



DLP GOVERNMENT'S NEGLECT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Yet another Month of The Disabled has come to pass without any legislative framework in place in Barbados addressing all forms of discrimination on the basis of physical and mental disabilities and providing for equal opportunities to be granted as of right to persons with disabilities so that they may have a more realistic chance to realize their full potential.

While the Government of Barbados did indeed finally ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities at the end of February, 2013, it has woefully failed to do anything substantial over the last year to advance the cause of persons with disabilities. The Government has had ample time since then in which it ought to have constituted the Committee which it is mandated to establish under the Convention to monitor the implementation of its provisions in our Country. The political administration's failure to so establish this Committee is compounded by the fact that Barbados is required by February, 2015 to submit to the United Nations' Secretary General a comprehensive report on measures taken to give effect to its treaty obligations and on the progress made thereunder.

Furthermore, the Government has cut the subvention granted to the Council for the Disabled by 54 per cent since October last year, thereby placing the quality of life of persons who are the most vulnerable in our society in severe jeopardy. A continuation of this political decision will undoubtedly result in a significant curtailment of programmes and projects which attempt to improve the lives of differently-abled persons in our Nation, many of whom are already counted among the one in five persons whom the 2010 Barbados Country Assessment of Living Conditions Study indicates are living below the poverty line.

The Government next week in the Estimates Parliamentary Debate needs to see it as its duty to restore its subvention for the Disabled to its pre-2013 Elections level and to actually transfer those sums to the Council.

EDMUND G. HINKSON
St. James North Member of Parliament
and Director of The Council for the Disabled
14th March, 2014