

► Just Transition and NDCs in Barbados

A Tripartite Approach – Case Presentation

Leading the Change: How Workers, Employers, and Governments Drive a Just Transition through Social Dialogue

Thursday / 09 / October / 2025

Agenda

- ▶ Presentation of Case Study (~25 minutes)
- ▶ Reactions/Comments by Tripartite Representatives from Barbados (~15 minutes)
- ▶ Open conversation (20-30 minutes moderated by Jorge Ramírez)

Case Structure: Why it matters?

- ❑ Executive summary
- ❑ Introduction
- ❑ Country and sectoral context: Economic, Social and political, Labour and human capital, and Environment
- ❑ Lessons from NDC iterations
- ❑ Policies and frameworks in support of a Just Transition
- ❑ Role and actions of Governments, Employers', and Workers' Organisations related to the Just Transition
- ❑ Social dialogue processes and multi-stakeholder engagement on the Just Transition
- ❑ Current Just Transition Challenges and Opportunities in Barbados
- ❑ Recommendations to support the Just Transition and NDC Implementation
- ❑ Conclusion
- ❑ References

Case Structure: Perspectives

Employers:

- ❖ How do **NDC actions** involve or affect **businesses**? What specific actions are they?
- ❖ Are policies and frameworks linking climate action and **businesses' needs/realities**? What legislation and norms should my membership be aware of? What **gaps exist**, or where are the burdens?
- ❖ What challenges and opportunities exist from a **business lens**? What actions can EBMOs and businesses take?

Workers:

- ❖ How do **NDC actions** involve or affect **jobs**? What specific actions are they?
- ❖ Are policies and frameworks linking climate action with **decent work and job opportunities**? What legislation and norms should my membership be aware of? What gaps exist, or what is **not being implemented**?
- ❖ What challenges and opportunities exist from the **workers' perspective**? What actions can Unions take?

Tripartite Partners:

- ❖ Are **NDC actions** including **labour** considerations? Are they including **social partners inputs**?
- ❖ Are policies and frameworks on climate action **accounting for businesses and workers**? Are policy consultation/awareness/development happening with SP? What **gaps or demands exist** from social partners?
- ❖ What challenges and opportunities exist and how can **social dialogue act** on them?

What is Barbados?

Economy



Social



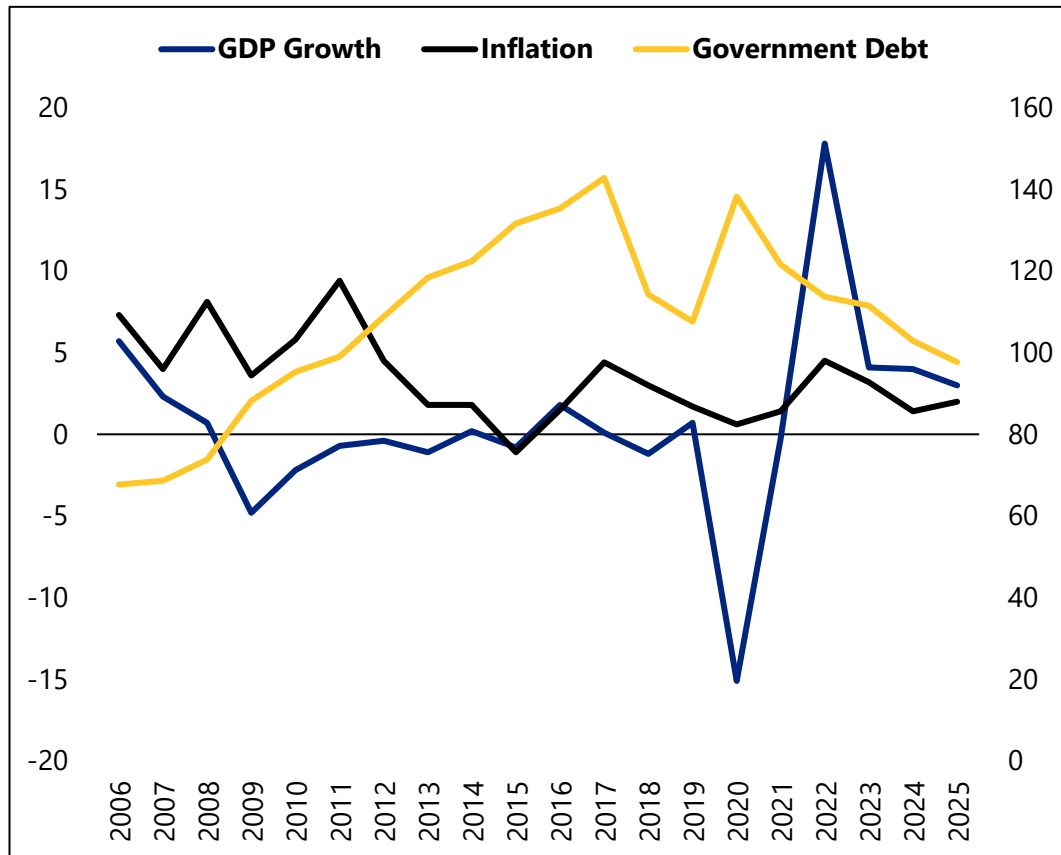
Labour



Environment



Economy



2024:

