

Universal Periodic Review
(17th session, from 21 October – 1 November 2013)

Contribution of UNESCO

(The countries to be reviewed are, in this order: China, Jordan, Mauritius, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Belize, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Malaysia, Malta, and Monaco. Each submission should refer to one country only)

Mauritius

I. BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

1. Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO

I.1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960)	Notification of succession 20/08/1970	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. (1989)	Not state party to this Convention			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)	Ratified 19/09/1995			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)	Ratified 04/06/2004			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005)	Ratified 29/03/2006			Right to take part in cultural life

II. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

1. Right to education

Normative Framework:

Constitutional framework:

2 The Constitution of Mauritius (1968)¹ provides for fundamental rights and freedoms, including non-discrimination, protection of freedom of conscience, and protection of freedom to establish schools. However, it does not explicitly grant the right to education. According to Article 3, "It is hereby recognised and declared that in Mauritius there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest, each and all of the following human rights and fundamental freedoms: (2) freedom of conscience, of expression, of assembly and association and freedom to establish schools." Article 11 provides that "(2) Except with his own consent (or, if he is a minor, the consent of his guardian), no person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if that instruction, ceremony or observance relates to a religion that he does not profess." Article 14 adds that "(1) No religious denomination and no religious, social, ethnic or cultural association or group shall be prevented from establishing and maintaining schools at its own expense."

3. Chapter II of the Constitution of Mauritius provides for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, Chapter VII of the same Constitution provides for a Judicature, including a Supreme Court "with unlimited jurisdiction to hear and determine any civil or criminal proceedings under any law other than a disciplinary law and such jurisdiction and powers as may be conferred upon it by this Constitution or any other law". Chapter IX of the Constitution also provides for a post of Ombudsman. The role of the Ombudsman is to investigate into complaints against Government Institutions and local authorities and seek redress to injustice if any, sustained in consequence of any alleged maladministration that may have been committed by any public officer or authority in the exercise of administrative functions. The Ombudsman looks into complaints: made by members of the public; when s/he is invited to do so by any Minister or other member of the National Assembly; or if s/he considers it desirable to do so of his/ her own initiative.

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http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/AssemblySite/menuitem.ee3d58b2c32c60451251701065c521ca/?content_id=c4554555fc808010VgnVCM100000ca6a12acRCRD (Accessed 29/06/11)

Legislative framework:

4. The Mauritius Institute of Education was established by the Mauritius Institute of Education Act of 1973².

5. Formal Education at all levels is governed by the Education Regulations of 1957³ (also named the Education Act) and the relevant amendments made subsequently to legislation to make education sector responsive to the growing needs of the Mauritian Society. Government's impetus for free Primary Education for All started in the 1940's resulting in near universal enrolments at primary level long before primary education was made compulsory in 1991. Under Article 37 of the Education Act, all children must attend primary school the responsible party for failing to comply is liable to a fine and imprisonment. Admission to a governments or aided primary school is granted to pupils at the age of 5 until they are less than 13 years old. Since 1997 free Secondary Education is also provided. This has caused enrolment at secondary level to rise considerably. Tertiary education at the University of Mauritius is also free. Article 35 of the Education Act provides that "All Government schools and all schools in receipt of a regular grant in aid from Government funds shall be open to pupils of any race or religion." Moreover, while education in Mauritius has been free for some time, in 2005 existing legislation was amended making education compulsory until the age of 16⁴. This was done in an attempt to reflect the Government's continuing commitment to broadening access to education.

6. The legislation was amended in 2004 to make Education compulsory until the age of 16 with the introduction of 11 year schooling, as from 2005. This measure reflects the government's commitment to broadening access to education. Section 37 of the Education Act as amended by the Education (Amendment) Act 2004 passed by the National assembly on 23 November 2004 (Education Act updated up to 30 June 2009 available on site <http://attorneygeneral.gov.mu>) provides for compulsory education up to age of 16 as follows:

- (i) Every child who has attained such age as may be prescribed for admission to a primary school shall attend a primary school.
- (ii) It shall be compulsory for every child to attend school up to the end of the academic year in the course of which he attains the age of 16.
- (iii) Any responsible party of a child under the age of 16 who, without reasonable cause, refuses or neglects to make the child to attend school regularly in accordance with subsection (i) or (ii) shall commit an offence and shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding MUR 10,000 and to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.

7. The Education Act was amended in 2011 to ban private tuition up to Standard IV after the introduction in 2010 of the Enhancement Program to encourage the holistic development of the children while ensuring better learning through innovative pedagogies.

