



General Assembly

Distr.: General
17 July 2013

Original: English

Human Rights Council
Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review
Seventeenth session
Geneva, 21 October–1 November 2013

National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*

Mauritius

* The present document has been reproduced as received. Its content does not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations.

Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1–2	3
II. Methodology and consultation process	3–4	3
III. Human rights framework – developments since last review in 2009	5–17	4
IV. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground	18–81	6
V. Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints	82–117	16
VI. Key national priorities, initiatives and commitments	118–121	21
VII. Capacity building and technical assistance	122–127	22
VIII. Conclusion	128	23

I. Introduction

1. The promotion and protection of human rights in Mauritius is guided by the basic philosophy underlying Government actions which is “*Putting People First*”. In addition to the human rights provisions enshrined in the Constitution, a series of measures have been adopted and are aimed at ensuring that the Citizens of Mauritius, irrespective of their race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex are able to exercise effectively their civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. The Government of Mauritius is strongly committed to strengthening democracy, promoting nation building and further entrenching the fundamental rights and freedoms of Mauritian citizens.

2. In 2009, when the report of the review of Mauritius was adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 11th Session, Mauritius was ranked by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) as the 26th most democratic nation. The latest EIU Democracy Index now ranks Mauritius as the 18th most democratic nation thereby testifying to the commitment of the Government of Mauritius to strengthen the existing democratic and human rights architecture. Similarly other indicators such as the Heritage Foundation ranks Mauritius 8th in the world in terms of economic freedom and the Yale Institute ranks Mauritius 5th in the world in its environmental performance index. For several years, Mauritius has been ranked 1st in the Mo Ibrahim Index. *As per the 2013 Human Development Report, Mauritius is ranked in the category of High Human Development.* All these indicators demonstrate that despite the capacity constraints of Mauritius as a Small Island Developing State, the Government of Mauritius is committed to ensuring that every Mauritian citizen enjoys to the fullest extent his or her civil and political rights as well as economic, social and cultural rights.

II. Methodology and consultation process

3. In the preparation of the Mauritius Report for the Universal Periodic Review, the General Guidelines for the preparation of information outlined in decision 17/119 of the Human Rights Council have been followed.

4. The national report of the Republic of Mauritius covers the Islands of Mauritius, Rodrigues, Agalega, Tromelin, Cargados Carajos and the Chagos Archipelago, including Diego Garcia and any other island comprised in the State of Mauritius. This Report has been drawn up as a result of an extensive national consultative process across Government, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organisations and the civil society in the Republic of Mauritius (including Rodrigues). Workshops were organised with the civil society organisations (including from Rodrigues) to explain the UPR process as well as gather inputs for the preparation of the second cycle report. The public was also invited in press articles to submit their views through e-mail. Awareness campaigns on UPR were also broadcasted on the national television, during peak time in order to reach the maximum audience. The Report also aims at providing updates on the recommendations made when Mauritius was reviewed for the first time in February 2009. It should thus be read in conjunction with the following:

- (a) mid-term report of Mauritius submitted in February 2011¹;
- (b) Periodic reports submitted to the Committee against Torture (2010), Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women(2010) and Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination(2012)².

III. Human rights framework – developments since last review in 2009

Political

5. Since October 2008, the portfolio of human rights falls under the responsibility of the Prime Minister's Office. In order to strengthen its commitments in the field of human rights and fulfil its international obligations, the Government has consolidated the institutional and legislative framework to ensure adequate legal protection to all sections of the population. Policies and programmes have also been adjusted, where necessary, to secure greater realisation of economic, social and cultural rights.

6. The Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment was set up in 2010 and has the responsibility of catering for the needs of vulnerable groups.

7. Government adopted in June 2013 a Maurice Ile Durable policy, 10-year strategy and action plan. The major objective of the Maurice Ile Durable is to create a system of economic activities related to the production, distribution and consumption of goods and services that will result in work life balance and improved human well being over the long term, while preventing exposure of future generations to environmental risks and ecological scarcities. Maurice Ile Durable is a societal project which is being implemented in a participative and democratic mode taking into consideration the aspirations of the whole population. It rests on five designated pillars known as the MID 5Es namely, Energy, Environment, Employment/Economy, Education and Equity. Taken together, these 5Es cover a wide spectrum of issues ranging from, land management, water resources, waste management, pollution control, public health and poverty alleviation amongst others.

Legislative

8. **New pieces of legislation** have been enacted since the last review of Mauritius to better guarantee the protection of human rights. The main ones include inter-alia.

9. The **Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act 2012 (Recommendations 2, 9, 13, 15 and 43)** aims at restructuring the National Human Rights Commission so as to enhance its role as a key institution in the protection and promotion of human rights at the national level. It also provides for a change in the composition of the Commission and makes better provision with regard to the recruitment of its staff. The Act provides for the National Human Rights Commission to operate through three divisions, namely the Human Rights Division, the Police Complaints Division and the National Preventive Mechanism Division. The mandate of the Commission has been broadened and its new functions have been aligned with the Paris Principles. The new set up is operational as from 1 July 2013.

10. The **Police Complaints Act 2012 (Recommendations 2, 3, 9 and 22)** provides for the setting up, within the National Human Rights Commission, of a Police Complaints Division to investigate complaints made against members of the Police Force, other than allegations of corruption and money laundering. Provision is equally made for the Division, upon completion of an investigation, to make recommendations to the relevant authority for appropriate action to be taken, including the institution of criminal or disciplinary proceedings or award of compensation. Provision is also made for the Division to investigate the death of a person occurring in police custody or as a result of police action and advise on ways in which any police misconduct may be addressed and eliminated.

