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

**Saint Kitts and Nevis**

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## I. Introduction

1. The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis remains committed to implementing mechanisms that safeguard the human rights of its citizens. In this vein, Saint Kitts and Nevis is honoured to participate in its 3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC). This National Report underscores the work that Saint Kitts and Nevis has undertaken since its 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle, in 2015.

## II. Methodology

2. The National Report for Saint Kitts and Nevis was prepared in accordance with the general guidelines for preparing information under the Universal Periodic Review.

3. This report is the result of a consultative process led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with support from the National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF). The NMRF was instituted after the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle review and comprises of key ministries and departments including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as chair, Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, the Department of Labour, the Ministry of Social Services and the Department of Gender Affairs, the Royal Saint Christopher and Nevis Police Force, and the Ministry of Health.

4. Shortly after the second cycle review, the government held consultations with Civil Society to advise of the recommendations which emanated from the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle report. Subsequently, the Government sought assistance from the OHCHR for training for the government and Civil society Organisations (CSOs). The final report takes into account the results of these consultations, which were facilitated by the NMRF.

## III. Human rights treaties and mechanisms

### **United Nations Convention Against Torture (Recommendations: 92.27, 92.28, 92.29, 92.30, 92.31)**

5. Although the United Nations Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) was a recommendation that the Government only noted in the previous cycle, after thorough research and consideration, Saint Kitts and Nevis, on September, 21, 2020 became the newest party to this UN Convention.

### **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Recommendations: 91.10, 91.53, 91.56)**

6. On 27<sup>th</sup> September, 2019, Saint Kitts and Nevis signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and acceded to it approximately three (3) weeks after on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2019. This is one of the many steps the country has taken in its quest to improve the human rights conditions throughout the Federation.

7. Prior to this, the Government was able to secure technical assistance from the European Union for a consultant to draft a Special Needs Policy. A workshop with stakeholders was conducted in December 2017 to help craft this Special Needs Policy for our Federation, resulting in a draft report, which is under review.

8. The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis encourages a multi-stakeholder approach to the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities, especially the national participation of CSOs, in accordance with the provisions laid out in Article 3.4 of the CRPD. As a result, the Government works closely with the Saint Kitts and Nevis Association of Persons with Disabilities (SKNAPD). Through this partnership, the Government holds regular meetings where critical interaction and exchanges take place

between policy makers and persons with disabilities. The partnership also convenes training, wheel-chair repair activities and improving housing solutions.

9. As provided for in the CRPD Article 9, the Government has prioritized accessibility for persons with disabilities. The Government has taken strides to ensure that persons with disabilities, have access to houses in our communities with the appropriate codes. In this regard, the National Housing Corporation (NHC) has so far constructed homes for differently abled persons across four (4) communities.

10. The Government has also taken an additional step to improve accessibility in the public transportation system through the introduction of new wheelchair ramps at some of the country's Bus Terminals, as well as the Basseterre Ferry Terminal. Likewise, the Government has undertaken several capital projects which were aimed at improving accessibility in public infrastructure. Projects included the installation of an elevator in the Government Headquarters building, wheelchair accessible sidewalks through the Island's main road, especially in the capital and in the main entertainment centre as well as outside some government buildings.

### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Recommendation: 91.17)**

11. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is one of the core international conventions and forms an important component of the Government's social development thrust. The National CEDAW Report was submitted in 2020 and contains an extensive description of the programmes and initiatives that the government has undertaken in fulfillment of the provisions contained in CEDAW.

### **Convention on the Rights of the Child (Recommendations: 91.1, 91.2, 91.3, 91.4, 91.5, 91.54, 91.6, 91.7, 91.8)**

12. In 1990, Saint Kitts and Nevis became the first country in the Organization of the Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and the second in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), after having been adopted by the United Nations in 1989. Our leadership as a nation in advancing the rights of our children resulted in the Federation being selected to partner with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to undertake a National Children's Summit during the period 23<sup>rd</sup>–24<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The Summit was convened under the theme 'CRC 30 Years - Convention on the Rights of the Child'. This important exchange was used to inform the development of programmes and projects to further strengthen the existing mechanisms and create new opportunities to ensure the four (4) guiding principles of the CRC remain foremost in the development agenda.

13. The ratification of the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child is currently under discussion by the government. A review of our legislation was conducted several years ago, and, it was noted that some elements of the legislation would require adjustment as it relates to the Optional Protocol on children in armed conflict. This is currently being reviewed and the government will consider signing the Optional Protocols and declare any possible reservations with regard to children in armed conflict.