² <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/MIE%20Act%201973.pdf>

³ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/Education%20Act%201957.pdf>

⁴ Education (Amendment) Act 2004, www.commonlii.org/mu/legis/num_act/ea2004184.doc

8. The Private Secondary School Authority (PSSA) was set up as a regulatory body by the Private Secondary School Authority (PSSA) 1976 Act⁵ for managing financial resources and maintaining norms and standards. The Government pays grant to Private School Sector for equalization of opportunities and facilities.

9. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA) has been established by the MQA Act of 2001⁶. The Act No. 27 of 2003⁷ provides for the establishment of the Human Resource Development Council.

10. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Authority Act 2007⁸ provides for the establishment of the Authority in order to have a more efficient regulatory framework in relation to ECCE. The Act repealed and replaced the Pre-School Trust Fund Act.

11. The Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD), a body corporate established under Act No. 12 of 2009⁹, has taken over the activities of the Industrial and Vocational Training Board.

12. A Sex Discrimination Act has been passed in the National Assembly in December 2002. The objectives of the Act are mainly to:

- Give effect to certain provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women
- Eliminate, discrimination against persons on the ground of (i) Sex; (iii) Pregnancy or potential pregnancy in the areas of employment, education health care, accommodation insurance, and pension. [...]
- Eliminate discrimination involving sexual harassment in the workplace, in education institutions and in other areas of public activity
- Promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle of the equality of men and women.¹⁰

13. For more information on the legislation: <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/education/menuitem.07f8c84cb46bb504631e691048a521ca/>

14. However, the Equal Opportunities Act of 2008¹¹ (and its Bill¹²) repeals sections 16 and 18(1) (b) of the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Act; and the Sex Discrimination

⁵ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/PSSA%20Act%201976.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/MQA%20Act%202001.pdf>

⁷ http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/hrd_act_2003.pdf

⁸ http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/education/menuitem.07f8c84cb46bb504631e691048a521ca/?content_id=fcea1f dfa0e8b110VgnVCM100000a04a8c0RCRD

⁹ http://www.mitd.mu/mitd_act.pdf

¹⁰ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/women-site/menuitem.8abf4dffaa942d54a3a5b31000b521ca/#women>

Act 2002. The Act aims to promote equal opportunity between persons, prohibit discrimination on the ground of status and by victimization, establish an Equal Opportunity Division and an Equal Opportunities Tribunal and for related matters. Section 17 of the Act is dedicated to Education:

15. Concerning Gender Equality, Section 5 on the Forms of Discrimination establishes that a “discriminator is deemed to discriminate on the ground of sex where he acts as he does because of: (i) the pregnancy, family responsibility or potential pregnancy of the aggrieved person; or (ii) a characteristic of the aggrieved person that generally appertains, or is imputed, to a person who is pregnant, has family responsibility or is potentially pregnant”. Furthermore, “(b) For the purposes of paragraph (a) “family responsibility” means the responsibility of a person to care for or support – (i) a dependent child; or (ii) any other immediate family member who is in need of care or support; “potential pregnancy” means the fact that a woman – (i) is or may be capable of bearing children; (ii) has expressed a desire to become pregnant; or (iii) is likely, or is perceived as being likely, to become pregnant”.

16. Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2005¹³: this Act amended the Education Act, the Mauritius Qualifications Authority Act and the Tertiary Education Commission Act in order to make better provisions for the recognition and equivalence of qualifications in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors, for regulating the establishment and operation of private post-secondary educational institutions, and for matters related thereto.

17. The Tertiary Education Commission Act 1988¹⁴: the Tertiary Education Commission is responsible under the Tertiary Education Commission Act 1988 as amended by the Education and Training (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2005 to not only promote, plan, develop and coordinate post-secondary education in Mauritius but also to implement an overarching regulatory framework to achieve high international quality (<http://tec.intnet.mu>).

18. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) is empowered under the Protection of Human Rights Act 1998 (Act. 19 of 1998)¹⁵ and the Sex Discrimination Act 2002¹⁶ (repealed by the Equal Opportunities Act of 2008) to deal with allegations of violations by public bodies of the human rights set out in Chapter II of the Constitution and with allegations of sex discrimination in the public and private sector as well as with cases of sexual harassment. The NHRC has the power not only of enquiring into complaints but also to review safeguards provided under any enactment for the protection of human rights and to give its views to the authorities on relevant

¹¹ <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/81533/88611/F747375996/MUS81533.pdf>

¹² <http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/assemblysite/file/bill3608.pdf>

¹³

[http://tec.intnet.mu/pdf%20downloads/THE%20EDUCATION%20AND%20TRAINING%20\(MISCELLANEOUS%20PROVISIONS\)%20ACT%202005.pdf](http://tec.intnet.mu/pdf%20downloads/THE%20EDUCATION%20AND%20TRAINING%20(MISCELLANEOUS%20PROVISIONS)%20ACT%202005.pdf)

¹⁴ <http://tec.intnet.mu/pdf%20downloads/TEC%20ACT%201988.pdf>

¹⁵ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/site/nhrbsite/menuitem.6a46a0254804c86512c7c91048a521ca/>

¹⁶ <http://ilo-mirror.library.cornell.edu/public/english/employment/gems/eoo/law/mauritiu/act5.htm>

legislation. It has a website <http://nhrc.gov.mu> to provide information to the public (including students and women) about its jurisdiction, objectives, functions, simple procedure for lodging complaints and outcome of cases dealt by it.