▶ 12.1% | 30%* GDP

Tourism

▶ 10% GDP (estimate)

Financial sector

▶ - 4.5% GDP

Current Account Balance

▶ Key exports:

Hard liquor, packaged medications & health supplies



Social

Population: 282,336 | One of the most densely populated islands globally

50/50 sex ratio | **90%** Afro-Caribbean | $\frac{30\% \text{ under } 25}{17\% \text{ over } 65}$ **ageing population**

12.5e% foreign born (many Caricom) | **25-30e%** Barbadians abroad

High income: \$19,945 PPP in 2024 | < Caribbean small states | > LAC

17.2% poverty line (2016) (gender bias) | **HDI** 69/193 one of the highest
in the region

Governance: House: 30/30 seats (BLP) | Good governance, rule of law, and corruption indicators.



Labour and human capital

Employment data (2024 Q2)

- **Unemployment:** 7.7% ↓
- **LF participation:** 63.5% —
- **LF 2004 = 146k | LF 2024 = 137k.**
- **Informality:** 30-40% GDP | 62% Labour (2016e)
- **Education (2021):** ~90% of 25+ adults, secondary, 12% post/associate, 20% tertiary | 20% in-school.

Social justice data

- **Gender:** good regional performance (LF gap = 7% ; WEF Index)
- **Youth:** 19.5% unemployment | NEET: 23% (2016e)
- **Underemployment:** 4.8%
- **Social protection:** Reforms advanced (e.g., parental and care leave).
Coverage (1 benefit): 56.7% population | 90% LF | health universal
- **Groups affected:** Women, youth, migrants, small businesses, informal workers (e.g., fishers).
- **Dependency ratio:** >50%

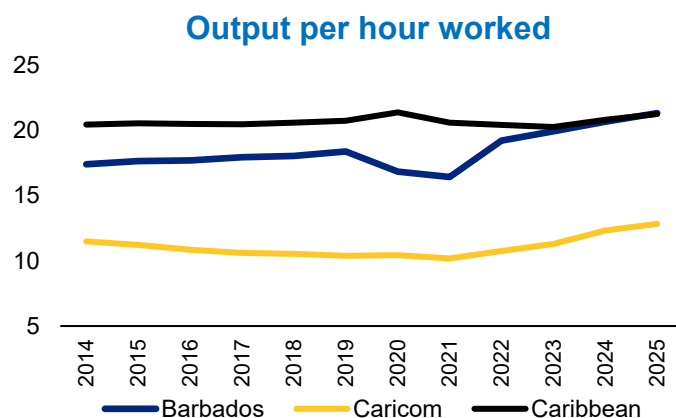
Jobs by sector:

- Tourism = 17.5% to 46%
- Secondary (Construction Manufacturing) = 18%
- Public employees = 21%
- Self-employed = 18%

MSME = 60% of private employment (retail, tourism, services)

Wage setting:

- Mostly market determined
- Min. Wage BBD\$10.5 (\$5.25)
- BWU represent ~15% LF | Union common in public sector



Environment

Economic activity	% contribution to total emissions of GHG
Energy (1/3 transportation)	74%
Waste, including solid waste disposal and wastewater treatment	15%
Industrial processes and product uses, such as in the metals and minerals industries	8%
Agriculture (mostly), forestry, and other land uses	3%
Carbon capture	Minimal – No ocean accounting

Environment

Barbados is highly exposed to climate-related risks that threaten both natural and economic systems. Rising sea levels, stronger tropical storms, flooding, drought, and increasing temperatures undermine economic activity, coastal ecosystems, and freshwater supplies. With much of the population and infrastructure located along the coastal areas.

