THE BARBADOS SOCIAL PARTNERSHIP

building our nation together
THE BEGINNING

• In early 90’s Barbados was facing a recession and possible devaluation of the dollar
• Many neighbours had entered into IMF adjustment programmes
• Unemployment was rising...social instability threatened
• Protest actions occurred
• Leaders of Government, Capital and Labour met and explored options
• Social dialogue reduced tension and social unrest
• Barbados devised its own programme, including 8% salary cut across government
• Formalized the tripartite arrangement
• Several entities met at the table
• Private sector later came under one umbrella, BPSA
• Labour also formed one umbrella, today called CTUSAB
• First protocol signed 1993
• Six protocols to date. 7th due next year
• www.labour.gov.bb/social-partnership
First Protocol 1993-1995

• Protocol for the Implementation of a Prices and Income Policy
• Agreed to freeze incomes and prices
• AIMED TO IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCTIVITY TO EXPAND THE ECONOMY
• Commitment to exchange rate
• Promotion of access to employment
• Reduction of social dislocation caused by high unemployment
Second Protocol

- Second protocol built on the broad objectives of First Protocol
- Wage freeze moved to wage restraint
- Consolidated tripartite social dialogue, collective bargaining, labour management and cooperation
Third Protocol

• Third protocol 1998-2000 expanded the focus to address issues associated with globalization
• Emphasized subordinating sectoral interests to the national interest
• Stable IR climate
• Increased employment to reduce social disparity
• Restructuring the economy
• Balance between prices and incomes
• Consolidation of tripartite consultation
Fourth Protocol

• 2001-2004
• Focus on building a modern, efficient economy
• Sustainable, equitable economic growth
• The disabled community
• Child labour
Fifth Protocol 2005-2007, extended to 2010

• Occupational Safety and Health
• Environmental issues
• Disaster Preparedness
• Migrant labour, human resource development
• As well as earlier issues of reduced social disparity, economic growth and increased competitiveness
Protocol 6, 2011-2013, extended to present

• Built on Protocol 5
• Dealing with the current economic crisis
• Attracting investment by becoming “the number one entrepreneurial hub”
• Chronic non-communicable diseases and workplace wellness
• Environmental protection and the green economy
• Public Sector issues always included
• Human Resource Development
Successes

• NISE 2004
• National Productivity Council
• HIV/AIDS awareness and education
• OSH
• Legislation eg. Employment Rights Act
• National employment policy
• CNCDs
• Social stability
• Financial stability
• Culture of voluntarism
• MUTUAL RESPECT AND TRUST
The Barbados Social Partnership in the current economy

- The Barbados Medium Term Growth and Development Strategy
- The Barbados Action Team appointed by the Prime Minister
- The home-grown stabilization and growth plan
- Avoiding devaluation
- Containing unemployment
- Dialogue as government cut expenditure
- Dialogue as companies adjust
- Dialogue to maintain or restore stable IR climate
Challenges faced in and by the Social Partnership

- Change in leadership of organizations
- Persons at the table may not be the leaders but delegated
- Become a function of managers
- Umbrella structure challenged
- Ensuring meetings are regular, relevant with concrete decisions for action and solutions to issues
- Must generate ideas and follow through
- Secretariat support
- Public awareness
- Globalization brings new interests who disregard voluntarism
Benefits of the Social Partnership

• Social stability, justice and peace
• Social dialogue, including tripartism, as best practice in governance
• Social dialogue used to address CNCDs, climate change
• Ready platform to ensure a Just Transition to sustainable economy and society for all as Barbados makes significant progress on Renewable energy, energy efficiency and climate change mitigation and adaptation
The way forward

• Change is inevitable
• New personalities and organizations
• “Enshrine voluntarism in law”
• Umbrella structure challenged but all still want to participate
• Civil Society wants to be at the table especially as non-labour areas discussed
• Recommitting to the principles may be necessary after period of difficulties
• Need to periodically review and redefine what the needs and expectations are of the parties and of the whole
• Success demands a commitment to the nation first; respect; trust; and willingness
The next generation
Barbados: You are specially invited

Thank you