### **National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up**

14. The National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF), established in January, 2018, is an inter-governmental committee created to assess the Government's efforts in the implementation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Human Rights Treaties and the overall promotion and protection of human rights. This, the Government considered, was of great significance, as this committee was essential in the completion of our National Report.

#### **IV. Cooperation with UN agencies (Recommendations: 91.12, 91.13, 91.15, 91.16, 91.17, 91.18)**

15. Saint Kitts and Nevis established its National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up in January, 2018. In an effort to sensitise and give direction to this new inter-ministerial committee, technical assistance was sought from the OHCHR, and a subsequent training session was done by the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Barbados.

16. In August 2019, Saint Kitts and Nevis further engaged OHCHR to build the capacity of the members of the NMRF, specifically towards treaty body report writing. Subsequently, the NMRF then played an integral role in compiling accurate information that was essential in the drafting of this report.

17. In an effort to fulfill our international obligations, Saint Kitts and Nevis received support from UNWOMEN during the preparation of its report on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). These reports were then approved by the government in 2019 and submitted in January and February 2020, respectively.

#### **V. Developments since 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle UPR report**

##### **A. Social development**

##### **Housing and standard of living (Recommendations: 91.44, 91.45, 91.47)**

18. As part of the Government's mandate to improve the standard of living for its citizens, several programmes have been implemented in this regard.

19. The Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) was launched in December 2018 to provide financial support to low-income households. The programme has assisted over four thousand citizens with a disbursement of approximately 22 Million Eastern Caribbean Dollars, for the first eleven months of 2019.

20. The Country Poverty Assessment of 2007/2008 identified female headed households as being amongst the most vulnerable in our society. With 63% of the 4,000 recipients being female, the PAP has been able to provide relief to this group.

21. The Government implemented a national housing programme which saw the completion of Phase 1 with the construction and allocation of 148 homes. Presently, the second stage of the programme is underway, which will see the construction of an additional 185 homes.

22. To date, over 550 persons have benefitted from the First Time Homeowners Programme over the past five (5) years. The government is committed to providing decent and affordable housing for its people and will continue to create innovative avenues to fulfil this need. To augment the existing housing programmes, the government will make a further \$30 million available to spur housing construction at a low interest rate. In addition, the Government will launch another low-cost financing programme, building on the experience of the Fund for the Realization of Economic Empowerment- FREESH programme. FREESH provides access to loans for constructing new homes and was designed to improve the quality of housing in the Federation. Under this initiative, approved applicants would receive a loan of up to \$500,000 to build or complete their homes at a low, fixed rate of interest.

23. The Government has not only constructed homes for its citizens but has also provided assistance in relation to housing repairs. In 2017, Saint Kitts and Nevis experienced the ravages of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and many citizens sustained damages to their homes. Subsequently, the government introduced the Hurricane Roof Repair Programme. This programme supported over 2,000 households with repairs and renovations.

24. Additionally, the government has aided over 100 individuals under the Housing Enhancement Loan Programme (HELP). This initiative provides a maximum of \$100,000 at a low fixed interest rate and is aimed at low-income citizens with existing homes who intend to undertake repairs, remodeling or extensions.

25. Saint Kitts and Nevis, like many other countries, has suffered from the effects of the current global pandemic. The Government in its commitment to the protection of all of its citizens in the wake of COVID-19 closed its borders on March 25, 2020. Due to the robust response of the Government, and implementing the advice from the medical experts, the Federation has only reported 19 coronavirus cases, all of whom have recovered, with zero active cases and zero deaths to date. In addition, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) designated St. Kitts and Nevis as “very low” risk.

26. To curtail the impact COVID-19 has had on the economy and individual households, the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis launched the Social Security COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund. For the period April-June, 2020, over 9,500 citizens who suffered a loss of income due to the coronavirus pandemic, have benefitted from a disbursement of \$22 million dollars.

## **B. Social protection (Recommendations: 91.20, 91.26, 91.42)**

27. The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis has deemed it fit to implement a National Social Protection Strategy and Action Plan. To this end, the Government has requested the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to review said plan. The purpose of the Strategy is to establish the main priorities for the development of a social protection policy and its reform in the next few years; and to guide the establishment of a sustainable, comprehensive and integral social protection plan. This implies the strengthening and integration of a large number of policies and programs, including social safety nets, social welfare, and social insurance and labor market policies. The first phase of the reform of social protection focuses on consolidating and strengthening the social safety net, in order to ensure that resources aimed at addressing the most vulnerable have the desired impact.