11. The **National Preventive Mechanism Act 2012 (Recommendations 2 and 9)** aims at giving effect in Mauritius to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It provides for the setting up, within the National Human Rights Commission, of a National Preventive Mechanism Division which shall be the National Preventive Mechanism under the Optional Protocol. Another object of the Act is to enable the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to discharge its functions under the Optional Protocol in Mauritius.
12. The **Equal Opportunities Act (Recommendation 41)** which was proclaimed on 1 January 2012 ensures better protection against discrimination as it prohibits both direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of age, caste, creed, ethnic origin, impairment, marital status, place of origin, political opinion, race, sex or sexual orientation. The Equal Opportunities Act also prohibits discrimination by victimization.
13. The **International Criminal Court Act 2011** provides for the effective implementation of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court in Mauritius, ensures the fulfilment of the obligations of Mauritius under the Statute, provides for the jurisdiction of the Mauritian Courts to try persons charged with international crimes and lays down the procedure for the surrender of persons to the International Criminal Court and for other forms of cooperation with that body.
14. The **Legal Aid Act** was amended in 2012 to extend the provision of legal assistance to accused parties not only at trial stage but as from the earliest stages of criminal proceedings. The amendments to the Act which came into force on 5th November 2012 provide for legal assistance in the form of (i) legal advice and counselling during the recording of a statement under warning from a detainee or an accused party and (ii) legal representation, during a bail application. Section 7B (2) of the Act provides that any detainee or accused party, being suspected of having committed a criminal offence as specified in the Act, shall, upon arrest, be informed by the police officer in charge of the police station that he may make an application for legal assistance during police enquiry and for bail applications. The Act is now known as the Legal Aid and Legal Assistance Act.
15. The **Criminal Code (Amendment) Act 2012** which came into force on 15 October 2012 provides that termination of pregnancies would be allowed in specified circumstances, namely where (a) the continued pregnancy will endanger the pregnant person's life, (b) the termination is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant person, (c) there is a substantial risk that the continued pregnancy will result in a severe malformation, or severe physical or mental abnormality, of the foetus, as assessed by the appropriate specialists or (d) the pregnancy has not exceeded its fourteenth week and results from a case of rape, sexual intercourse with a female under the age of 16 or sexual intercourse with a specified person which has been reported to the police or a medical practitioner. Amendments have further been brought to the Medical Council Act to stipulate inter-alia, that a specialist in obstetrics and gynaecology registered as such may provide treatment to terminate a pregnancy in a prescribed institution.
16. The **Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act (Recommendation 30)** was passed on 21 April 2009. The objectives of the Act are to give effect to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in persons; prevent and combat trafficking in persons; and protect and assist victims of trafficking. It provides for repatriation of victims of trafficking, and return of victims of trafficking to Mauritius, as well as compensation to victims of trafficking.

Sexual Offences Bill/Criminal Code Amendment Bill (Recommendation 4)

17. The Government introduced the Sexual Offences Bill into the National Assembly in April 2007. However, following the controversy provoked by the issue of depenalisation of sodomy, the Bill was referred to a Select Committee for re-examination. The Select Committee held several meetings. However, before the Select Committee could submit any report to the Parliament, Parliament was dissolved in March 2010. Nevertheless, in May 2010, the Attorney General consulted all Ministries in relation to the Bill for their views and comments. Government has in Feb 2013 decided that instead of proceeding with the Sexual Offences Bill, it will amend the existing Criminal Code in order to make better provisions for the criminalization of various acts of sexual perversion including marital rape.

IV. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

New policy measures and institutions

1. National Action Plan on Human Rights (Recommendation 14)

18. The Prime Minister's Office has launched a National Human Rights Action Plan 2012-2020 in October 2012.

19. The Action Plan sets out the following goals and objectives:

- (a) reinforcing international co-operation on Human Rights;
- (b) strengthening the National Human Rights Framework;
- (c) protecting and safeguarding civil and political rights;
- (d) securing greater realisation of economic, social and cultural rights;
- (e) securing Women's Rights in the context of Gender Equal Opportunities;
- (f) securing the rights of the Youth;
- (g) better protecting and securing rights of vulnerable persons;
- (h) securing the Right to Sustainable Development;
- (i) enhancing Human Rights education and awareness; and
- (j) encouraging and facilitating greater involvement of civil society and the business sector in general, in the promotion and protection of Human Rights.

20. This Action Plan is a landmark on the human rights landscape of Mauritius. It shows what Mauritius has achieved in terms of protection and promotion of human rights and charts the way forward. One of the main recommendations of the National Human Rights Action Plan is the setting up of a **Human Rights Monitoring Committee** under the chairpersonship of the Senior Chief Executive of the Prime Minister's Office and consisting of stakeholders concerned, including representatives of relevant Ministries and Departments, National Human Rights Institutions, non-governmental organisations dealing with human rights as well as the private sector. The role of the Committee is to ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the Action Plan.

21. There are a number of institutions responsible for the upholding of constitutional democracy in Mauritius. These institutions are independent and subject only to the Constitution and the law and operate in an impartial manner. Any person within the

national jurisdiction of Mauritius may avail themselves of these institutions in order to claim appropriate remedies.

22. The **Equal Opportunities Commission** has been set up since April 2012 (**Recommendations 20 and 21**) under the Equal Opportunities Act and its functions are, inter-alia:

- (a) to work towards the elimination of discrimination, and the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status;
- (b) carry out an investigation on its own motion or following a complaint;
- (c) attempt to reconcile the parties to whom and against whom a complaint relates;
- (d) conduct and foster research and educational and other programmes for the purpose of eliminating discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different status;
- (e) prepare appropriate guidelines and codes for the avoidance of discrimination; and
- (f) take all necessary measures to ensure that the guidelines and codes are brought to the attention of employers and the public. The Equal Opportunities Act also provides for an Equal Opportunities Tribunal consisting of a President and two other persons to hear and determine complaints referred to it by the Commission.

23. Between April 2012 to 20 June 2013, the Commission has received some 655 complaints out of which it has already examined 430 cases as follows:

- (a) 9 cases were conciliated;
- (b) In 27 cases, the Commission found no evidence of discrimination;
- (c) One case has been referred to the Equal Opportunities Tribunal;
- (d) 186 cases were set aside since they were either time-barred, withdrawn by the complainants, fell outside the purview of the Commission or the complainants failed to give further information; and
- (e) 207 cases are still being investigated and additional information being sought.

