

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

Date of admission to UN: 11 November 1981.

TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

Land and People: Antigua and Barbuda has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

Racial Discrimination

Succeeded: 25 October 1988.

Antigua and Barbuda's initial and second through fourth periodic reports were due 24 November 1989, 1991, 1993 and 1995 respectively.

Reservations and Declarations: Article 4.

Discrimination against Women

Acceded: 1 August 1989.

Antigua and Barbuda's fourth periodic report is due 31 August 2002.

Antigua and Barbuda's initial and second and third periodic reports were submitted as one document (CEDAW/C/ANT/1-3) which was considered by the Committee at its July 1997 session. The report prepared by the government provides a profile of the country and information on its political structure as well as commentary on: the Constitution and laws as they relate to discrimination; national machinery for women; sex roles and stereotypes; prostitution; women in public and political life; nationality and citizenship; education, employment and health; social and economic benefits; and marriage and family laws.

The Committee's concluding observations and comments (CEDAW/C/1997/II/L.1/Add.4) acknowledged that, as a small island state, Antigua and Barbuda's lack of financial and human resources, had an impact on its capacity to compile statistical data on the situation of women and might be an obstacle in fully implementing the Convention.

The Committee commended the government for having established a Women's Desk soon after independence, which was later upgraded and expanded to become the Directorate of Women's Affairs. The Committee also commended the government on its intention to upgrade that office even further to that of a ministry.

The Committee welcomed: the introduction of legislation such as the Equal Opportunity Act, the Divorce Act and the Sexual Offences Act as well as the introduction of bills on equal pay and domestic violence; the successful measures taken to reduce the birth rate; the introduction of gender management systems; the Prime Minister's assurances that the government would redress the inequalities in power-sharing at the highest decision-making levels; the introduction of the domestic violence hotline and related support services; and, the introduction of measures to address teenage pregnancies and the focus placed on the situation of girls.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee were: the few measures aimed generally at increasing women's participation in public life, or specifically at increasing their political participation, and the absence of women in Parliament; the lack of integrated measures to address violence against women; the fact that the Directorate for Women's Affairs has no decision-making power; the lack of information on prostitution and the trafficking in women;

the fact that female students continue to select stereotypical subjects and, within the school system, are given greater exposure to domestic skills than other areas; the low level of occupational achievement by educated women and male dominance in the technical and professional fields; the concentration of women in the lower-paid service sector, including in the tourist industry; the failure to integrate women's concerns into the national five-year plan; the situation of rural women and their access to credit; the continued illegality of abortion, which had led to unsafe abortions; the lack of family planning education programmes and the fact that contraceptives are not covered by medical benefits schemes; the high level of teenage pregnancy; the high rate of perinatal mortality; the lack of special measures for women with HIV/AIDS, as well as the absence of measures to address drug addiction among women; and, the legal and economic position of women in common law relationships.

The Committee recommended that the government:

- ▶ upgrade and strengthen the Directorate of Women's Affairs;
- ▶ integrate gender issues into the five-year plan;
- ▶ fully employ affirmative action measures, as provided for in article 4 of the Convention, to accelerate de facto equality for women, and ensure the greater participation of women in politics by introducing special temporary measures;
- ▶ introduce appropriate policies and programmes for sex education and family planning education;
- ▶ ratify International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 100 concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value and take the necessary measures for its implementation;
- ▶ introduce programmes to encourage men to take account of their family responsibilities;
- ▶ use cultural art forms as a vehicle to promote respect for women and the media to promote positive attitudes towards women; and,
- ▶ include in its next report fuller information on the remaining obstacles to the full enjoyment of women's human rights, particularly in relation to article 6 (trafficking and sexual exploitation) of the Convention and the legal and economic position of women in common law relationships.

Torture

Acceded: 19 July 1993.

Antigua and Barbuda's initial report was due 18 August 1994.

Rights of the Child

Signed: 12 March 1991; ratified: 5 October 1993.

Antigua and Barbuda's initial report was due 3 November 1995.

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

At its 1997 session, the Commission on Human Rights considered the situation in Antigua and Barbuda under the confidential 1503 procedure, and decided to discontinue this consideration.

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