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**RIAL/OAS BILATERAL COOPERATION BETWEEN**

**THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND LABOUR OF ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA AND**

**EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA**

**ON ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT IN THE WORLD OF WORK**

**Coordination meeting:** April 30, 2025

**First session:**  June 11, 2025

**Second session:** July 29, 2025

**Third session:** October 9, 2025

All information on this cooperation is available here: <https://rialnet.org/?q=en/AG_CAN_Violence_Harassment>

(Version: August 7 – Open to comments from the Ministries – This document will be updated as the exchange progresses)

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6. **OVERVIEW:**

The Bilateral Cooperation Activity between the Ministry of Public Safety and Labour (MPSL) of **Antigua and Barbuda** and the Labour Program at Employment and Social Development **Canada** (ESDC) on **Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the world of work** was selected in the framework of the 18th Call of the Inter-American Network for Labor Administration (RIAL) of the Organization of American States (OAS) in April 2025, to be carried out virtually.

The RIAL, coordinated by the OAS, seeks to strengthen the institutional and human capacities of the Ministries of Labor of the Americas through cooperation and technical assistance among them. More information at: <https://rialnet.org>

1. **OBJECTIVES AND PRODUCT (as stated in the proposal)**
* **General objective 1**: To bring Antigua and Barbuda into compliance with its obligations under Convention 190, on Violence and Harassment
	+ **Specific objective 1:** To identify the components necessary for comprehensive workplace violence and harassment legislation/regulations
* **General objective 2:** To foster a co-operative approach towards workplace violence and harassment between management and workers
	+ **Specific objective 2:** To implement workplace committees
* **Final product:** A comprehensive document outlining all key components for a workplace violence and harassment legislation or regulation inclusive of prevention, deterrence and sanctions
1. **METHODOLOGY**

The virtual exchange will be carried out following the methodology defined by the RIAL/OAS and discussed at the coordination meeting.

1. Coordination meeting to define contents: Held on April 30 with the participation of both Ministries and the OAS, with the objective of meeting the participating teams, and defining preliminary contents and dates of cooperation sessions, based on the expectations of Antigua and Barbuda and strengths from the experience of Canada. The final product of the cooperation was also discussed and agreed upon. Further details about this meeting’s contents are provided below.
2. Exchange of documents and information: Both entities will exchange the information they consider pertinent to meet the objectives of the cooperation prior to the first session and throughout the cooperation. The OAS will make this information available to delegations on the [cooperation website](https://rialnet.org/?q=en/AG_CAN_Violence_Harassment).
3. Cooperation sessions: Four (4) virtual cooperation sessions will be held, with a duration of 2 to 3 hours, this could be modified during the exchange. The "Teams” platform of the OAS Department of Human Development, Education, and Employment will be used.
4. Preparation of the final product: Throughout the cooperation sessions, the Ministry of Public Safety and Labour of Antigua and Barbuda will be working on the product, which will receive feedback from Canada.
5. **COOPERATION SESSIONS (Please feel free to adjust or complement contents below)**

In the coordination meeting held on April 30, the delegations from Antigua and Barbuda and Canada, with support from the RIAL/OAS team, agreed on the key steps of the bilateral cooperation process (including preliminary dates of the sessions), as well as the Final Product.

During the meeting, the MPSL expressed its aim to develop a comprehensive draft document to inform regulations to address workplace violence and harassment, in alignment with ILO Convention 190. While steps have been taken to raise public awareness and apply Convention guidelines informally, they underscored the pressing need for binding legislation. The MPSL is interested in learning about Canada’s process in drafting and implementing their regulations, as well as defining the most effective course of action, whether to integrate protections against workplace violence and harassment into its existing Labour Code or to develop standalone legislation.

The Canadian delegation confirmed their willingness to share Canada’s experience in developing and implementing its workplace violence and harassment regulation, which was introduced through amendments to the Canada Labour Code under Bill C-65. The delegation emphasized that their technical assistance would go beyond the legislation itself, covering public consultations, the design of the regulatory framework, as well as implementation strategies and ongoing review efforts.