19. The office of Ombudsperson for Children (OC) was established under the Ombudsperson for Children's Act of 2003¹⁷. The OC's objects, as specified under section 5 of the Act are to:

- (a) Ensure that the rights, needs and interests of children are given full consideration by public bodies, private authorities, individuals and associations of individuals;
- (b) Promote the rights and best interests of children; and
- (c) Promote compliance with the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

20. Act 12 of 2009 establishes a body corporate to take over the activities of the ex-Industrial and Vocational Training Board (ex-IVTB) and part of the ex-Technical School Management Trust Fund (ex-TSMTF) as from 16 November 2009.

Policy measures:

21. The Education & Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020 and the Programme-Based Budget Estimates 2011 & Indicative Estimates 2012 & 2013 emphasized the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources to provide learning opportunities to all our school population and sustain equitable access to quality education to all learners. The latter document also mentions that the priority objective of the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology is to improve access to tertiary education and to attain 72% GTER by 2015.

22. The Education and Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020¹⁸ translates Government's commitment to bring about fundamental reforms in education. This Education and Human Resource Strategy Plan covers all subsectors, from the pre-primary, through primary and secondary, to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and tertiary. It establishes various Objectives:

23. Firstly, to ensure that all children aged 3 to 5 years in Mauritius have the opportunity to develop their individual intellectual, socio-emotional and psycho-motor skills to the best of their capacity in order to build the confidence and self-esteem in learning that will not only prepare them for the next level (primary school) but, more importantly, lay the foundations for learning that will support them throughout their lifetime;

24. Secondly, to sustain equitable access to quality education, ensuring that all learners attain high levels of achievement in Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communications Technology and essential Life Skills as well as sound human values, healthy lifestyle and so forth as the basis for lifelong learning and good citizenship;

¹⁷[http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/The%20Ombudsperson%20for%20Children%20Act%20\(update%202003\).pdf](http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/The%20Ombudsperson%20for%20Children%20Act%20(update%202003).pdf)

¹⁸<http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/educationsite/file/EHRSP%202008-2020.pdf>

25. Thirdly, to ensure that all students are given the opportunity to embark on and complete higher secondary education for employability and higher and further education and training with the required maturity and confidence;
26. Fourthly, to build a system that ensures a supply of quality personnel that work collegially with a strong management and quality assurance system to improve and support learning achievement and overall development of all learners;
27. Fifthly, to provide an efficient and effective TVET system of greater public esteem responsive to the present and future needs by having a skilled and flexible workforce;
28. Sixthly, to make Mauritius an intelligent island, a Knowledge Hub to serve the Region and a Centre for Higher Learning and Excellence;
29. Seventhly, to build a creative and competent Human Resource base for Mauritius for sustainable national development;
30. Eighthly, to develop the Ministry into an efficient, effective, and accountable functioning public institution that exemplifies ‘best practices’ at all levels of the organisation.

Free education

31. Different measures have been taken by the government to guarantee equal access at each level: textbooks free of charge at primary level, book loan scheme at secondary; a loan scheme for higher education¹⁹. Since 2005, government provides free-transport to all students. This has allowed poor students who otherwise would have missed schooling to attend school²⁰.

Quality education

32. The quality education issue is addressed by the government in a 5 years programme. The challenge stated for 2005-2010 was that of enhancing quality dimension as well as bringing more equity in the system²¹.

33. The Government Programme for 2005-2010 emphasized its commitment to the social and human needs. In the field of education, Government therefore committed itself to carrying out fundamental reforms with a view to providing universal World Class Quality education to enable young Mauritians to be employable in new sectors of the economy, to have more fulfilling jobs and to be competitive at the international level while ensuring their holistic development.

See also “Student Loans Schemes in Mauritius: experience, analyses and scenarios”

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001470/147096e.pdf>

²⁰ The development of education, National report of Mauritius, 2008, Measures taken to alleviate the financial burden of families of school going children, p. 16,

http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/mauritius_NR08.pdf

²¹ The development of education, National report of Mauritius, 2008, Measures taken to alleviate the financial burden of families of school going children, pp. 10-11.