24. As regards the remaining 225 cases, preliminary investigations are being carried out.

25. The Commission has issued in October 2012 an Interim Report which has been made public. In April 2013, it has also published Guidelines for employers with the following objectives:

- (a) Provide guidance to employers on how to prevent discrimination at work and achieve equality of opportunities in the field of employment;
- (b) Help employers who have duties and obligations under the Equal Opportunities Act to understand their responsibilities and rights;
- (c) Help employers prepare and apply an equal opportunity policy at work with a view to minimizing risk of discrimination; and
- (d) Help employers promote recruitment, training, selection and employment on the basis of merit in relation to its employees or prospective employees.

26. The **Truth and Justice Commission which was set up under the Truth and Justice Commission Act 2008** came into operation on 20 March 2009. The Truth and

Justice Commission was empowered to conduct inquiries into slavery and indentured labour during the colonial period in Mauritius, determine appropriate measures to be extended to descendants of slaves and indentured labourers, enquire into complaints made by persons aggrieved by dispossession or prescription of any land in which they claim to have an interest and prepare a comprehensive report of its activities and findings based on factual and objective information and evidence. The Commission submitted its report to the President of the Republic on 25 November 2011.

27. On 9 December 2011, Government set up an Inter Ministerial High Powered Committee (HPC) chaired by the Vice Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Development to look into the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Truth and Justice Commission.

28. On 17 February 2012 Government agreed to the proposal made by the HPC to implement a first set of 19 recommendations of the Truth and Justice Commission that would generate quick wins and bring visible benefits. In addition, Ministries represented on the HPC have set up, at their level, a dedicated unit to look, in detail, into the issues and recommendations in the Report related to their respective sector.

29. A Co-ordination Team has been mandated to closely co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of these recommendations and will report on a regular basis to the HPC.

30. A Land Research and Mediation Commission has been set up to:

- (a) carry out an in-depth investigation into cases of dispossession of land as mentioned in the report of the Truth & Justice Commission and any other similar cases referred to it by the HPC;
- (b) assist the applicants to retrieve all necessary documents, including title deeds, plans and Civil Status documents and in collaboration with other appropriate institutions, to draw up genealogical trees;
- (c) provide, within established limits, assistance to claimants as regards land surveys or other necessary actions;
- (d) advise the applicant, after thorough investigation and enquiry, on his claim and any other relevant issues; and
- (e) act as mediator and promote amicable settlements.

2. Rights of women (Recommendation 36)

31. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDWF) has adopted a National Gender Policy Framework (NGPF) in 2008 as a generic policy document (**Recommendation 18**), which calls upon various entities to take ownership of the process of designing their own respective gender policies using a participatory approach. It further provides the broad operational strategies and institutional arrangements for achieving gender equality. The NGPF stands guided by principles of human rights, human-centred development, partnership and accountability. To date, 16 out of 25 Ministries have formulated their respective gender policy statements and the MGECDWF is continuing to extend technical expertise to all Ministries to develop their own sectoral gender policies by the end of 2015.

32. To address the problem of domestic violence, a National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence (**Recommendations 25 & 26**) which was launched, spells out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders concerned to combat domestic violence. It contains five strategic objectives:

- improving legislation on Domestic Violence and strengthening of the Justice System and other agencies response;
- providing appropriate, accessible, timely, coordinated multi-agency responses and support to all victims and children who need it;
- sensitising and change attitudes to prevent domestic violence from happening in the first place;
- promoting responsible reporting, advocacy, sensitisation and provision of a forum by media specialists to encourage the community at large to discuss domestic violence; and
- undertaking research and studies on domestic violence, strengthen capacity building and set up appropriate mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of the National Action Plan to Combat Domestic Violence for the promotion of best practices.

33. 94 % of the recommended actions in the Plan have already been implemented for example:

- The Protection from Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2007 was proclaimed in September 2011;
- A component of domestic violence has been included in the training programme conducted at the Police Training School;
- A series of awareness raising programmes have been undertaken to sensitise women at grassroots level on the problems of domestic violence and services available to them. Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials in term of pamphlets, brochures were disseminated.

34. The Ministry has set up a National Platform to end Gender Based Violence (NPEGBV) since October 2011 ensuring national coordination to end gender based violence in Mauritius. In this context, a costed National Action Plan to End Gender Based Violence 2012-2015 (NAPEGBV) was elaborated. The NAPEGBV provides for a multi level approach to redress gender based violence (GBV) by:

- (a) Reviewing, adopting and enforcing protective laws and policies;
- (b) Improving health, legal/justice security, education and social welfare systems to monitor and respond to GBV survivors and perpetrators;
- (c) Ensuring provision of prompt and compassionate services to survivors;
- (d) Implementing a coordinated multi-sectoral approach in tackling GBV issues in the country; and
- (e) Bringing behavioural change amongst men and boys likely to perpetuate GBV.

35. 25% of the recommended actions of the Action Plan have already been implemented, for example some 135 officers from the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Ministry of Local Government as well as some 89 representatives of the civil societies have benefitted from capacity building programmes.

36. In addition to working with men through the “**Men as Partners**” Project, the MGECDW will shortly come up with a new project known as “**Youth Empowerment Programme to Combat Gender-based Violence**”. This programme will enable youth to grow up with a culture of non-violence and hence reduce the incidence of gender-based violence in the long run. The project of “Men as Partners” has been extended to some 17 regions and more than 13,000 persons have benefitted therefrom.

37. The MGECDWF is also engaging Religious Bodies in the combat against gender-based violence. Joint sensitisation programmes are being implemented with youth, men and women to sensitize them on issues pertaining to gender-based violence and involve them in the fight against gender-based violence.

38. Victims of domestic violence/family problems are assisted at the Family Support Bureaux in terms of:

- Application for Protection Order/Occupation/Tenancy Orders by Family Welfare and Protection Officers;
- Counselling(individual/marital counselling) by Psychologists; and
- Legal advice by Legal Resource Persons.

Shelters (Recommendation 25)

39. A Shelter for Women and Children in Distress Trust Fund has been set up with a view to providing temporary shelter to women and children victims of abuse and family problems. The shelter provides a temporary refuge to women away from conflictual family environment and to children in difficult circumstances such as those who are battered, neglected or ill-treated by parents or guardians. Moreover, the Shelter provides a measure of social integration for the children placed therein.