1. **FIRST SESSION — June 11, 2025:** In the first session, Canada delivered a comprehensive presentation on its legislative and institutional framework to prevent workplace harassment and violence, with a focus on the development and implementation of Bill C-65 and the Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention (WPHVP) Regulations. The presentation outlined the legal evolution, tripartite consultation process, employer obligations, and the extensive support mechanisms created to operationalize this framework:
* The session began with an overview of **Bill C-65,** which introduced a unified framework under Part II of the Labour Code to cover all forms of harassment and violence -which were previously addressed under separate parts of the Code-, with clear timelines, privacy safeguards, and employer obligations. To implement the law, the WPHVP Regulations came into force in 2021, requiring employers to assess risks, develop prevention policies, provide training, follow resolution procedures, and collaborate on implementing investigation outcomes.
* As part of the regulatory development process, the Labour Program conducted **extensive stakeholder consultations** through a tripartite model, including roundtables, an online public consultation, and the establishment of two ongoing tripartite working groups focused on developing the Register of Investigators and creating interpretation guidelines and implementation tools.
* The presentation highlighted **employers’ key obligations** under the new framework, including conducting joint workplace risk assessments, developing a prevention policy, and providing mandatory training. Employers must follow defined procedures and timelines for responding to incidents, select qualified investigators, and implement recommendations in coordination with workplace committees or representatives. They are also required to submit monthly updates, annual reports, and immediate notifications in the event of fatalities.
* The presentation also detailed the roles of **Policy Committees, Workplace Committees, and Health and Safety Representatives**, which are required based on workplace size. These entities, referred to collectively as “applicable partners,” are responsible for jointly carrying out several core functions, including risk assessments, policy development, training design, and the selection of investigators. Privacy provisions were emphasized, particularly the requirement for consent before sharing notices or investigator reports.
* To support implementation, Canada developed a range of **tools and training resources** aligned with three core pillars: preventing incidents through education and awareness, responding effectively through structured investigation processes, and supporting affected individuals. Canada also publishes annual data to monitor trends, and plans to review the framework every five years starting in 2026, while continuing to align with ILO Convention 190 and engage stakeholders in future improvements.
* During the session, Antigua and Barbuda raised several questions regarding key aspects of the new Canadian framework, such as employer obligations, confidentiality, and the procedures for selecting investigators, which were addressed during the session, allowing both teams to share practical insights on common challenges. At the end of the session, the date for the second cooperation session was also agreed upon.

***Between the first and second sessions****:* The MPSL of Antigua and Barbuda held internal meetings to analyze the contents of the first session and define any additional issues or topics they want ESDC to address during the second session.

Prior to the 2nd session, they informed that, as a result of this process, they carried out a legislative gap analysis, reviewing similarities and differences between both countries' legal frameworks. This analysis also identified potential amendments, institutional adjustments, and ways in which existing bodies or roles could be repositioned to reflect elements of the Canadian structure. Ahead of the upcoming session, they also plan to assess their human resource needs. Antigua and Barbuda expressed their intention to present these findings after Canada’s presentation and to engage in a discussion on structural elements relevant to the prevention of violence and harassment at work.

1. **SECOND SESSION — July 29, 2025:** The second session focused on Canada’s institutional framework for workplace committees and on Antigua and Barbuda’s presentation of their legislative gap analysis regarding workplace harassment and violence prevention:
* The session opened with a presentation by Canada on the institutional mechanisms established under Part II of the Labour Code, specifically the roles and responsibilities of **Policy Committees, Workplace Committees, and Health and Safety Representatives**. These bodies, referred to as “applicable partners,” are mandatory depending on the size of the workplace and play a key role in implementing the WPHVP Regulations. Their functions include conducting joint risk assessments, participating in the development of prevention policies, supporting training efforts, and selecting qualified investigators. Canada also highlighted the importance of consensus in decision-making and safeguards to protect confidentiality and privacy during the resolution process.
* The presentation emphasized the collaborative structure of the Canadian model and the mechanisms in place to ensure coordination between employers and workplace committees. Attention was given to implementation challenges, particularly in small enterprises, and the flexible approaches adopted to address these. Canada further clarified reporting requirements and the role of applicable partners in reviewing and implementing investigation outcomes. The explanations offered technical insights into how committee structures are embedded in the regulatory framework to ensure effectiveness and accountability.
* Antigua and Barbuda presented the results of **their legislative gap analysis** comparing the Canadian framework under Bill C-65 with their existing Labour Code. The presentation focused on specific areas such as the legal definitions of harassment and violence, employer responsibilities for prevention and response, risk assessments, reporting procedures, training obligations, support for affected individuals, and enforcement mechanisms. The analysis identified key gaps, including the absence of formal internal procedures for reporting and resolution, limited requirements for prevention policies, a lack of clearly defined employer duties, and weak enforcement provisions.
* Based on these findings, Antigua and Barbuda outlined a series of potential reforms, including the introduction of structured prevention and resolution mechanisms, formal confidentiality safeguards, and mandatory training for employers and workers. They also proposed establishing institutional structures similar to Canada’s workplace committees and strengthening alignment with ILO Convention 190. The delegation emphasized the need for inter-agency coordination and capacity-building to support implementation.
* During the session, several points of clarification and technical questions were raised by Antigua and Barbuda, particularly regarding how workplace committees operate in practice, how investigators are selected and trained, and what mechanisms ensure confidentiality throughout the resolution process. Canada addressed these questions directly during the presentation, offering concrete examples and highlighting how flexibility and collaboration are applied in various workplace contexts. The session concluded with agreement on the upcoming timeline and deliverables for the third cooperation meeting.

