industrial harmony by the application of that very concept of voluntarism and through the observance of the principles of tripartism as established by the International Labour Organisation.
- 3.6 The Social Partners support a system of data collection and measurement to monitor the progress, value-creation and challenges of each Mission. The Social Partners therefore support the development of a dashboard of baseline measurements and economic and non-economic indicators to monitor the success of each Mission.
- 3.7 The Social Partners commit to meeting to determine, by June 30, 2023, what each partner will do to deliver on the Missions and sensitise the wider public on the plan and its implementation.
- 3.8 The Social Partners agree therefore to develop and sign the Seventh Protocol by May 1, 2024.

Signed by the Social Partners on the first day of May, 2023 at the National Botanical Gardens, Waterford, St. Michael.

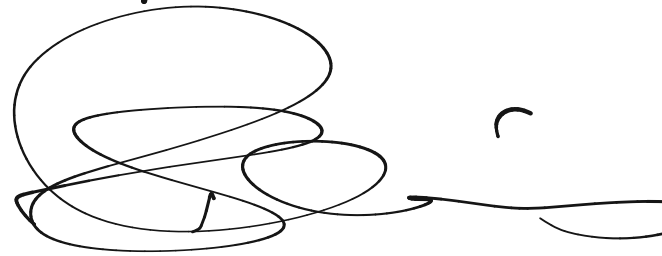
For the Government of Barbados

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal tail.

Workers' Representatives

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'M/O'.A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, circular loop and a long horizontal tail.

Employers' Representatives

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal tail.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mary Ann Rose'.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Kimberly Agard'.