28. As provided for in Article 25 of the UDHR, Saint Kitts and Nevis introduced the Social Protection Bill which has successfully undergone its first reading in the Federal Parliament. The Saint Christopher and Nevis Social Protection Bill, 2018 formally secures social protection for persons in Saint Kitts and Nevis and alleviates poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. Under this Bill, an Interagency Commission for Social Protection will be established with responsibility for portfolios which include social development, housing, finance, education, health, labour, etc. The main duty of the Commission is to advise the Minister on the social protection floor, taking into account the objectives and priorities of the state, social policy needs, economic constraints, and fiscal space. It is intended to extend social protection cover based on eligibility criteria that will enable those in need to access essential health care, nutrition, education and income security. Passage of the legislation is expected soon.

29. The purpose of this Bill is to:

(a) enable good governance for social protection, by establishing an appropriate institutional framework and administrative mechanisms, in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery, and enhance accountability and control; and

(b) grant essential social rights, subject to the economic constraints, fiscal space, and social policy needs, objectives and priorities of the State, through:

- a social protection floor comprising guaranteed benefits so that at a minimum, over the life span, all in need have access to essential health care and basic income security which together secure access to necessary goods and services; and
- implementation of the social protection floor within a framework that progressively ensures extended coverage in terms of the types of measures,

levels of coverage and quality of service, to as many people as possible as soon as possible.

30. The Ministry of Labour records no outstanding issues as at 2019, as it relates to cases of inequalities in Pay. The Equal Pay Act 2012 guides the occasional handling of these matters, in addition to the ongoing data collection to track and monitor cases of this nature. The Ministry of Labour is committed to strengthening its efforts in raising awareness to the Equal Pay Act.

31. The Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, under the Ministry of Labour, is committed to amend the Protection of Employment Act.1986 that would prohibit sexual harassment within the workplace, so allot proper adjudication and overall justice in matters of this nature. Additionally, the Ministry of Labour will seek to strengthen collaborations and consultations with the Department of Gender Affairs and the Royal Saint Christopher and Nevis Police Force (RSCNPF) as counterparts in administering justice.

### **Government's social protection efforts during COVID19**

32. Saint Kitts and Nevis, like many other countries, has suffered from the effects of the current global pandemic. The Government in its commitment to the protection of its citizens in the wake of COVID-19 closed its borders on March 25, 2020. As a small Caribbean nation with an established tourism industry – the mainstay of the economy – this measure had a significant impact on jobs and the economy. The Government utilised its reserves to sustain the economy and support many affected. To cushion the impact COVID-19 has had on the economy and individual households, the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis launched the Social Security COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund. For the period April-September, 2020, over ten thousand citizens who suffered a loss of income due to the coronavirus pandemic, have benefitted from a disbursement of over \$22 million dollars. Further, the Government reduced corporate income tax for employers who retain 75% of their workforce. It also waived VAT, import duty and/or customs service charge for a series of pandemic-related products. The Government has implemented systems to ensure that the most vulnerable in the community retain their jobs and remain employed to sustain their families.

## **C. Advancement of women and girls**

### **Gender and women empowerment (Recommendations: 91.22, 91.24, 91.25)**

33. The Department of Gender Affairs has a significant responsibility in raising awareness; monitoring and improving the status of women and girls in the country through the implementation of a number of International Conventions and declarations.

34. The Department's priority areas include the formation of a National Gender Policy, the empowerment of women and girls, the reduction of all forms of gender-based violence, poverty elimination, governance and democracy, and programmes for men and boys.

35. The Department of Gender Affairs functions under a policy framework, which is guided by international and regional commitments including the Sustainable Development Goals, Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Gender Equality Observatory, (CSW) Commission on the Status of Women in Saint Kitts & Nevis and the Belém do Pará Convention. It has responsibility to fulfil periodic international, regional and national reporting obligations.

36. Within the last year Saint Kitts and Nevis completed and submitted the Beijing +25 Report, ECLAC Montevideo Report, MESECVI (Belém do Pará) Evaluation; and Gender Equality Observatory reporting.

37. As part of the women's empowerment platform, the Department of Gender Affairs administers a Prison Programme which aims to provide support and advocacy services for incarcerated women. The Prison Programme facilitates short term skills training and education for female inmates of Her Majesty's Prison to assist them with their personal and career development e.g. entrepreneurship classes and agricultural training.