▶ Lessons from NDCs iterations

Write in the chat if your country's NDC mentions Just Transition

▶ Lessons based on NDC 2016, NDC 2021, and NDC 2025

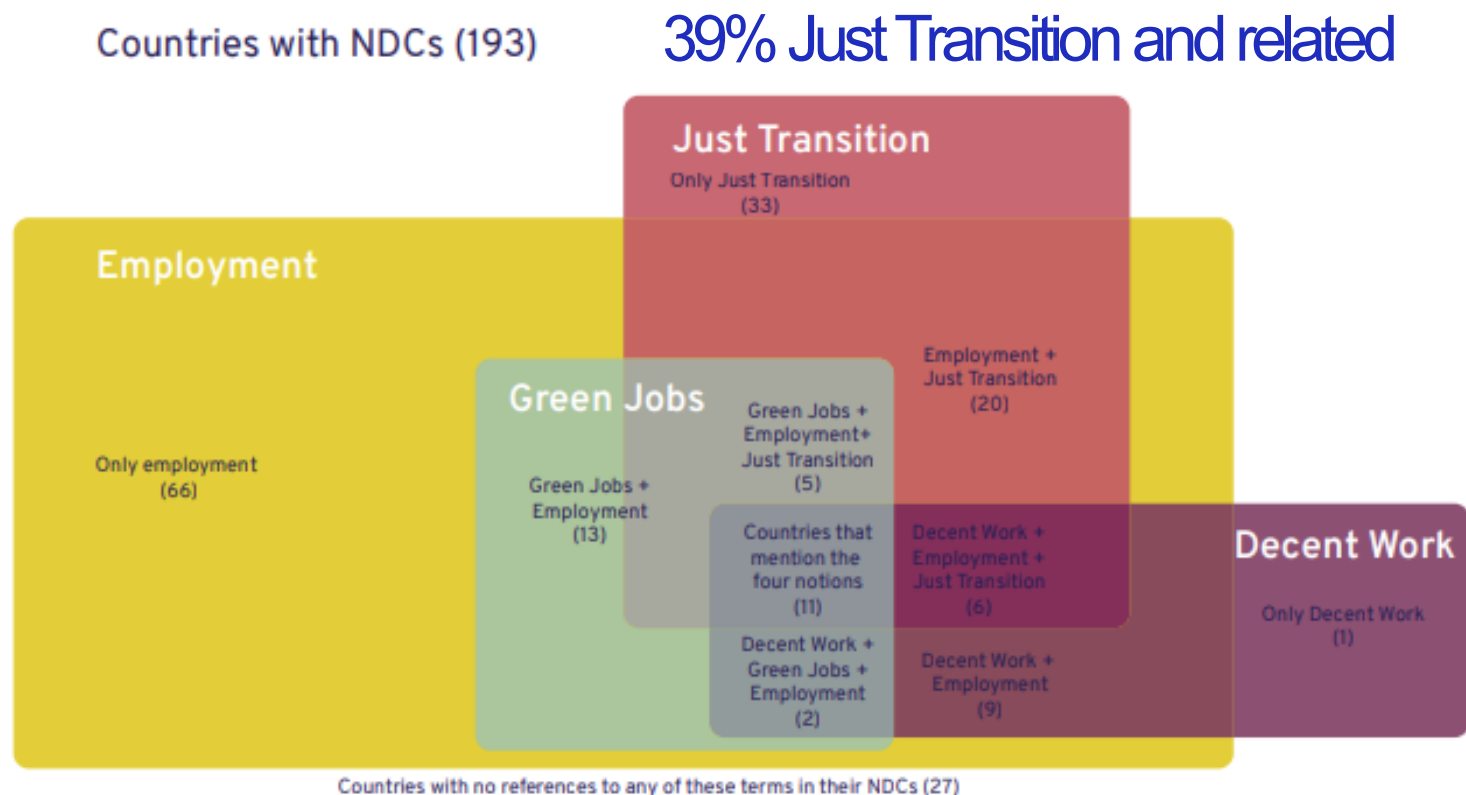
1. Feasible and aligned ambition

- ▶ Barbados aims to be 100% renewable by ~~2030~~ 2035
- ▶ Several policies align with this goal (next section)

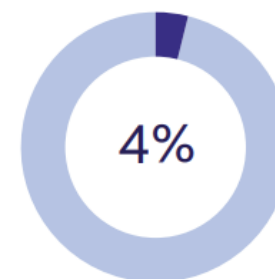
2. A Just Transition lens

- ▶ NDC 2025 introduces it (DWCP – UN PAGE – RE Council)
- ▶ And more: Health, Social Protection, **Population and Mobility**, Loss and Damage, Responses to Vulnerabilities and Risks, and Gender
- ▶ Vulnerable populations mentioned: the elderly, coastal residents, displaced persons, migrants, and those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, fishing, and tourism.