34. In the Government Program for 2010 – 2015, the Government stressed its intention to pursue the democratization of the economy and the transformation of Mauritius into a society of equal opportunities based on the values of Unity, Equity and Modernity.

35. The Student Tracking System mentioned in the previous section will follow every child who enters the school system as from the pre-primary level and monitor his/her individual school going status and progress in school and beyond. It will allow speedy collection and dissemination of data for prompt intervention for integrating all school going children. A SMS-based system, commonly called e-Register System, was implemented in all state secondary schools in 2011 and some interested private schools in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to curb unjustified absences and truancy. This SMS alert system informs parents of the absence of their wards from school.

36. In 2010, an Enhancement Program was implemented, after school hours, for Standard IV pupils in core subjects (English, French, Mathematics, History, Geography, Science) and extended in 2011 to Standard III pupils as well as in Asian languages and Arabic so as to promote a culture of success at all levels through the support of a diversity of activities such as drama, sports, physical education, music, painting, slam, etc. It was imperative for Ministry of Education and Human Resources to adopt technology to ensure a better quality of educational services to the children through an efficient management of the Education System. This was made possible through the implementation of the Sankoré Project, as the e-learning solution in a phased manner. An IT mediated learning process was launched and Educators trained to make their classes more interesting, attractive and interactive. The purpose was two-pronged: to reduce absenteeism and to improve learning. Preparatory works were also completed for the introduction of Kreol Morisien as an optional subject and Bhojpuri in Standard I as from January 2012.

37. The Mauritius Qualifications Authority, which operates under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, is responsible for developing, implementing and maintaining the National Qualifications Framework (a 10-Level hierarchy of qualifications that encompasses the primary/secondary and tertiary education as well as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training and enables clearer pathways for all learners) and recognising and validating competencies acquired outside the formal education and training systems, thus facilitating lifelong learning.

ICT

38. The Ministry of Education has launched a national project that will equip primary education institutions with smart boards. This initiative aims to promote the use of technologies within the Education system.²²

Mechanisms of respect of non-discrimination

39. Mauritius established an Ombudsperson's office to investigate and intervene on behalf of victims of any type of discrimination, including in education. Educational institutions or individuals can appeal to the court or to the Ombudsperson in the event of any kind of discrimination.

²² Press Agency (15/02/2011)

Inclusive Education

Gender equality:

40. Since 2005, the government's commitment toward gender equality is expressed in the National Gender Policy Framework that deals notably with parity in education. In 2008, this document was revised²³ and it promotes education of girls and women.

41. Since 2009 the FIFA Grassroot Football project is being implemented in primary schools by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and Human Resources and Mauritius Football Association with the aim not only of encouraging football activity in primary schools but also of increasing the awareness of educational values of football, fostering social interaction and contributing to a healthy development of the young children of the country. As at October 2011, around 9000 pupils (boys aged 10-11 years and girls aged 8-9 years) participated in this programme.

42. At the Secondary level, the FIFA Football for Health project was started in 2010 on a pilot basis in 11 secondary schools and extended in 2011 to 163 secondary schools covering some 17,000 students. It was scheduled to be implemented in 2012 in all secondary schools (State and private) at Form I level with the aim of conveying 11 health messages by playing football (e.g. Respect for girls and women which sensitizes on gender based violence including trafficking in women, Protect yourself from HIV, Avoid drugs and alcohol, etc.).

43. Following the launching of the African Women's Decade in Mauritius in October 2010, boys were encouraged to opt for courses in Cookery/Needlework and girls for Design and Technology within the National Youth Achievement Award Scheme run by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for those aged between 14-25 years. In 2011, 27 boys were able to opt for Cookery, 2 for Needlework and 54 girls for Design and Technology.

Education in disadvantages areas:

44. The National Empowerment Programme was launched in 2006. This has enhanced the education of children in the most vulnerable households. Under the Eradication of Absolute Poverty Programme (EAPP) a special effort was being made to ensure that those who live in poor, marginalized and excluded areas have access to Education. 483 pre-primary school children living in poverty benefited in 2009 from free lunch, transportation, medical exams, schools materials and 'accompagnement scolaire.'

45. Although education is free and all schools have similar facilities in terms of infrastructure, human and other resources, the level of achievement of children in some disadvantaged areas is particularly low. These schools, numbering about 30, fail nearly 60% of the children attending them. The Priority Education Area (ZEP) project was reviewed in 2003 to bring innovative strategies to the existing initiative. It targets schools where the percentage of passes in the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) has been less than 40% for five consecutive years. Students attending these schools are mainly from families experiencing problems and the project aims at giving additional resources to such schools. Furthermore, assurance is given to the teachers/head teachers who are willing to work in such schools. Through the ZEP food project

²³ http://www.gov.mu/portal/goc/women/file/nat_gen_pol_fr_mts.doc

the Government ensures that all students in ZEP school are provided with a daily meal. School kits are also supplied as learning aids.