38. The “Engaging, Empowering and Advancing Women” Entrepreneurship Workshop was delivered to a group of six women at the prison in September 2017. The women received intensive training to develop business ideas and business plans and learnt skills to start their own businesses upon their reintegration into society. Upon release, some women are faced with unemployment challenges, but with the assistance from the Department, employment has now become more accessible. One example includes an inmate who, since her rehabilitation, has successfully opened and operates a Day Care Centre. We are pleased to report that since the Prison Programme was restarted in 2017, there have been no repeated offences.

39. In 2016-2017 the Department of Gender Affairs led a Gender Sensitization Project designed to provide the wider society with a more sophisticated understanding of gender; to improve gender mainstreaming in the public sector, and to enable the private sector to address and provide more substantial reporting about gender-related issues. Deliverables from this project included the creation of three sector specific training guides and a manual for use with adolescents, the private sector and focal point units within the public sector. Subsequently, 116 focal points across Saint Kitts and Nevis in the private and public sectors, and civil society were trained. Further gender sensitization training sessions were carried out in July and August 2018 respectively. Gender sensitization training continues to be delivered through the Department of Gender Affairs.

40. After a Gender Equality Study was conducted in 2014, the results renewed the Government’s desire to complete a Gender Policy, and in 2018, the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis restarted the consultative process towards its National Gender Policy. The general objective of the gender policy is to advocate for non- discrimination on the grounds of sex and to provide a framework that will assist the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis in facilitating gender equality and empowerment. The policy will be structured in two parts- gender mainstreaming and gender setting.

41. ‘Gender mainstreaming’ is a strategy embraced by the Government, and is an important initiative that promotes gender equality in institutions policies and programmes. The implications and interests of men and women are considered in order to address unequal social structures. Gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that gender issues are addressed within the existing development strategies and programmes. Gender setting will seek to transform the existing agenda through the systematic application of a gender perspective. Other strategies will include gender sensitization, training, promotion, ensuring public ownership of the policy, ensuring data disaggregation, promoting women’s empowerment and gender equality, and establishing a gender responsive, monitoring and evaluating mechanism within government and other agencies.

42. The Government recently received approval for additional funding, from UNESCO, to complete the drafting of said policy. The document is expected to be completed in the second quarter of 2021 and will be presented to Cabinet for approval thereafter.

**Domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (Recommendations: 91.28, 91.30, 91.32, 91.33, 91.34, 91.38)**

43. Domestic violence is the most common form of gender-based violence which predominantly affects women and girls. Within the Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis, several institutions and agencies are involved in providing service to victims of domestic violence, facilitating the report of incidents to the relevant authorities.

44. Through assistance from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), The Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence Complaints and Response Protocol was launched in November, 2018. The policy educates key stakeholders in the healthcare, education, childcare, social support, legal and criminal justice system sectors and provides guidelines for training on the appropriate procedures to follow when a crime of this nature materializes. It addresses first response procedures, best practices for law enforcement, emergency and medical services, social services, victim advocacy and legal action. The Department of Gender Affairs has held various sensitization workshops, consultations and panel discussions, aimed at increasing the awareness of stakeholders about this Response Protocol and its use throughout 2019.

45. Saint Kitts and Nevis is also an avid participant of the annual 16-day campaign on Violence against Women and Girls. The 16-Day Campaign which was observed in the Federation from November 25 to December 10, 2019 was designed to demonstrate solidarity with survivors of domestic and gender-based violence, raise awareness, prevent the occurrence wherever possible, and advocate for relief and justice for the victims.

46. In 2018, the Special Victims Unit (SVU) relocated to a more conducive, safe and comfortable space for victims to report incidents of sexual violence without fear of reprisals. In addition, the Department of Gender Affairs in partnership with several faith-based organisations, provide financial support and temporary shelters for victims of domestic violence who have no alternate housing solution. This rental allowance covers a period of three months.

47. Different public campaigns were also lead by the Ministry of Gender Affairs which featured primarily on popular call-in radio programmes. Guest panelists included staff from the Special Victims Unit of the Royal Saint Christopher and Nevis Police Force, and the National Men's Council.

48. Collaboration with the Ministry of Education resulted in the involvement of primary school children in public service announcements to condemn domestic violence and promote a kinder, gentler society; and secondary school children in public awareness raising activities, such as marches and street theatre.