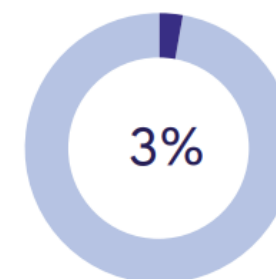
NDC 2.0 (2020/2021)



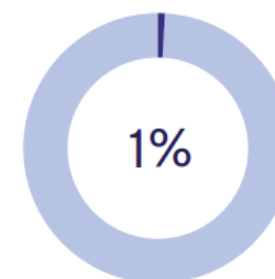
NDCs that mention workers organizations



NDCs that mention EBMOs



NDCs that mention workers and EBMOs



▶ Lessons based on NDC 2016, NDC 2021, and NDC 2025

1. Feasible and aligned ambition
2. A Just Transition lens
- 3. Platform for global leadership and climate justice**
 - ▶ Blue carbon (ocean)
 - ▶ Legal action (e.g., GHG as marine pollution)
 - ▶ Climate finance reform, especially for SIDs (Bridgetown Initiative, climate vulnerability SDRs)

► Policies and frameworks

In support of a Just Transition

Laws and norms

Health Services Act

Marine Pollution Control Act + Marine Transport (Emissions Control) Act

Catastrophe Fund Act

Blue Green Bank Act

Physical Development Act

Electric Light and Power Act

Electricity Supply Bill (2024, not yet proclaimed):

International commitments (Paris, SDGs, ABAS) and Support (DWCP, UN PAGE, The Nature Conservancy)

Policies, plan, and projects

Declaration of Mission Barbados (2023)

Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plans

National Physical Development Plans (PDP) + Roofs to Reefs Programme (R2RP)

Barbados 2035: A Plan for Investment in Prosperity & Resilience

Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) Policy

National Policy Framework for the Development of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) (2025)

Barbados National Energy Policy (BNEP) 2019–2030 + Integrated Resource and Resiliency Plan + Barbados Energy Transition and Investment Plan

Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy + Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan 2020–2030

Many others: Barbados Population Policy, Agriculture and Climate Change Policy, **National Cooling Strategy**, Water Reuse Act, Health NAP, National Policy on Gender, Land Use Zoning Policy

Fiscal Incentives that can support NDC & Just Transition – Barbados

Type of Incentive	Sectors	Examples of Measures
Tax Exemptions & VAT Relief	Renewable energy and energy efficiency	• Full duty exemptions for renewable energy systems • Zero VAT on materials and supplies for RE generation, sale, and energy-efficient systems • Differentiated excise tax rates for vehicles by engine capacity and fuel source
Income Tax Deductions & Holidays	Renewable energy and energy efficiency	• Income tax deductions up to BBD \$5,000 for “environmentally preferred products” • 150% deduction for recognised environmental certification and energy audits • 50% deduction of retrofitting costs to shift to non-fossil systems • 10-year income tax holiday for developers, manufacturers, or installers of renewable energy and energy-efficient products
Enhanced Deductions (150%)	Renewable energy, training, and R&D	• Up to 150% deduction for interest on loans to construct or upgrade RE facilities • 150% deduction for staff and individual training in energy efficiency and renewables • 150% deduction for marketing, product development, and research in these sectors
Dividend & Interest Exemptions	Financial intermediaries and investors	• Dividend exemptions for shareholders of companies solely engaged in renewables or energy efficiency • Interest income exemptions for financial intermediaries financing renewables/efficiency (10 years)
Sectoral Incentives (Tourism & Housing)	Tourism; Construction; Housing	• Duty and VAT exemptions/refunds on construction, amenities, training, and marketing • Income tax deductions on interest, equity, and marketing expenditures • Incentives for construction in non-coastal areas • Support for low-income housing (no explicit green provision)
Innovation & Employment Credits	Economy-wide	• R&D tax credit: 50% of eligible expenditures against tax liabilities • Productivity and innovation credit: 25% for successful market innovations • Jobs tax credits increasing with number of employees

Declaration of Mission Barbados (2023)

“To transform Barbados into a sustainable, prosperous, inclusive and resilient society. Barbadians must shift mindsets and engage as citizens and stakeholders in collaborating, innovating, and investing to shape Barbados’ future”.

- **Social compact – tripartite developed**
- **Six missions** (I – 100% domestic activities sustainable by 2035)
- **Includes themes** such as decent work, digital transformation, well-being

Roofs to Reefs Programme (R2RP)

- **Operationalizes NDCs and other policies**
- Actions such as climate-resilient housing and infrastructure
- Job creator (decent?)
- Includes vulnerable groups prioritization

► Other highlighted policies

1. **Barbados 2035: A Plan for Investment in Prosperity & Resilience (2024)**

- Identifies 12 non-exhaustive investment priorities (~BBD 11.6 billion, 57% private) in fostering social, economic, and climate resilience.