Special needs education:

46. The Ministry's Education & Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020 includes among its strategic goals the statement to "Give a greater thrust to special education needs" while the Ministry's Programme-Based Budgets as from 2011 provide a special Programme "Special Education Needs of School Age Children" with clearly defined Outcome (Successful integration of children with special education needs into the world of higher education, training or work), services to be provided, service standards and quantifiable enrolment targets for 2011 to 2014.

47. In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, after multi-sectorial consultations, developed a National Policy and Strategy Document on Special Education Needs and Inclusive Education in Mauritius to respond to both the specific and emerging educational needs of all children with special educational needs with focus on the special educational needs of children with disabilities.

48. The National Policy and Strategy Document for the Special Education Needs (SEN) sector lays emphasis on the need to adopt a child-centered pedagogical approach as well as a flexible and adapted curriculum that will help each child to develop his or her full potential. In order to successfully attain the strategic objective of inclusion for the SEN sector, the following four crucial elements are being worked on:

- An appropriate curriculum along with an adapted pedagogy;
- An appropriate regulatory framework to ensure the provision of an adapted and quality education services so as to cater for the different types of special needs/disabilities of children aged between 3+ and 20 years;
- Capacity building programs for trainers and teaching personnel; and
- An appropriate quality assurance framework to harmonize the level of educational services dispensed by the different stakeholders involved in the sector.

49. An outreach exercise was initiated for the first time in 2010 to sensitize both parents and Heads of primary schools to facilitate the registration of SEN children in an appropriate school. A Special Monitoring Team was set up at the Ministry to work together with the NGOs in tracking children with Special Education Needs and to facilitate their admission to schools that can best respond to the specific needs of these children. Other measures taken to facilitate integration of children with mild disabilities included:

50. Improvement of physical facilities

- (a) 148 schools have been equipped with ramps.
- (b) All new secondary schools (over 30) have been provided with adapted toilets for children with disabilities. Moreover, links between building blocks have been constructed to ease access of children using wheelchairs.
- (c) Facilities such as music room, library, science laboratory, computer labs are available on the ground floor where necessary. In Primary schools, Head arrangements have already been made to move all classes having children with disabilities to the ground floor.

51. Facilities for parents with SEN children

- (a) A flexible approach is being adopted towards parents who call at school during the day to help their physically disabled children.
- (b) In line with the policy of the Ministry, students with disabilities are now released earlier than other students to avoid hardships to these students.

52. Pedagogical facilities to SEN children:

- (a) Children with disabilities are benefitting from extra time for the Certificate of Primary Education examinations.
- (b) Enlarged print school books/manuals and question papers are being produced and provided, free of charge, for children suffering from visual impairment.
- (c) A Mauritian Sign Language has been developed to ease communication for children suffering from hearing impairment.

53. Support Services: Services of Educational Psychologists, Educational Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and Speech Therapists are provided as and when required.

54. Support to NGOs running SEN schools: For the year 2012, NGOs running SEN Schools will receive an increase of 25% in the Grant-in-Aid payable to them. This increase will help them to ensure their empowerment and the capacity building of their personnel.

55. Future Projects - Setting up of SEN Resource Centres:

- a) Several properly equipped SEN Resource and Educational Development Centres will be opened in 2012 and 2013 in different parts of the island in order to reach out to children who require specialized services, especially, children living in areas where there are no such facilities available.
- b) The possibility of providing ICT Equipment with appropriate software to meet the education needs for disabled children is being explored.

Higher Education

56. Admission is by merit following public advertisement of courses available. There is no discrimination except that Mauritian and SADC students may pay lower fees than students from other countries. Moreover, in addition to increasing the number of seats available in publicly and privately funded institutions, the following measures are also taken to increase access to tertiary education in Mauritius:

- (a) financial assistance in the form of loans, scholarships and bursaries is provided to ensure that deserving Mauritian and some foreign students are not debarred from tertiary education because of lack of funds;
- (b) a framework for Foundation Programmes was implemented in 2011 to allow students who do not have the minimum entrance requirements for tertiary education to progress to degree programmes;
- (c) a framework for Recognition of Prior Learning was also put in place in 2011 to facilitate access for those who had to join the world of work after their secondary schooling but want now to undertake post-secondary studies;.

- (d) a “Study Mauritius” Centre was set up in 2011 to provide students with information on tertiary education and career guidance, and assist foreign students in securing visa, accommodation, occupation and work permits.