Protocol of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault

(a) With a view to preventing victims from undergoing further trauma at Police Stations and casualty departments of hospitals, a **Protocol of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Assault**, which provides for a coordinated approach of authorities concerned, namely the Ministry of Health and Quality of Life and the Police, for victims to be provided prompt and timely assistance.

(b) The Protocol is effective **since March 2006** and, the Ministry is informed of cases of Sexual Assault by the Police on hotline 119 (operational on a 24-hour basis). Psychological assistance and legal counselling are provided to the victims. Follow up actions are then ensured through the Family Support Bureaux of the Ministry (Bell Village, Goodlands, Flacq, Bambous, Phoenix & Rose Belle).

Women participation in politics and decision-making

40. As regards participation of women in the national decision-making process, Mauritius is committed to the decision taken by SADC to increase women's participation in politics and decision-making by 30%. For the two last general elections held in July 2005 and in May 2010, the main political parties honoured their pledge to increase women representation in National Assembly and there was a marked increase in the number of women candidates.

Women participation in local village and municipal elections (Recommendation 34)

41. With a view to ensuring adequate representation of each sex on a local authority, the Local Government Act 2011 makes provision for any group presenting more than 2 candidates in an electoral ward, during Municipal and Village Council elections, to ensure that the candidates are not all of the same sex. A National Platform for Women in Politics has been set up to increase women participation in politics and to work towards equal representation of both men and women in politics.

42. As regards women's representation in decision-making bodies, in 2010, women made up to 47.1% of Judges and 63.6% of Magistrates at Intermediate Court. In the public

sector 35% of Permanent Secretaries are women and 37.2% are Directors/Heads of Departments. Presently the Vice-President of our Republic is Mrs. Monique Agnes Ohsan-Bellepeau.

3. Rights of children

43. Following the visit of the Special Rapporteur, Mauritius ratified the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography on 14 June 2011. It signed on 13 August 2012 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Communications Procedure (**Recommendations 1 & 28**).

44. Action has already been initiated for the preparation of a National Child Protection Strategy with a view to consolidating and strengthening ongoing efforts and measures to respond to child protection issues and to ensuring protection of children from any forms of abuse and violence.

45. The Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDWF) is in the process of finalizing a Children's Bill and it is expected to present the Bill in the National Assembly by end of this year (**Recommendations 8 & 12**). The aim of the Bill is to consolidate the various pieces of legislation on children's rights and to harmonize all laws in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

46. In line with the UN recommendations, the Police have also set up a Police Family Protection Unit (PFPU) with the special mandate to provide specific services to a category of people who are termed vulnerable within society. This category of people includes children as well.

47. As children are becoming more and more vulnerable in our society, the Mauritius Police Force has, at the request of the MGECDWF, set up a new unit styled "*Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs*" as from May 2004. One of the priorities of the Brigade is to act as a watchdog against all forms of exploitation and abuse against children. The Brigade is providing a meaningful and sound customer care service aimed at optimizing the protection of children and helping to alleviate the anxiety of parents whose children have been subjected to such abuses. The "*Brigade pour la Protection des Mineurs*" will continue its work with the MGECDWF on the protection of the child from all forms of abuse including commercial sexual exploitation of children (**Recommendation 29**).

48. With a view to promoting Mauritius as a safe family destination, the Ministry of Tourism and Leisure has embarked on a sensitization campaign on the impact of CSEC. A pamphlet on "Zero Tolerance to Child Exploitation" has been prepared.

49. Since January 2008, crackdown operations have been conducted island wise at regular intervals by Officers of the MGECDWF, National Children's Council, Brigade des Mineurs (Police Department), in collaboration with NGOs to ensure that young persons and students are attending schools during normal school hours. Such operations are seen to contribute in an efficient way to prevent young persons from playing truancy and loitering thereby getting involved in illicit activities.

50. The Police in collaboration with the Social Workers of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Child Development Unit also redirect children who are cut off from schools to the education system (**Recommendation 27**).

51. Police Officers refer children who have been abused to the Child Development Unit for psychotherapy and placement to shelters, if required in addition, the Police provide the following services:

- A 24 hour hotline service. (Tel: 999)
- At divisional level, an Operations Room is open on a 24 hour basis.

- Likewise, at line barracks the Operations and Information Room is open on a 24 hour basis.
- A protocol of assistance to child victims ranging from protection to counselling exists, whereby all Police Officers serving in any part of the country know how to deal with reported cases of child abuse.

52. A residential Care Drop-in-Centre for victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children has been constructed. Its purpose is to assist those children victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, who are indulged in Commercial Sexual Exploitation and to help them to integrate society. A Hotline (113) is available to public for referral of cases of victims of child prostitution.

53. Officers of the Inspection and Enforcement Section of the Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment effect systematic visits at undertakings and all places of work, thus covering both the formal and informal sectors of employment to detect and sanction cases of child labour. Whenever a child is found in illegal employment, the employer is required to discontinue such employment and criminal action is taken against the employer accordingly (**Recommendation 29**).

4. Rights of the disabled (Recommendation 39)

54. Mauritius has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD) in January 2010. Government's vision is that all citizens should have equal opportunities and that no discrimination should exist in the society. In Mauritius the employment of persons with disabilities is specifically regulated by the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act (TEDP). It stipulates that the workforce of any enterprise having 35 or more employees should include 3% of persons with disabilities. This legislation applies also to Parastatal Bodies, Statutory Boards and Committees and Companies in which Government is a shareholder.

55. The Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act was amended recently to -
- (a) better provide for the enforcement of the Act with a view to promote the access of persons with disabilities to employment;
 - (b) provide for the setting up of a hearing committee which shall be vested with the responsibility to determine the contribution of employers and the exemptions from the Act; and
 - (c) increase the fine provided for non-compliance with the Act.

56. It is now provided that the Board, set up under the Act, shall be responsible for the setting up of a hearing committee to hold a hearing for the purposes of the Act, and any finding and recommendation made by the Hearing Committee shall be communicated to the Board for consideration and decision. The Hearing Committee shall, after the completion of the hearing, determine whether the employer cannot reasonably be expected, having regard to the nature of his business, provide suitable employment to or create suitable employment opportunities for the employment of disabled persons. Furthermore the Board may, in the light of the determination of the Committee give such directions to an employer as it may consider reasonable and proper in all the circumstances including a direction that the employer shall pay to the Board such contribution in the following manner: Rs 4,000 monthly for each disabled worker not yet recruited to meet the 3% percentage as specified above.