***Between the second and third sessions:***

* Antigua and Barbuda will start developing the **final product**: A comprehensive document outlining all key components for a workplace violence and harassment legislation or regulation inclusive of prevention, deterrence and sanctions.
* ***By October 2nd, at the latest:*** Antigua and Barbuda will send the preliminary version of the Document and send questions regarding pending information or issues (if certain information voids are identified during the drafting).
1. **THIRD SESSION — October 9, 2025:** In the third session, Antigua and Barbuda will present the first draft of the Document. Canada will provide feedback and respond to the questions posed by Antigua and Barbuda.

***Between the third and fourth sessions:*** *Antigua and Barbuda will develop a new (final, if possible) version of the Document based on the comments provided by Canada, and will send any remaining questions.*

1. **FOURTH SESSION –** **Tentatively October / November, 2025 (TBD):** In the fourth and final session, Antigua and Barbuda will present the finalized workplan, including proposed next steps. Canada will provide final feedback and respond to any outstanding questions.
2. **PARTICIPANTS**

**ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**

* Eltonia Anthony-Rojas, Labour Commissioner, Labour Department, Ministry of Public Safety and Labour (MPSL)
* Francis Pascall Kentish, Deputy Labour Commissioner, Labour Department, MPSL
* Kerry-Ann Mussington, Acting Senior Labour Inspections Officer, Labour Department, MPSL
* J'Donna Defoe, ILO Desk Officer, Labour Department, MPSL
* DeQuhan Samuel, Legal Consultant to the Labour Department, Labour Department, MPSL
* Ghándera Codrington, Crown Counsel II, Attorney General's Chambers and Ministry of Legal Affairs
* Deniscia Thomas, Legal Officer, Ministry of Legal Affairs
* Denisha Henry, Legal Officer, Ministry of Legal Affairs
* Lisa-Ann Yearwood, Industrial Relations Officer, Antigua Trades & Labour Union

**CANADA**

* Marie-France Sanschagrin, Senior Director, Labour Program, Compliance, Operations and Program (COPD) – Development, Workplace Directorate (WD) – Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
* **LEAD:** Lisa Berting, Senior Program Advisor, Labour Program, COPD-WD-OHS, ESDC
* **EXPERTS:**
	+ Ana Marie Iliescu, Senior Policy Analyst, Occupational Health and Safety Policy Division, Labour Program, COPD-WD-OHS, ESDC
	+ Nicole Smith, Program Advisor, Labour Program, COPD-WD-OHS, ESDC
	+ Ana Ilha, Policy Analyst, Labour Program, COPD-WD-OHS, ESDC
* Sylvain Laberge Director, Labour Program, Policy, Dispute Resolution and International Affairs (PDRIA) – International and Intergovernmental Affairs Directorate (IILA) – Multilateral Labour Affairs (MLA), ESDC
* Rebecca Gowan Deputy Director, Labour Program, PDRIA-IILA-MLA, ESDC
* LaReine Passey, Senior Policy Analyst, Labour Program, PDRIA-IILA-MLA, ESDC
* Zaiba Ali, Policy Officer, Labour Program PDRIA-IILA-MLA, ESDC

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES**

* María Claudia Camacho, Chief of the Labor and Employment Section, Department of Human Development, Education and Employment (DHDEE)
* María Paz Rodríguez, Consultant of the Labor and Employment Section, DHDEE
* Mariana Vieyra, RIAL Program Officer and consultant of the Labor and Employment Section, DHDEE