Continuing Education

57. The students who did not make the grade at the CPE and were over aged to remain in the primary schools were given the chance to continue their education through a pre-vocational stream. A new strategy for the Prevocational Sector was worked out in 2011 for implementation as from 2012. The new 4-year programme will place greater emphasis on acquisition of work-based experience, social and life skills, lifelong learning skills and development of trade skills. The introduction of a 4 week “Bridging the Gap” project was also scheduled for 2012, based on practical activities to help the children regain their self-esteem and develop their confidence.

58. A Summer School Program for schools where less than half of the students have passed the CPE exists to provide targeted supplementary education in reading, writing and arithmetic to those who have not achieved the required proficiency. The program was piloted successfully from 30 November to 22 December 2011 in 18 Government schools and 2 private aided schools. 808 pupils registered for the Program which also included provision of a hot meal daily to each child and a medical screening.

59. The Mauritius Institute of Training and Development implemented the 9 month part-time Second Chance Programme to provide Basic and Advanced Literacy & Numeracy and Life Management Skills to 16-21 year olds who had dropped out of the school system and were not in full time employment. Since its implementation in 2009, 468 youngsters for both Mauritius and Rodrigues, successfully completed the programme while for the third run which started in March 2011, 333 participants were enrolled in both Mauritius and Rodrigues. This Programme was meant to prepare the youths for a vocational training programme which would eventually qualify them to be selected for the Circular Migration Programme.

60. The National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC), which operates under the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, initiated in June 2005, with seed grant from UNESCO, a course in functional English literacy and ICT targeting learners with low academic level in English and Computer to bridge the digital divide and to empower women in fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals. The ELIT project (English Literacy using Information Technology) was, with the collaboration of the then Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development, Family Welfare & Consumer Protection, pilot tested with 184 women aged 16 and above in 14 women centres around the island of Mauritius.

61. The specific objectives for the ELIT course are to:

- provide young girls and women (15 years and above) the possibility for further education and increase their employability;
- improve their creative skills,
- empower them to take advantage of schemes promoting entrepreneurship development;
- develop a productivity culture through non-formal education;
- facilitate inter-generation learning;

- bridge the digital divide by using ICT as a tool to make learning more interesting, interactive and flexible.

62. The ELIT programme was officially launched on the 5th April 2007 and was being scaled up with the collaboration of various institutions and non-governmental organisations. With the course being conducted by trainers from NGO's, it has been adapted to cater for the needs of men and youth also (<http://www.npccmauritus.com>).

Financial Aid

63. As announced in the Budget Speech 2008/2009, the following schemes were set up under the Human Resource, Knowledge and Arts Development Fund to enable students to pursue post-secondary studies in a recognized local Tertiary Educational Institution:

- A Student Scholarship Scheme for students from families with monthly income not exceeding Rs10,000 and who face severe hardship following the death or serious incapacity of a wage earner;
- A Government Guaranteed Students Loan Scheme for students who do not have the means to secure a loan to avail themselves of government guaranteed loan facilities from commercial banks (for details, please see <http://ministry-education.gov.mu> or <http://kdf.intnet.mu>).

64. The two Schemes were launched in August 2008. Subsequently, the HRKADF Student Scholarship Scheme was extended to students belonging to single parent families or whose parents are legally divorced or are following treatment for drug addiction in recognized institutions. Since the operation of these two Schemes up to end of 2011, 1118 students have benefitted from scholarships and 169 from Government guaranteed loans.

65. In addition to various scholarships and financial assistance provided to certain meritorious students from lower income families following courses provided by the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, University of Mauritius, University of Technology, Mauritius, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources has, as announced on 19 November 2010 in the Budget Speech 2011, reviewed the Government Scholarship Schemes to increase the number of scholarships granted for a first degree course from 30 to 60 annually, including 16 to be awarded on the basis of both academic merit and approved social criteria (such as family income not to exceed Rs12,000 per month). The new scheme will apply to students competing at the HSC examinations as from 2012.

66. Moreover a New Bursary Scheme providing 8 bursaries per year has been introduced for the benefit of students from the lowest income families (household income not exceeding Rs 5,000 monthly) who have passed the HSC examinations. These Bursaries will be awarded for the first time in 2012 to students having sat for HSC examinations in 2011.

67. In the Budget Speech 2012 delivered on 4 November 2011, the following measures were announced:

- Extension as from 2012 of the pre-primary education grant applicable to children aged 4 to cover 3 year olds in order to ensure all children are provided with vital foundation years of schooling to develop their aptitudes to perform well in future years;
- A Summer School Programme for schools where less than half of the students have passed the CPE to provide targeted supplementary education in reading, writing and arithmetic to

those who have not achieved the required proficiency. The programme was piloted successfully from 30 November to 22 December 2011 in 18 Government schools and 2 private aided schools. 808 pupils registered for the Programme which also included provision of a hot meal daily to each child and a medical screening.