57. The Excise Regulations have also been amended to provide for duty-free facilities to purchase a motor car to new categories of disabled persons (apart from the physically

disabled), i.e deaf or blind persons who are in gainful employment and parents of severely disabled children.

58. In a bid to empower the physically handicapped persons to enhance their creative talents, the Minister of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives launched on 17th January 2013 an Incubator at the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) in Coromandel.

59. The objectives of the new Incubator are to enhance creative talents of special needs trainees for the production of quality handicraft products; support the entrepreneurial skills development of physically handicapped persons; facilitate the creation of Small Business Enterprises for these persons through Business Training and Mentoring; and build confidence and capabilities for an enhanced economic contribution by our fellow citizens with special needs.

60. As from February 2013, physically handicapped persons are benefitting from free courses in the following areas: fancy jewellery, fibre craft, ceramic, pyrogravure and fashion garment making. With this Incubator, physically handicapped persons will also benefit from training in craft production, entrepreneurship and digital literacy skills.

61. Government has adopted a rights-based approach to the issue of disability as follows:

- (a) Government has adopted a policy of inclusive education;
- (b) A number of facilities are being provided to enhance educational opportunities for persons with disabilities:
 - (i) Refund of bus fare for accompanying parents;
 - (ii) Scholarship scheme to pursue secondary and tertiary studies; and
 - (iii) Refund of taxi fare to students with disabilities attending university and who cannot travel by ordinary means of transport;
- (c) The Equal Opportunities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability;
- (d) The Building Control Act provides for enhanced accessibility to public infrastructure by disabled persons;
- (e) Voting procedures have been made disabled-friendly to enable persons with disabilities to participate in public affairs and governance;
- (f) A Forum of Women with Disabilities has been set up to lobby for the Rights of Women with Disabilities to equal opportunities in all spheres of life;
- (g) A Special School of Performing Arts has been set up to develop the talents of persons with disabilities;
- (h) Athletes with disabilities are provided with facilities to participate in competition at both local and international levels.

5. Rights of older persons

62. The Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions started the construction of a third Recreation Centre in April 2012, to provide for an additional yearly accommodation capacity of 12,000. The project is due to be completed around 1st week of July 2013. A fourth Recreation Centre is also planned to be constructed.

63. An Observatory on Ageing is being set up to carry out action-oriented research on the socio-economic aspects of ageing, in view of the ageing phenomenon. The Ministry

has already embarked on the constitution of the Advisory Board and is in the process of recruiting the members of the Research Team.

64. The Ministry is proposing to set up a Legal Counselling Programme on property rights for senior citizens to provide enhanced protection to the elderly in as much as property rights are concerned to avoid abuse and exploitation.

65. The Ministry will further promote IT Literacy programme among the elderly so as to enable them to communicate through new technology. The Ministry, with the collaboration of the National Computer Board is setting up computer clubs in all the 19 Day Care Centres.

66. The Ministry is pursuing, in collaboration with the Mauritius Institute of Health, a training programme to train some 500 carers and 2500 informal carers to constitute a pool of carers as there is a high demand for their services with the increasing number of our elders.

6. Protecting the rights of migrant workers (Recommendation 40)

67. Mauritius has been active in promoting circular migration. Since 2006, Mauritians have embarked on Circular Migration Programmes and some 300 workers have taken employment in Canada. In April 2010, a Bilateral Agreement with France was ratified and the Mauritian authorities are working with the French authorities in that respect. Circular migration agreements with other countries like Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Italy are also under consideration. The National Empowerment Foundation (NEF), under the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is the Implementation Agency for the Circular Migration Programmes. The NEF has set up a Circular Migration Committee (CMC) comprising representatives of different Ministries and Departments to drive the whole process. The Government of Mauritius is assisted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in the recruitment, selection and preparation of Mauritian workers.

68. Mauritius is the first African State to host the Global Forum on Migration and Development which was held in 2012 in Mauritius on the theme '*Enhancing the Human Development of Migrants and their Contribution to the Development of Communities and States*'. The ultimate purpose of the 6th GFMD Meeting is to achieve improvements in the conditions and prospects of people on the move and their families. The GFMD provided a platform to take up the issue of migration and migration-related issues from an African perspective by putting emphasis on:

(a) Outcomes that will make a difference for migrants, diaspora, their families, and communities and states of origin and destination, and that may be achieved in the coming years to guide the future work of the Forum;

(b) The specific needs and challenges of African countries and their migrants and diaspora, also in the South-South migration and development context;

(c) Close consultations with civil society and international organizations, particularly the Global Migration Group (GMG), to support GFMD governments in achieving agreed desirable outcomes; and

(d) Engagement of the private sector and diaspora as appropriate to support governments in achieving agreed outcomes.

69. Although Mauritius is not a signatory to the 1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, the Government as far as possible applies the essence of the Convention in cases of disputes between migrant workers and their employer.

70. Article 13 of the Code Civil Mauricien provides as follows -

13. “L'étranger jouira à Maurice des mêmes droits civils que ceux qui sont ou seront accordés aux Mauriciens par les traités de la nation à laquelle cet étranger appartiendra.”

71. Migrant workers enjoy the same terms and conditions of employment, including minimum wages as those laid down for local workers in our labour legislation.

72. Regular inspection visits are carried out by officers of the Special Migrant Workers' Unit of Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment at workplaces where migrant workers are employed to ascertain that employers are complying with the existing labour laws and to enquire into any reports of bad treatment. Moreover, the Unit provides a service whereby foreign workers can register their collective and individual complaints and tripartite meetings are held to resolve the workers' grievances. Most of the complaints are being resolved within a day or two.

73. For period January to December 2012, the Unit carried out 441 visits covering a total number of 26,525 workers (19,013 male and 7,512 female) and a total amount of Rs 863,292 was recovered in favour of the migrant workers. Besides 225 complaints were registered at the level of the Unit and a total sum of Rs 7,877,026 was recovered.

