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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BARBADOS LEADING IN MASS VACCINATION EFFORT

Barbados is in the process of a mass COVID-19 vaccination programme, following the donation of 100,000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine from the Republic of India.

And now with over 25,000 people – approximately 12.5 per cent of the adult population – already receiving their first shots within just two weeks, Barbados leads the way as the most vaccinated country in the Caribbean.

“This is a commendable start for a country that really did not have a lot in place for a vaccination programme,” Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley said.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) describes vaccination as a critical tool in reducing the impact of COVID-19 worldwide. In a statement, the organization said “If you are protected from getting infected and from disease, you are less likely to infect someone else. This is particularly important to protect people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19, such as healthcare providers, older or elderly adults, and people with other medical conditions.”

Speaking to the nation, Prime Minister Mottley added that a comprehensive vaccination programme was the fourth step in Barbados' COVID-19 management plan. Other strategies include contact tracing; lab testing; public health protocols such as physical distancing and handwashing; and Operation Seek and Save, which saw the Ministry of Health and Wellness travelling to communities to do public health assessments to capture those who may be unknowingly infected by the virus and offer them early healthcare, especially the elderly.

The first wave of vaccinations was distributed to frontline workers, including those in the tourism sector, as well as the vulnerable population, including the elderly and persons with comorbidities. Now, all citizens over 18 are coming forward to get their first dose of the vaccine.

To ensure widespread protection, Government has signalled its intent to obtain more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine for persons on island, whether they are citizens or not, by the end of April or early May 2021.

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About Barbados

The island of Barbados offers the most authentic Caribbean experience with its exceptionally rich culture and history rooted in remarkable landscapes. Rated as one of the world's sexiest beaches in 2008 by Concierge.com; Barbados' Crane Beach in St. Philip stands as a premier destination for travellers. Barbados is also the first Zagat-rated Caribbean island and is known as the culinary capital of the Caribbean. Barbados has hosted several world class events including: The annual Barbados Food & Rum Festival; the 2006 PGA World Golf Championships-Barbados World Cup, the ICC Cricket World Cup Finals in 2007, the Sentebale Charity Polo match with Prince Harry of Wales in 2010, and the ICC Twenty20 Cricket Finals for 2010, and the Rihanna LOUD concert in 2012. Accommodations range from picturesque plantation houses and villas, to quaint bed and breakfasts and award-winning, five-star resorts. Grantley Adams International Airport offers even more non-stop and direct service from a growing number of U.S. cities, making Barbados the true gateway to the Eastern Caribbean. Barbados was voted eighth in the World by Trip Advisor's "2008 Travelers' Choice Destination Awards" in its Top 100 Destinations category. For more information on travel to Barbados, visit www.visitbarbados.org, follow on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/VisitBarbados>, via Twitter @Barbados.