Human Rights Education

68. In Mauritius, the primary school curriculum has been reviewed to provide education such as will meet the needs for academic, aesthetic, physical and social development of the child. New subjects such citizenship education, health and physical education as well as Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have been included. The curriculum also mainstreams human rights, children's rights, duties of all children, women's rights and concern for the environment. It should be noted that this curriculum is gender-friendly.

Language Education for Minorities

69. In Mauritius, the education system provides for instruction in seven oriental languages (ancestral languages).

70. Provisions are made in both primary and secondary public and private grant aided schools for the teaching of Asian languages (Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Marathi, Telugu, and Modern Chinese) and Arabic as optional and examinable subjects. Moreover, in line with a Government policy dating from 1976 to propagate and foster ancestral languages and uphold the cultural heritage of Mauritians, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources contributes about Rs 29 million (USD) annually for the payment of an allowance to those who teach these languages after school hours and during week-ends in what are commonly known as "Evening Schools" run by socio cultural organizations and to the Visiting Officers who monitor these schools and provide pedagogical advice to the teachers. Arrangements (teacher training, production of textbooks for free issue to pupils and teachers, etc.) were also made in 2011 for the teaching, as from January 2012, of Kreol Morisien in Standard I in all public and private aided primary schools where the parents had opted for it and for inclusion of Bhojpuri in Hindi.

71. The Ministry of Arts and Culture provides for annual grants to various Speaking Unions and cultural centers besides supporting the religious festivals of all religious groups.

Cooperation:

72. Mauritius is party to 1960 UNESCO's Convention against Discrimination in Education since 1970 and submitted a report, in 2006 within the framework of the Seventh Consultation of Member States on the measures taken for its implementation (covering period 2000-2005), as well as for the Sixth Consultation for period 1994-1999.

73. Mauritius is not party to 1989 UNESCO's Convention on Technical and Vocational Education

74. Mauritius did not report within the framework of the fourth consultation of Member States the measures taken for the implementation of the 1974 UNESCO's Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (covering the period 2005-2008).

75. Mauritius submitted a national report for the Eighth Consultation on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education (covering the period 2006-2011).

Freedom of opinion and expression

Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints

Legislative framework

76. Article 3 and Article 12 of the Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius protects freedom of expression.

77. Defamation remains criminalized in Mauritius under the Criminal Code. Under Article 288, “(3) Any person who, ...is guilty of defamation shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year and a fine not exceeding 5,000 rupees.”²⁴ Additionally, specific provisions on sedition (Article 283) and “outrage against public and religious morality” (Article 206) also contain penalty of prison sentences for made the offences through words or writing including in a newspaper.

78. No freedom of information law has been adopted in Mauritius.

Media self-regulation

79. Media self-regulatory mechanisms remain undeveloped in the country.

Safety of journalists

80. UNESCO recorded no killing of journalists in Mauritius between 2008 and 2012.

The right to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications (REBSP)

Cooperation, Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints:

81. Mauritius transmitted its national submission to UNESCO on the application of the 1974 Recommendation on the Status of Scientific Researchers and took part in the consultations concerning the issue of a possible revision of the 1974 Recommendation discussed currently at UNESCO.

82. The national legislation adequately conforms to the principles laid down by the Recommendation. Institutional practices are currently being reviewed through proposals for a national Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, which will take into consideration aspects relating to the financing of research and development, human resources, the public research system, science and society, and the transfer of technology and innovation.

²⁴ Penal Code of Mauritius <http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/legaldb/files/criminal.pdf>

83. UNESCO has contributed significantly to the forward-planning process associated with the review of the 1994 Barbados Programme of Action (BPoA) for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and to the International UN Meeting in Mauritius (10-14 January 2005), through events that highlighted the role of culture, youth visioning for island living, communities in action, ocean and coastal management, and a civil society forum. This contribution is underpinned by a resolution (32C/Res.48) adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 2003.

84. Mauritius Declaration: the 23-paragraph Mauritius Declaration reaffirms the continued validity of the Barbados Programme of Action as the “blueprint providing the fundamental framework for the sustainable development of small island developing States”. Reiterating that the acknowledged vulnerability of such States will grow unless urgent steps are taken, it reaffirms the international community’s commitment to support the efforts of small island developing States for their sustainable development through the further full and effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The Declaration recognizes that particular attention should be given to building resilience in small island developing States, including through technology transfer and development, capacity-building and human resource development. The text goes on to address women and youth, conservation of island and marine biodiversity, the importance of cultural identity, HIV/AIDS, and commits to timely implementation of the Mauritius Strategy.