74. Employers are required to submit a model contract of employment duly vetted by the Special Migrant Workers' Unit at the time they apply for work permits on behalf of their foreign workers. Payment of the total salary and other benefits has to be effected directly to the foreign workers in Mauritius itself and this clause should be included in the contract of employment before it is vetted. Officers verify that this clause is strictly complied with and during inspection officers ensure that workers have been given a copy of the vetted contract of employment.

75. According to Section 38 of the Employment Rights Act 2008, employees benefit from protection against termination of their work agreement. An agreement shall not be terminated by an employer by reasons of a worker's race, colour, national extraction, social origin, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, sex, sexual orientation, HIV status, marital status or family responsibilities amongst others.

The right of association

76. The right to organise which equally applies to migrant workers has been reinforced in the Employment Relations Act 2008 which came into force on 2 February 2009. Section 29 protects in unambiguous terms the right of workers to be or not to be a member of a trade union and to participate in trade union activities, including the right to seek and hold appointment or election as officers of a union. Section 30 protects trade union of workers against acts of interference and section 31 protects workers against discrimination, victimisation or termination of employment by the employer in the exercise of this right.

77. The Occupational Safety and Health (Employees' Lodging Accommodation) Regulations 2011 was promulgated on 28 January 2011. These regulations aim at establishing norms for workers' lodging accommodations with a view to improving the standards of living conditions in lodging accommodation provided to any employee including migrant workers.

7. Vulnerable groups (Recommendations 20, 35 & 42)

78. The problem of poverty is an issue which cut across all components of society and does not affect a specific community. From a survey conducted by the National Empowerment Foundation, there were some 10,200 households that is approximately 40,000 persons living below the poverty line as at 31 December 2012. Poverty in Mauritius

based on the relative poverty line (half median monthly income) is at 7.9% although on the basis of the USD 1 definition is less than 1%. Poverty in the country is largely structural and is not correlated with economic opportunity to earn income. Since 2006, various programmes have been put in place to eliminate/alleviate poverty.

79. In May 2010, Government has created a specific Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment which has as main objective to eradicate absolute poverty. A three pronged strategy has been adopted and includes three main programmes, namely the Social Housing and Community Empowerment, Child Development and Family Welfare and Training and Placement. The National Empowerment Foundation, the executive arm of the Ministry, is already implementing a package of programmes with a holistic framework so as to provide immediate support to vulnerable groups, foster integrated community development, enable re-skilling of the unemployed and promote development of income generated activities.

8. Right to housing

80. With regard to vulnerable groups and their housing needs and in line with the social housing policy, the Ministry of Housing and Lands has come up with a National Housing Programme for the next ten years. The programme will provide access for housing to the low income groups, mainly targeting families earning a monthly household income up to Rs 15,000, through its executive arm, i.e. the National Housing Development Company.

81. In addition, Government encourages self-help construction of housing units by low income families that already own a plot of land. These families are financially assisted through a grant scheme for the casting of roof slabs to complete their construction or the purchase of building materials to start their construction. As at date, some 47,000 families have benefited from that scheme and Government has disbursed an amount of about Rs1.8 Billion since 1997.

V. Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints

Sensitisation programmes on human rights

82. The Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Infrastructure, National Development Unit, National Human Rights Commission, Ombudsperson for Children, Equal Opportunities Commission carries out three hour sensitization sessions on human rights in all Citizen's Advice Bureaux around the island. Around 1500 participants (from NGOs, women's associations, vulnerable groups) are sensitised each year. A whole module is dedicated to the Constitution (**Recommendation 7**).

Training programmes on human rights

83. In August 2011, Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with National Development Unit, National Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International organised a two day training programme on Human Rights for 60 Citizens Advice Bureaux Organisers of Ministry of Public Infrastructure, Ministry of Youth and Sports, National Human Rights Commission;

84. In May 2012, Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with Ministry of Youth and Sports and Equal Opportunities Commission and other Resource Persons organised a two days training programme on Human Rights for all Officers of youth cadre.

85. In May 2012 the Prime Minister's Office organised in collaboration with MACOSS a two day training programme on human rights for 125 representatives of civil society organisations.

MBC programme on human rights

86. Television programme on Human Rights is broadcasted every Saturday after the French news bulletin during peak time in order to reach the maximum audience. The programme has been developed in collaboration with the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation and all our stakeholders on the following themes:

- (a) Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- (b) Constitution and Democracy (**Recommendation 7**);
- (c) Rights of Prisoners and Detainees;
- (d) Rights of Women;
- (e) Rights of the child;
- (f) Rights of older person;
- (g) Rights of disabled person;
- (h) Civil and Political Rights;
- (i) Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- (j) The role of the National Human Rights Commission;
- (k) The role of the Equal Opportunities Commission;
- (l) Rights of Migrant workers;
- (m) Universal Periodic Review exercise.

Human rights portal

87. The creation of the human rights portal (<http://humanrights.gov.mu>) aims at providing a common platform for Government officials, NHRIs, Human Rights NGOs, students and citizens to assist in the implementation of the recommendations of the Action Plan including:

- (a) Information to all stakeholders about the human rights status and strategy of the Republic of Mauritius;
- (b) Support to policy makers, trainers in human rights and students in terms of access to research materials on human rights;
- (c) Platform for training and sensitisation;
- (d) Communication tool between all human rights stakeholders;
- (e) Link to all National Human Rights Institutions in Mauritius including NHRC, Equal Opportunities Commission and Ombudsperson for Children; and
- (f) Link to OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights) website which contains status of all reports presented by Mauritius and recommendations by UN Treaty Bodies and all treaties and Conventions signed by Mauritius.

Database of human rights indicators

88. The Prime Minister's Office has worked in collaboration with the University of Mauritius with a view to preparing a Database of Human Rights structural, process and outcome indicators. The Human rights indicators serve as a scientific tool for a proper monitoring of all sectors and also allow follow up on recommendations of UN Treaty Bodies.

