

THE INSTRUMENTS CATERING FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE CHILD

The instruments catering for the protection of the child are as hereunder-

- a) **Child Protection Services:** these services are provided through the Child Development Unit (CDU) under the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare (MGECDFW). It operates through a network of 6 outstations and endeavours to provide immediate assistance to children victims of abuse, especially victims of sexual abuse, through — (a) the emergency protective services; (b) a 24/7 basis hotline service and (c) close monitoring and follow-up;
- b) **Alternative Care System/Residential Care Institutions:** the MGECDFW accommodates children victims of violence in its 6 shelters (4 run by NGOs and 2 by the National Children’s Council) and 14 Residential Care Institutions which are managed by NGOs. The Inspectorate section of the CDU carries regular inspections in these shelters;
- c) **Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of Child Abduction:** Mauritius adhered to the abovementioned Hague Convention in October 1993 and the CDU enforces the provisions of the Instrument whose main objectives are to secure the prompt return of children wrongfully retained in another State and see to it that the rights of custody and of access under the law of one Contracting State are effectively respected in another State;
- d) **Foster Care Programme:** opportunities are given to children victims of abuse and/or neglect to live in a substitute family on a temporary basis. In accordance with section 8 of the Child Protection Act and section 23(a) of the Child Protection (Foster Care) Regulations 2002, the main objective of the Foster Care System is to give the opportunity to children removed under a Court Order and placed in institutions, to evolve in a substitute family environment;
- e) **Child Protection Register:**, the Child Protection Register (CPR) was launched in 2014 and is a key innovative computerised system aimed at enabling the CDU to record and address cases of children in distress reported to the Ministry of Gender Equality, Child Development and Family Welfare;
- f) **High Powered “Working Together” Committee:** It has been setup by the Ministry of Gender to facilitate and sustain prompt and multidisciplinary actions in reported cases of violence and abuse against children;
- g) **Tardy Declaration of Birth:** to ensure that children whose births have not been registered within the prescribed delay and are not deprived of their rights, a fast track system is in place since 2005 in respect of tardy declaration.
- h) **Child Mentoring Programme (CMP):** Children between 10 to 16 years of age who display mild behavioural problems are assisted by trained adult mentors for their emotional and social reconstruction;
- i) **Early Childhood Development Programme-Monitoring of Child Day Care Centres:** The MGECDFW monitors and registers Child Day Care Centres (CDCCs) for children in the age bracket of 3 months to 3 years old in order to ensure that these children are provided with appropriate support and care. As at date out of the 390 CDCCs in Mauritius, only 89 were registered as at end 2016. Consequently, regular site visits are effected to those which are not registered so as to persuade them to do so.