2. **Amendment to the National Policy Framework for the Development of Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) (2025)**

- Places new emphasis on climate change adaptation and resilience. Prioritises business continuity and disaster preparedness.
- Encourages formalisation, sustainable growth, entrepreneurial skills development, worker reskilling and upskilling, financial access, tax credits, and incentives (for RE)

3. **Blue Green Bank (upcoming):** over USD 250 million for renewable energy, resilient housing, and sustainable transport

4. **Energy:** Energy Policy (100% goal) & Barbados Energy Transition and Investment Plan (roadmap and scenarios) & **Electricity Supply Bill**

Supportive Policies from the ILO Guidelines on Just Transition (2015)

Social dialogue and tripartism policies	• Mechanisms and spaces • Active role in policy formulation • Incorporation of environmental dimension in collective bargaining and agreements
Macroeconomic and Growth Policies	• Sustainable growth • Harmonizing growth with social and environmental goals • Investing public funds in the greening of the economy • Trade and investment policies
Industrial and Sectoral Policies	• Sectoral goals and incentives • Sectoral perspective (risks and opportunities)
Policies concerning companies	• Favourable environment for sustainable businesses • Business resilience, especially for SMEs • Financial incentives, training opportunities, technical assistance
Competency Development Policies	• Labor skills development • Education, technical training, supply and demand gaps
Occupational Health and Safety Policies	• Identification and regulation of new risks • Adaptation of environments/conditions
Social Protection Policies	• Health services, income security, social services integrated with environmental policies • Innovative solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change on workers
Gender and Diversity Policies	• Promoting equitable outcomes
Active Labor Market Policies	• Addressing unemployment caused by job losses, and support for at-risk communities • Effective and timely employment services

► Social dialogue mechanisms In support of a Just Transition

Social dialogue and tripartite engagement mechanisms

The Social Partnership

Mission Boards from “Declaration of Mission Barbados”

Barbados Decent Work Country Programme Steering Committee (UPCOMING)

National Advisory Committee on Occupational Safety and Health

C144 Committee (ILO Convention No. 144 (Tripartite Consultation – International Labour Standards Convention))

Technical Vocational Education and Training Council (TVETC)

Minimum Wage Board

National Committee on Wellness in the Workplace

Renewable Energy Council (UPCOMING)

Productivity Council (decommissioned)

Social Partnership

- **Apex social dialogue body** | created in the 1990s following economic and industrial unrest
- Broader group is chaired by the **Prime Minister** (meets quarterly)
- **Subcommittee** – acts as the first line of consultation (stipulated to meet monthly)
- **Formal basis = Voluntary** | Agreed Protocols that set out tripartite views, agreements, and commitments (including decent work) | Current Protocol **outdated**, but new in development.
 - **Developed** Mission Barbados; Barbados Economic Recovery and Transformation (BERT) Plans
 - **Members:** Government: Minister of Labour (chair); the Head of the Civil Service, the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour, the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office, the Chief Personnel Officer and the Chief Labour Officer. The social partners have an equal number of representatives from the Barbados Private Sector Agency (BPSA), Barbados Employers' Confederation (BEC), Barbados Workers' Union (BWU), National Union of Public Workers (NUPW), Barbados Secondary Teachers Union (BSTU) and the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB).

► **Suriname** - Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) Steering Committee

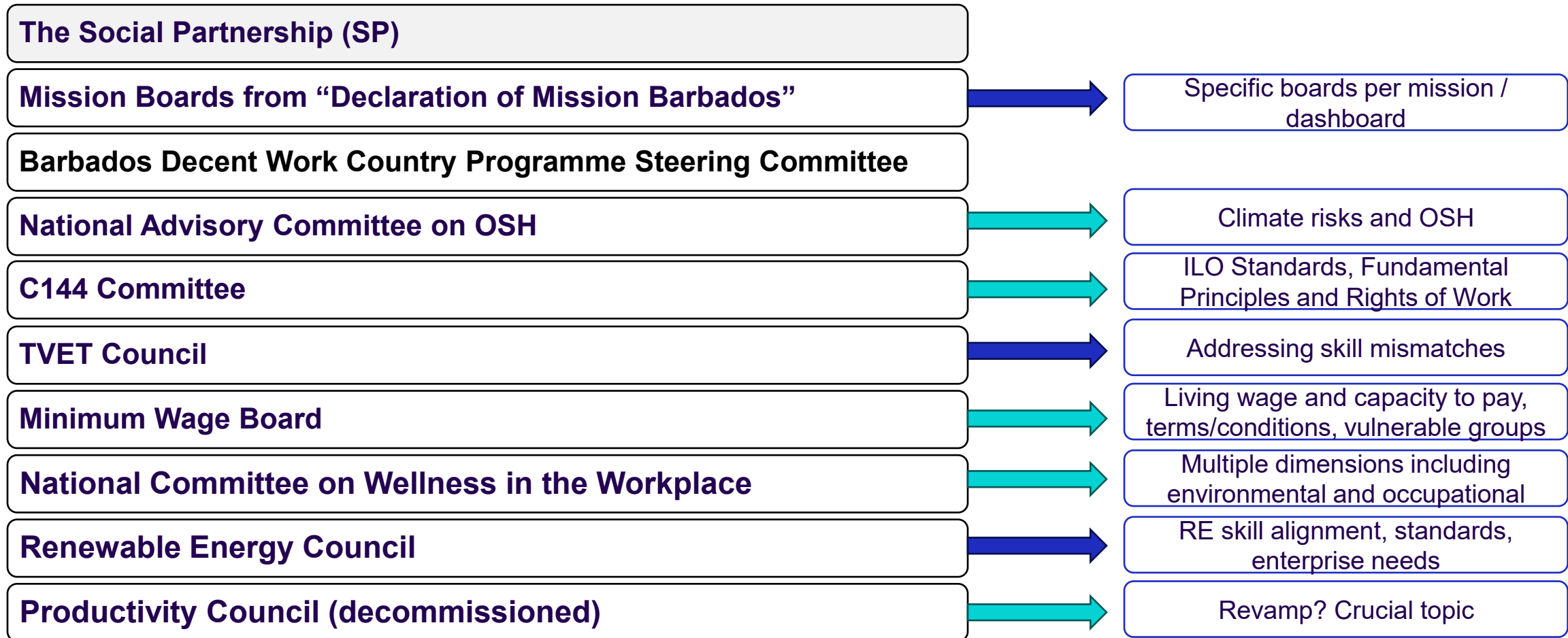
1. Some highlighted pursued outcomes:

