13th August, 2019

Mr. António Guterres
Secretary General of the United Nations
United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
U.S.A.

Dear Secretary General,

Antigua and Barbuda is committed to championing the cause of the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent Health, by embracing its objectives of ending preventable deaths, ensuring individual & population wellness and well-being, and expanding enabling environments. This is evident through our recent validation of the ‘Elimination of Mother to Child Transmission of HIV and Syphilis’ by the World Health Organization. This however does not negate the challenges that we currently face, or curtail the strides that still have to be made.

We therefore commit to a health care delivery system that, in tandem with the Sustainable Developmental Goals, ensures that every woman, child and adolescent is empowered, and physically and mentally well. The following are therefore goals that we are committed to achieving:-

1. Establishing a National Adolescent Health Department by 2020 to ensure appropriate holistic management of all adolescent issues. This will aid in:
   a. Reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy to less than 8%.
   b. Providing legislation to guide programmes that invest in adolescent development and mental health.
   c. Improving accessibility to health care services and better facilitate access to reproductive health and contraceptive measures.
   d. Ensuring protection against violence and discrimination in this age group.

2. Integrating the maternal and child health care programmes throughout the country by implementing a comprehensive health information system by 2021. This will further enhance communication and continued care through the hospital, community clinics and private health care facilities.
3. Encouraging all healthcare facilities to conduct research and ensure evidence based practice. This will result in the generation of data for the formulation of evidence-based national policies and an improvement in the quality of health care.

4. Establishing legislation to allow women with unwanted pregnancies to access legal and safe methods of termination of pregnancy so as to prevent morbidity and mortality related to illegal and unsafe abortions.

5. Creating a sustainable national programme where standardized evaluations of children who are differently abled can be obtained by 2020, with subsequent provision of indicated auxiliary services to include speech, occupational and physical therapy.

6. Implementing a National Preventative Health Task Force by 2019, whose focus will include but not be limited to:
   a. Reducing the neonatal mortality rate to less than 10 per 1000 live births
   b. Re-introducing a preventative dental programme in primary schools
   c. Implementing programmes targeting vision in primary schools
   d. Improving rates of exclusive breast feeding in the first 6 months of life
   e. Increasing the percentage of adolescents vaccinated for HPV to 100%
   f. Increasing the number of women who present for antenatal screening and continued care in order to reduce perinatal outcomes directly associated with poor antenatal care
   g. Reducing the maternal near misses to 3%. This can be actualised through appropriate capacity building of health care workers and facilities
   h. Reducing the percentage of premature babies born per year from 8% to less than 5%
   i. Introducing a national new-born screening program


The Government of Antigua and Barbuda realises that the above activities and programmes require financial resources. In this regard, we commit US $32,000,000 to the health of our women and children.

Antigua and Barbuda will adopt all appropriate measures and standards which will ensure that every Woman, Child and Adolescent has access to the highest quality of healthcare for their wholesome well-being.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Honourable Molwyn Joseph
Minister of Health Wellness and the Environment