



GOVERNMENT OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council and is pleased to submit its responses to the outcome of the Universal Periodic Review of Antigua and Barbuda.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda is pleased to inform that it accepts all the recommendations contained in paragraph 68 of A/HRC/19/5, except for the following of which due note has been taken:

- (a) the recommendation calling for the strengthening of its legal arsenal by acceding to the first Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, contained in paragraph 68.6 of A/HEC/19/5. The Government wishes to state that any alteration of existing legislation and binding judicial pronouncements on matters relating to the death penalty is currently not an acceptable position. That apart, the Government will seek to adopt the other provisions of the International Covenant;
- (b) on issuing a Standing Invitation to all special procedures of the HRC, it acknowledges the importance of the special procedures in ensuring that human rights obligations under the various conventions are respected and upheld and also expresses its willingness to cooperate, but cannot accept that recommendation at this time because of the financial burden and additional requirements this invitation would impose on a small island developing state such as Antigua and Barbuda. However, the Government will continue to monitor the implications with a view to accepting such invitations in the future;
- (c) regarding recommendations 68.23 to 68.25 on raising the age of criminality, the Government is cognizant of the emotional, mental and relative intellectual maturity of juveniles and will give active consideration to the recommendation to increase the legal minimum age for criminal responsibility in line with internationally acceptable standards;
- (d) on recommendation 68.31: implement public awareness campaigns on discrimination based on sexual preference, the Government recognizes the human rights of all citizens. However, the issue of discrimination based on sexual orientation is one which remains a matter of concern and it is of the view that implementing policies based on sexual orientation requires extensive public consultation and education given the current pre-disposition of its people and their religious influences and indoctrination;
- (e) lastly, on recommendation 68.8: consider the ratification of those international instruments of Human Rights of which it is not a party yet, the Government Antigua and Barbuda is a party to a number of core Human Rights Instruments and will continue to work towards completing the accession process for those which it considers acceptable following cabinet and/or public consultation.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda welcomes this exercise and is grateful to member States of the HRC for their commendations on our work in progress, as well as their recommendations on areas in which more work is needed. In this regard, the Government welcomes the continued support and encouragement of the HRC as it strives to achieve the high ideals being pursued by this august body.

Secretariat of the Human Rights Council

Geneva

14 March 2012