- ❑ 1) **Jobs, productivity, and sustainable growth**: Increased offer of decent 'green' jobs that are accessible to all | Enhanced enterprise productivity and competitiveness | and resiliency
- ❑ 2) **Livelihoods, human capital, and a skilled workforce**: Education and training programmes are aligned with current and future labour market need | Improved policies, programmes, and services to facilitate jobseekers' transition into decent employment.
- ❑ 3) **Labour market governance and labour rights**: Improved labour market information and analysis system.

2. The work of the **Committee** (the National Decent Work Commission) in monitoring and implementation has been **highlighted as exemplary**.

- ❖ **Convenes regularly**
- ❖ **Systematically monitors DWCP progress** (Results framework updated periodically – Last July 2025)
- ❖ **Extended stakeholder consultation and information awareness**

Social dialogue and tripartite engagement mechanisms



► Challenges

For the Just Transition in Barbados

Challenges to Just Transition in Barbados

Fiscal space and import-reliance

Regulatory/Technical constraints – Energy Sector

Policy alignment but **inter-ministerial coordination** weakness + **Slow implementation**

Skills gap is the main challenge highlighted by social partners + **information gaps**

High dependency ratio, ageing population, and **declining LF**

Migration inclusive of social protection and balancing locals' opportunities

Social protection needed advancements/coverage, informality levels, vulnerable groups

What **diversification** can be accomplished?

Financial access AND awareness

Social dialogue spaces not always institutionalize, convened, or effective (or not explicit JT)

NDC involvement by social partners

Challenges – Survey to Tripartite Partners [MoL]

Providing a **regulatory framework** for sustainable enterprises and decent work

Including **JT in Labour Ministry agenda**

Building **local and regional capacity** to guide the transition

Promoting **opportunities for union–employer participation**

Conducting **research and impact evaluations** in sustainable/social policies

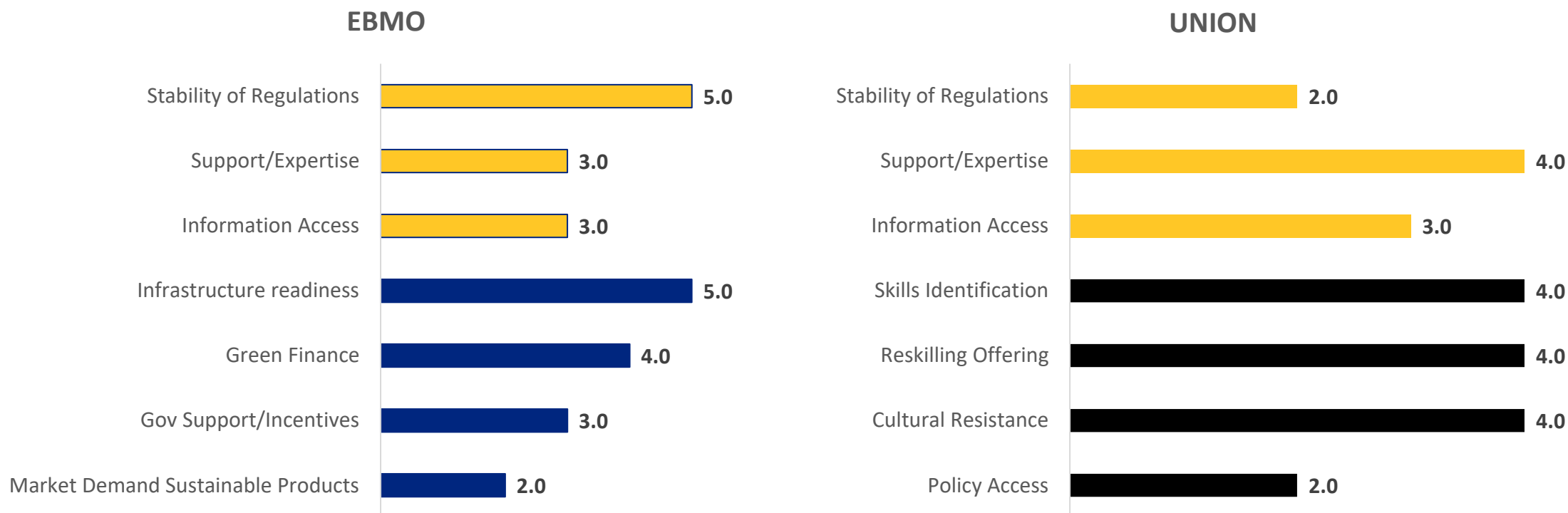
Integrating **Just Transition into national plans**