Human rights education (Recommendation 38)

89. At tertiary level, Human Rights Education already forms part of the curriculum of LLB courses. Human Rights are an essential component of training of Police and Prisons Officer (**Recommendation 24**). The University of Mauritius is also coming forward for academic year 2013-2014 with a new LLM in International Human Rights Law.

90. With a view to promoting respect for human rights through teaching and education, the Commonwealth Secretariat was approached by the Prime Minister's Office to ensure the integration of human rights across the curriculum at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels.

91. In this respect a Consultant of the Commonwealth Secretariat was on official visit in Mauritius from 28 November to 2 December 2011 in order to have working sessions with the Mauritius Institute of Education on curriculum development and preparation of textbooks at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels to address the following:

- (a) Integration of human rights across the curriculum;
- (b) Integration of human rights in school textbooks; and
- (c) Development, implementation and evaluation of human rights project in school.

92. The report from the Consultant has been finalised and the assistance of Commonwealth Secretariat has been sought for its implementation.

93. The Prime Minister's Office in collaboration with Ministry of Youth and Sports and Equal Opportunities Commission implements a 12-hours Human Rights Education Programme in all youth centres around the island for around 500–750 youths each year.

Prison

94. A new prison is being constructed in accordance with required norms and standards at Melrose to reduce overcrowding in existing prisons (**Recommendation 32**). Its construction is expected to be completed by end August 2013.

Education

95. Since 28th January 2012, the Mauritius Prison Service is conducting courses in Basic Numeracy and Literacy in the creole language. The Training is being run continuously for the benefit of detainees. In addition, Training of Trainers is being carried out in the Garment Making. Subsequently, the trainers will deliver courses in creole language to detainees following Garment Making Course run by the MITD.

96. In the women prison, rehabilitation programmes such as vegetable gardening, garment making, pastry, food preparation, handicraft, beauty care and hairdressing, massage therapy, meditation, Tai-Chi are run by prison staff in collaboration with private organisations and NGOs.

97. Detainees also have individual and group counselling sessions, group therapy and health counselling.

Medical and health facilities available in prisons

98. At Beau Bassin Prison, there is a ward with an accommodation capacity of 20 patients and manned by Hospital Officers (male) round the clock. Each Institution has a dispensary where medical treatment and care is dispensed to detainees during the day. During the night and weekends, Hospital Officers from Central Prison, Beau Bassin attend to any emergencies.

99. In order to improve the physical and mental well being of the detainees, a team of health-care workers provides service round the clock. The team comprises three full time medical officers, and one part time, one dental surgeon and twenty four qualified nurses including eight female nurses presently.

100. A methadone Induction Unit has been set up at the central Prison for inducing and dispensing of methadone to drug addicts.

101. A Rehabilitation unit (Lotus Centre) for rehabilitation of substance abusers.

102. An AIDS unit for the prevention, care, treatment and support of detainees living with HIV/AIDS in prison.

103. There is also one 12 bedded ward for male and another 6 bedded ward female at J. Nehru Hospital for detainees requiring admission thereto. On admission to the prison, every detainee is seen by a doctor who assesses the detainee's general health. The same process is observed when he is released. During his period of detention, whenever the need arises, the detainee can be seen by the doctor at the Prison hospital or dispensaries for any health problem. In addition, detainees requiring specialist treatment are referred to public hospitals.

104. The prison health service is also equipped with two dental clinics, one for male detainees located in the medical centre at BBP and the other for female detainees at women prison where various treatments relating to dental care are provided, namely, extraction, scaling and filling.

105. In addition to these facilities for general medical and dental care, suitable arrangements have been put in place in prison to provide specialist consultation and out-patient follow-up in the field of Medicine, Surgery, Dermatology, Psychiatry, HIV/AIDS, Orthopaedics, ENT and Psychologist also attend clinic on a regular basis.

106. A referral system has been established between the Prison Department and the Ministry of Health & Quality of Life, for proper medical case management regarding health facilities not available in prison.

107. Medicine and medical equipment are procured from the Central Supplies Division, Ministry of Health & Quality of Life, and from the local suppliers

108. The provision of medical services in our prisons is consistent with the Standard Minimum Rules for the treatment of offenders adopted by the United Nations Congress.

Training on human rights

109. Training on Human Rights is an ongoing activity at the Mauritius Prison Training School. Up to present, 809 Officers have attended training.

Number of children in prison and facilities provided

110. At present, there are 7 children in Prison. They are accommodated in a special unit called the *Mother and Baby Care Unit*. Recently, with the opening of the Day Care Centre "Kids R Kids" on 24th May 2012, the children attend the centre from 08 00 hours to 16 00 hours on weekdays and from 09 00 hours to 12 00 hours on Saturdays.

111. Three Children attend the Municipal pre-primary school at Mont-Roches from 09 00 hours to 14 00 hours during week days. They are provided with all the school materials and lunch pack. After school hours and on Saturdays, they remain at the Day Care Centre up to the closing hours as mentioned above.

Police

112. Police have launched on 24th February, 2010 a National Policing Strategic Framework which aims at promoting an effective and efficient service delivery.

113. The NPSF comprises six main pillars:

- (a) Community Policing:- greater accountability to the community;
- (b) Achieving a Human Rights Compliant Organisation: commitment to professional standards (Recommendation 3);
- (c) Human Resource Management Capability: modernizing human resources management;
- (d) Permanent Strategic Planning Capability (strategic direction at Force and Divisional level);
- (e) Intelligence-Led Policing (development of proactive responses);
- (f) Enhancing Reactive Capability (a step change in the quality of our reactive activities).

114. In line with the new provisions of the Bail Act, the Bail and Remand Court (**Recommendation 22**) is now operational 7 days a week, including weekends and public holidays. All persons arrested during weekends and public holidays are either being brought before the court for bail procedures or released on parole pending the next district court sitting, hence reducing the probability that the arrested persons spend the weekend in Police cell.

115. In its quest to ensuring strict compliance with set standards, including human rights, the Mauritius Police Force has established a Professional Standards Department (PSD) both at Force and Divisional Level under the Reform Programme launched in February 2010. The PSD basically carries out thematic inspections and provides Police Commanders with objective reports and recommendations to improve processes and systems in the Police. In that context, Police cells are regularly inspected, detainees visited and all relevant documentations pertaining to the rights of arrested persons are scrutinized which include the checking of books and files. PSD also ensures the upholding of values, integrity and best practices.