#### **D. Health**

49. The government continues to build on the gains achieved in combatting Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). The National Multi-Sectoral Plan for the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in Saint Kitts and Nevis (2018-2022) will be completed in 2020 with the support of the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO). The Ministry will also continue its collaboration with Stanford University Diabetes Self-Management Programme which has facilitated the training of a total of 42 persons since this partnership was started in September 2015.

50. In 2017 the NCD Program launched the Women's Health Improvement Plan (WHIP), a program geared to empower and educate women on how to effectively manage their health and well-being. The Chronic Disease Self-Management Programme (CDSMP) or "Living Healthy" has been introduced in alignment with the model programme created by Stanford University and Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). Cervical cancer awareness programmes and free pap smear testing to screen for cervical cancer exist on both islands.

51. Attention has also been concentrated on the Human Papilloma virus (HPV), a group of viruses that are extremely common worldwide. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with PAHO, undertook an extensive public awareness programme during the second quarter of 2019 which not only focused on adolescents but also their parents, making them aware of the serious consequences of these viruses. Having completed this exercise, the Ministry successfully launched the administration of the HPV Vaccine to all females leaving the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level at all Primary Schools within Saint Kitts and Nevis. The administration of this vaccine has been evidenced to drastically mitigate against the incidence of cancer of the reproductive tract and is improving upon its already stellar immunization rate of 97%.

52. Saint Kitts and Nevis continues to take steps to strengthen the prevention, management and control of HIV/AIDS and other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). The twin island Federation marked a major achievement in 2017 by being the first country in the OECS to eradicate mother to child transmission of HIV and syphilis, as validated by the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

53. Saint Kitts and Nevis will continue to work hard to achieve the 90-90-90 treatment for all targets, namely (i) 90% of all people living with HIV will know their HIV status; (ii) 90% of all people with diagnosed HIV infection will receive sustained antiretroviral

therapy; and (iii) 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression.

54. The Ministry of Health undertook a situational analysis of its HIV/AIDS programme during the last quarter of 2018. This analysis will inform the development of a plan of action to guide interventions that would enable the Government to build on the gains made in these areas towards the 2030 reporting period.

55. Mental health and well-being forms an integral part of the national health sector. The government has also opened a Mental Health Treatment Centre which allows us to provide greater support to people who need care and attention. This Centre also provides some respite for the families and those who care for people with mental health issues.

56. The advancement of the right of health has also encouraged the advancement of health infrastructure in the nation. The first Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory will soon be established. The Lab would be instrumental in rendering emergency care to patients suffering from or at risk of developing strokes and/or heart attacks.

## **E. Education (Recommendations: 91.43, 91.50, 91.51, 91.52)**

57. Protecting and promoting the right to education, in line with Article 26 of the UDHR, has always been a priority of the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis. In 2017, the Government launched the 2017- 2021 Education Sector Plan. The plan's ultimate goal is to ensure that all learners are equipped with the relevant skills needed to be successful both locally and globally in today's world. To this end, it aims to make widespread improvements to the provision and administration of education, and targets areas such as teacher training, curriculum reform, leadership and accountability, and equitable access and participation in education. The key policy issues in the new plan include improving equitable access to and participation in education at all levels; promoting inclusivity in education access for persons with disabilities.

### **Early childhood education**

58. The Early Childhood Sector within the Ministry of Education is undergoing significant growth. Current activities being spearheaded by the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU) are:

(a) Revision of the Early Childhood Policy for Saint Kitts and Nevis (draft completed December, 2018);

(b) Revision of the Early Childhood Minimum Standards;

(c) Revision of the Operational Procedures for the Early Childhood Development Unit;

(d) Conclusion of a consultancy on the expansion options for the Early Childhood Sector in Saint Kitts and Nevis.

59. The "Reaching the Unreached" (RTU) Program which provides support and supervision for home care providers of children from officers within the ECDU in further collaboration with the Ministry of Health community nursing programme is being expanded.

### **Tertiary education**

60. The Ministry of Education through the amalgamation of the National Skills Training Programme (NSTP) and the Advanced Vocational Education Centre (AVEC) will facilitate the growth of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The growth of TVET in both the public and the private sector is seen as paramount in advancing opportunities for career growth and development and is reflected in policy decisions regarding the course of education for students at both the secondary and tertiary level. The expansion of TVET included upgrades to technical and vocational learning spaces and laboratories in secondary schools.