85. A clear science and technology policy direction is vital for the socio-economic development of a country. Countries that have effectively leveraged science and technology have made significant progress. Science and research has now assumed a new dimension with the creation of a Ministry for Industry, Science and Research. The Ministry of Industry, Science and Research has embarked in a process to develop a science and research policy framework. After the elaboration of a draft document on science and research, a national conference on science and research will be held with stakeholders. Thereafter, the policy framework will be finalised. The policy framework should provide response to such issues as: lack of innovative capacity, poor levels of investment in research and development, poor flow of knowledge and technology from science to industry and society and lack of support system with appropriate funding.²⁵

86. The Government of Mauritius has adopted a strategy of **Building a Green future for Mauritius** through the **Maurice Ile Durable (MID)** concept. The **MID** concept aims at reducing the dependence on fossil fuels, improving consumption behaviours and creating a sustainable local industry of renewal energy sources. To ensure the endorsement of the population to this massive endeavour, a range of programmes are being conducted to build awareness, confidence and familiarity in renewable energy technologies and sustainable consumption practices.²⁶

87. The Central Electricity Board (CEB) in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Utilities (MPU) has launched an “Energy Saving Campaign” since August 2004. Several measures have

²⁵ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/nsp/industry/policies.htm>

²⁶ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/nsp/industry/energy.htm>

been taken to help residential customers to cut down their electricity bills without decreasing their comfort. During this campaign, Energy Saving Booklets were distributed to all residential customers so as to explain the ways to reduce electricity bills by implementing measures such as changing incandescent lamps (ICLs) to compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) which consume less energy. Apart from lighting, reduction in electricity consumption with regard to other domestic appliances such as refrigerator, iron, air conditioner, washing machine and dishwasher were also dealt with. CEB has embarked in a project whereby CFLs are sold at a highly subsidized price of Rs 15 a unit to all residential customers. The project which was started on 1 st August 2008 in collaboration with Climate Care, aims at increasing the adoption and use of high quality CFLs by replacing less efficient Incandescent Lamps (ICLs) so as to reduce the consumption of electricity, particularly at peak times, and also to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.²⁷

The right to take part in cultural life

A) Normative Framework: constitutional and legislative frameworks

88. The Constitution provides fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual without discrimination on the grounds of race, place of origin, political opinions, colour, creed or sex, but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest. It includes freedom of conscience and of expression. Freedom of conscience includes freedom of thought and of religion, freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and both in public and in private, to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.²⁸ No reference is made to culture, heritage and/or museum.

89. Mauritius has ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) on 12 December 1973.

B) Institutional framework

90. The Ministry for Arts and Culture is in charge of implementing cultural conventions and related activities. Its objectives could be resumed as follows: a) to preserve and to foster cultural values both at individual and collective levels; b) to promote cultural interaction among different cultural components within the country and abroad for mutual understanding and enrichment; c) to upgrade, strengthen and extend the existing cultural infrastructure and to construct new structures; d) to provide support to associations of artists and to individuals involved in artistic, and cultural activities; e) to organize cultural activities for the public at large; to encourage the development of a dynamic arts and culture sector.²⁹

²⁷ <http://www.gov.mu/portal/sites/nsp/industry/energy.htm>

²⁸ Extracts from <http://www.gov.mu/> and from <http://www.ilo.org/> : January 30, 2013

²⁹ Extracts from <http://www.gov.mu/> , January 30, 2013

C) Policy measures

91. Cultural Agreements have been signed between Mauritius and the following countries: India, Seychelles, China, Russia, Egypt, France, Mozambique and Madagascar.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Right to education

92. Mauritius reported for the Eighth Consultation on the measures taken for the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education that the Right to education is not guaranteed in the Constitution. Mauritius is encouraged to guarantee the Right to education in the Constitution.

Freedom of opinion and expression

93. The Government of Mauritius is encouraged to decriminalize defamation in accordance with international standards.

94. The Government of Mauritius is encouraged to introduce a freedom of information law in accordance with international standards.

95. UNESCO recommends developing the media self-regulatory mechanism.

Right to take part in cultural life

96. Although Mauritius has taken some steps in establishing and managing a National Heritage Fund Act responsible for the safeguarding of its tangible and intangible heritage, its legal and institutional framework remains in need of further revision and strengthening to improve its safeguarding efforts. To this end, greater resources need to be identified for policy review, to reinforce capacities for the implementation of the 2003 Convention and the development of technical skills to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage of Mauritius. In addition, emphasis needs to be placed on partnership with civil society.