Strengthening **inter-ministerial collaboration**

Improving access to and availability of **labour data**

Challenges – Survey to Tripartite Partners [SOCIAL PARTNERS]

Please rate the extent to which each of the following factors acts as an obstacle to transitioning toward a sustainable economy:



Scale: 1 (not an obstacle), 3 (moderate), 5 (very severe obstacle)



► Opportunities For the Just Transition in Barbados



Green jobs



Renewable
energies



Construction



Bioenergy



Blue economy



Tourism?

Macroeconomic conditions and fiscal management

Shared tripartite vision and policy alignment

Climate justice leadership and international partnerships

Innovative finance

Vulnerable groups holistic lens

Growing skill offering

Examples of current TVET and Education Programmes

The following list highlights how different education centres are training the Barbadian workforce with skills aligned to a low-carbon economy:

- **Barbados Community College (BCC):** offers a Certificate in Photovoltaic Design & Practice, combining online modules (via Solar Energy International) with hands-on training to prepare technicians and designers in solar systems. It also provides environmental science majors, along with STEM and health programmes that include environmental tracks, all at associate degree level.
- **Samuel Jackman Prescod Institute of Technology (SJPI):** through its Distance and Continuing Centre provide short-courses in Photovoltaic Installations, Energy Advisory, Refrigeration and A/C, and Wind Energy. A Sustainable Energy Youth Empowerment Programme has also been launched and aims to offer scholarships in energy-related trades.
- **Barbados Vocational Training Board (BVTB):** operates TVET and apprenticeship pathways in technical trades relevant to energy-transition infrastructure. It offers Solar Water Heater Technician and Refrigeration and Air Conditioning apprenticeships, alongside skills training in electrical installation, plumbing, RAC, and automotive. Evening and part-time courses are available.
- **The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill (UWI):** provides undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Environmental Studies, Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Air Transport, and Sustainable Energy Management, supported by research labs working on climate and energy. Following ABAS 2024, it was agreed to establish a SIDS-SIDS Green-Blue Economy Knowledge Transfer Hub at Cave Hill to support SIDS in curriculum development, capacity building, knowledge exchange, and NDC implementation (currently NDC stocktakes).³
- **National Transformation Initiative (NTI) and Coursera:** launched in 2020, the NTI provides online short courses tailored to national skills needs. Since 2021, it has partnered with Coursera to give citizens free access to learning tracks in renewable energy, climate change, environmental management, and green and blue economy foundations, among other areas.

Green and * Decent* Jobs

"Green jobs are, by definition, decent jobs that contribute to preserving and restoring the environment. They can involve producing goods or providing services that benefit the environment—for example, green buildings or clean transportation."

Identified opportunities

Energy: 1,500 new jobs by 2035 | 2024 RE = 14.4% of electricity generation

Transport: 89/126 public buses fleet is electric | Incentives | New skills needed

Blue economy: EEZ is 430 x Barbados land | Country's bet

Construction: Roof to Reefs | Current industry boom | NDC green codes

Waste: Strong landfill diversion (69%) | Bioenergy with UNDP | Water Reuse | Container Act to Recycling act?