116. Following the recommendation of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), the Police have formalised the procedure for informing the relatives of arrested persons and detainees of latters' arrest and detentions through a circular 4/2009 dated 5th March 2009 issued by the Commissioner of Police. The circular also guarantees that arrested persons are entitled to be visited by family and close relatives. Police is working in collaboration with the Judiciary to reduce the detention period until the case is called for trial and a judgement is pronounced (**Recommendation 23, 31**).

117. Likewise, since June 2012, with a view to further improving the conditions of detention of arrested persons in police cells, every detainee is being further provided with two services of tea daily in addition to the two meals provided to them.

Justice (Recommendation 33)

Achievements

- Cases are being disposed of more efficiently and speedily through the creation of dedicated and specialized divisions at the level of the Supreme Court (e.g. Commercial, Family, Criminal and Mediation).
- Faster disposal and sustained decrease in backlog of cases at the Supreme Court with establishment and operationalization of the Mediation Division.
- Judges and members of the legal profession trained in January 2011 as a precursor to the setting up of the Mediation Division.
- E-judiciary phase I project successfully developed, leading to an electronic case management and filing system of civil and chambers cases before the Supreme Court, including the Commercial Division.
- The Divorce and Judicial Separation Act 2011 (Miscellaneous) enacted in May 2011.
- A third batch of fifteen Court Officers completed the Diploma Course in Legal Studies with Court Administration at the University of Mauritius.

E-Judiciary

- The objective of the e-judiciary project is to provide an electronic platform for the filing and management of cases before all Courts and to replace the paper based system by adopting new and modern technologies more attuned to present day needs.
- Phase 1 of the project covers civil and commercial cases only (including Judge in Chambers cases) brought before the Supreme Court. Phase II of the project will take on board all civil and criminal cases brought before other divisions of the Supreme Court and before the lower jurisdictions of the Judiciary.

Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies

- The Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies was set up by the Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies Board Act 2011 on 19 July 2011 and proclaimed on 01 October 2011. The official launching of the Institute was carried on 27 July 2012
- The Institute seeks to promote proficiency and ensure the maintenance of standards in the Judiciary, among law practitioners and legal officers and in the delivery of court services in general. This will be done through the organisation and provision of Continuing Professional Development programmes, i.e continuous training courses, seminars and workshops, for the benefit of existing and prospective law practitioners and legal officers.

VI. Key national priorities, initiatives and commitments

118. Section 12 of the Constitution provides for freedom of expression. The local media enjoy a long tradition of freedom and pluralism. The audiovisual landscape consists of the national radio and television broadcaster, the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation, and private radio stations.

119. Government also proposes to introduce a Media Bill (**Recommendation 6**) shortly in a bid to enhance the democratic principles applying to media practice, with special

emphasis on freedom of expression and individual rights. In this respect, Mr Geoffroy Robertson Q.C, has already submitted a preliminary report on “*Media Law and Ethics in Mauritius*” for consultation among the general public.

120. In forging the development of the country, the Government has always been guided in its actions by the underlying philosophy of “Putting People First”. We have always considered economic success to be meaningful only if it leads to improvement in the quality of life for all in a sustainable manner. Government maintains its unflinching determination to nurture a more inclusive, plural and cohesive society based on human dignity, equality of treatment, economic efficiency and social justice.

121. In its Government Programme 2012-2015 “Moving the Nation Forward” developments in such sectors as education, health, law and order, children, women, disabled, elderly persons, prisons, judiciary and social integration of vulnerable groups rank high on the agenda of the Government.

VII. Capacity building and technical assistance (Recommendation 19)

122. A regional seminar was organised from 18 to 19 April 2011 by the Commonwealth Secretariat in collaboration with the Prime Minister’s Office in Mauritius with the following objectives -

(a) Encourage and support Commonwealth States and other stakeholders (National Human Rights Institutions and non-governmental organizations) to remain committed to the UPR following the review in Geneva;

(b) Support Commonwealth States to implement and act on the accepted UPR recommendations; and

(c) Provide constructive forum for Commonwealth States and other stakeholders to share their expertise and discuss challenges and strategies in respect of the implementation of the UPR recommendations.

123. From 31 October to 1 November 2011, Mauritius was represented at the 3rd Francophone Seminar organized by Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) in Tunisia. Mauritius was invited to make two presentations, namely on the challenges of UPR Implementation and preparation of the 2nd cycle report.

124. Mauritius in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights will be hosting from 30 to 31 July 2013 an interregional pre-session seminar to support the participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the Human Rights Council and its Universal Periodic Review Mechanism.

125. In February 2012, the Commonwealth Secretariat organised a Leadership Seminar on Human Rights for Heads of Ministries in order to sensitise them on the importance of human rights in their respective sectors and ensure the implementation of the recommendations of the National Human Rights Action Plan 2012-2020.

126. The Commonwealth Secretariat is also assisting in the project of “Integrating Human Rights across the curriculum” (**Recommendation 16**) and a Consultant was appointed to make a survey of the status and make recommendations for the implementation by Commonwealth Secretariat of the project. His report has already been finalised and we are awaiting the implementation which will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources and the Mauritius Institute of Education.

127. The local UNDP office partly sponsored the “Database on human rights indicators” project which has been implemented in collaboration with the University of Mauritius.

VIII. Conclusion

128. Mauritius is fully committed to the UPR process and recognises its importance in improving human rights in the world. Civil society organisations play and will continue to play a conspicuous role in fostering a human rights culture among the whole population. Collaborative arrangements with all Ministries/Departments, National Human Rights Institutions, NGOs and international partners are essential to achieve our ultimate goal to make Mauritius a human rights friendly island.

Notes

¹ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/HRC/downloads/mauritius%20mid%20term%20report.pdf>

² <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G10/468/49/PDF/G1046849.pdf?OpenElement>
<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G12/467/19/PDF/G1246719.pdf?OpenElement>
http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/CEDAW.C.MAR.6-7_en.pdf