Financial innovation: Debt to nature swaps -> 30% EEZ protection; 3% GDP to climate resilience, millions in debt conversion (\$> 200m) | Blue Green Bank and Barbados Environmental Sustainability Fund



► Roles of Tripartite Partners

In support of a Just Transition

Roles of Social Partners

Government

- **Main implementer and architect**
 - But who bears the actions?
- **Convenor**
- **Direct provider of services and support**
 - Education and skill building
 - Employment services
 - Access to finance and investments
 - Crisis response
- **Involved public actors:**
 - Ministry of Maritime Affairs and the Blue Economy (Fisheries Division, Coastal Mgt. Unit)
 - Ministry of Environment (NDC, Env. Protection)
 - Ministry of Labour
 - Ministry of Energy and Business
 - Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (NDC)
 - Cabinet, Parliament
 - Many others (should): Housing, Education, Finance, Transport, Youth, Tourism, etc)
 - SOEs

Social Partners

- Advocacy
- Policy development -> implementation
- Social Dialogue
- Awareness raising
- Representation
- Direct services to members and capacity building
- Partnership building

ILO resolution concerning a just transition (International Labour Conference- 111a meeting, Geneva, 2023) states that employers' and workers' organizations must:

- a) Participate in social dialogue in all its forms to ensure the distributions of benefits and promote a just transition and decent at the company, sector and national level;
- b) Develop the capacity of its members to analyse the effects and give answers;
- c) Design and introduce its own initiatives in favour of the just transition, including initiatives by specific sectors, and contribute to the development of balanced policies;
- d) Contribute, as interlocutors, to training activities and the reskilling of professionals;
- e) Elaboration and application plans in favour of a sustainable transition at the company and sector level through bipartite social dialogue

► Recommendations

Recommendations

1. Strengthen social dialogue and make Just Transition an explicit agenda item.

Tripartite spaces—such as the Social Partnership, Mission Barbados boards, the TVET Council, and the upcoming Renewable Energy Council— offer an opportunity to make the Just Transition an explicit agenda item for consensus building

2. Boost financial access and awareness.

High transition costs remain a barrier for MSMEs. The new Blue Green Bank and Environmental Sustainability Fund offer opportunities to finance renewable energy, housing, and resilience projects. Social partners should help raise awareness, simplify applications, and ensure fiscal incentives reach smaller firms.

3. Close skills gaps and modernise training.

Rapid mapping of green occupations and stronger alignment of TVET programmes are priorities. National training centres and online platforms offerings should be expanded and complemented with short, stackable courses on renewable energy, energy efficiency, and OSH–climate linkages. Redirecting the newly launched Job Registry to highlight green jobs would also help meet future labour market demand.

4. Advance inclusion and twin transitions.

Policies must better support women, youth, migrants, and MSMEs, promoting equal access to skills, finance, and formalisation. Finally, combining digital and green innovation—the “twin transition”—can boost productivity and sustainability.

5. Increase NDC ownership by social partners.

Ongoing tripartite participation in NDC 2025 is needed to ensure that climate actions engage more directly with the world of work.

► Intervention by Social Partners

- **Imran Best** | Program Officer | Barbados People Development Implementation and Monitoring Unit - Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Third Sector
- **Lesley M. Trotman-Edwards** | Executive Assistant to the General Secretary | **Barbados Workers' Union (BWU)**
- **Aleika Walker** | Manager, Administrative Services | **Barbados Employers' Confederation (BEC)**



► Message from Mr. Imran Best

- Barbados demonstrates how **social dialogue drives climate action**—aligning economic transformation, labour resilience, and environmental goals through the Social Partnership and Mission Barbados. The Government is **modernizing the National Apprenticeship System** to equip workers for green and blue economy jobs, linking skills development directly to the **Just Transition**. This tripartite approach ensures that employers, unions, and government work together to **turn climate ambition into decent work and sustainable growth**.

► Imran Best / Program Officer / Barbados Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Third Sector

► Highlighted activities from the Ministry of Labour

- **Green Jobs & Skills:** Aligning apprenticeships and short courses in renewable energy, energy efficiency, EV maintenance, and climate-smart construction (retrofitting, roof strapping, water efficiency). **Modernization of National Apprenticeship System**
- **Skills Gap Analysis:** Manpower Research & Statistical Unit mapping occupations vs. market demand and planning a national skills gap assessment.
- **Tripartite Engagement :** Active in Social Partnership, C144 Committee, DWCP, UN PAGE, and Mission Barbados—main spaces advancing Just Transition dialogue. The **Renewable Energy Council:** Council's Terms of Reference have been drafted, with nominations advancing, and waiting for Cabinet formal establishment
- **Policy Implementation:** Leads on green jobs and skills workstreams under Mission Barbados | Supports Roofs to Reefs and Physical Development Plan via labour market analysis and skills pipelines | Will advise Blue Green Bank on financing for green jobs | Energy: develop skill standards, apprenticeships, and Just Transition measures for energy and transport workers.

► **Thank you!**