61. A new TVET Council was installed in May 2019. The TVET Council has been working conscientiously and is on schedule to be assessed with the view to receive accreditation through the Council for Human and Social Development by 2021. The Council's achievement of this accreditation status would give it the authority to issue Caribbean Vocational Qualification (CVQ) certificates right here in Saint Kitts and Nevis. The ability of our TVET Council to issue certificates for both our National Qualifications Framework and the CVQ will ensure that our citizens and residents are marketable at the national and regional levels.

### **Inclusive education**

62. Efforts to address the call for greater access and inclusivity are being addressed in the education sector in the following ways:

(a) A policy on Special Education is being drafted and is expected to be completed by the end of 2020. The policy is expected to outline procedures for student placement, assessment and accommodation.

(b) The Education Sector Plan prioritizes inclusive education and is reflected in current national efforts to:

- Revise the National School Curriculum covering primary and secondary levels of education, inclusive of alignment for early years education (age 3–8).
- Further efforts are being made to introduce new pedagogical strategies to teachers which support differentiation in the classroom to better support the enrollment of learners with special needs in mainstream schools and classrooms.
- Develop new teaching and learning standards linked to a new framework for assessment.

63. The Saint Kitts Spectrum Services Centre was established in September 2018- the first of its kind to open in the Eastern Caribbean. It provides early intervention and support to children who have been identified with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental delays. The Centre operates through the collaboration of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Health. The Centre is expected to expand in 2020. The current physical location is within a pre-school; however, a new site has been selected and the Centre is expected to transition into its new space by end of 2020. The relocation is expected to support the increase in the number of children and families accessing the centre as well as the nature of the services which can be provided (e.g. motor skills development activities, family counseling services, etc.)

64. Through a grant programme with the CDB, the Ministry of Education has been afforded the requisite funds to purchase and enhance existing tools for the assessment of children. The selected assessment tools and resources will address both the academic and the social /behavioral aspects of child development. This effort is intended to support the implementation of the new curriculum, teaching and learning standards and the application of the special education policy in school environments.

65. The physical infrastructure of schools is being assessed under the Model Safe School Programme in coordination with Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and through the MOE initiative, which led to the establishment of a civil works project unit which oversees upgrades and repairs in schools. Included in the safety assessments of schools are the accommodations necessary to increase access to schools for persons with disabilities.

### **Inclusive education (Recommendation: 91.49)**

66. The 1997 Cabinet policy decision which clarified the right of teen mothers still attending school to continue their education led to the establishment of Project Viola in Saint Kitts (2002) and the 'Second Chance Teen Mothers Program' in Nevis (2007). These longstanding programs, run by the Departments of Gender Affairs, cater to schoolgirls aged

14-19 who become pregnant; and aim to provide an enabling environment in which teen mothers can complete their secondary education. Program activities include workshops on parenting skills and professional development, career exposition and financial assistance to facilitate educational advancement. With support from the Basic Needs Trust Fund, a project was implemented in 2016 to 2017 to enhance the structures and programming of Project Viola.

67. The strategies implemented through this programme have reduced the instances of teen pregnancy. The birth rate to teenage mothers has steadily declined and fell from 95 births in 2016 to 54 births in 2018; a fall of 43%. The programme relies on education and training and while this remains the main focus, there is greater emphasis being placed on families assisting in the process.

68. A project manual was developed and issued to school principals to ensure that they are guided by the process. Social assistance is provided to remove financial barriers to education, e.g. cost of day care for babies, extra tuition, books and uniforms. Support for teenage mothers through the Project Viola and Second Chance Teen Mothers Programmes are two of the most significant poverty reduction initiatives, which have had long lasting and far reaching effects.

69. Although it is a Government funded project, from the onset, the programme has been heavily supported by the private sector. They have played a significant role in providing scholarships for teen mothers for tertiary level education and also provided job attachments, and stipends for their transportation, lunch and school.

70. Private individuals have also helped with the programme by introducing teens to Technical and Vocational Skills. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), after seeing the success of the programme, decided to provide a significant amount of support to the teen mothers. Project Viola is now recognised by UNICEF as a model of best practice across the Caribbean region. Owing to the success of Project Viola, in 2018, five of the 13 teen mothers (38%) were enrolled at continuing and tertiary education institutions.

## **F. Human rights education and training (Recommendation: 91.23)**

71. Human Rights Education is taking place in schools through an initiative with the UNESCO Country office in Saint Kitts and Nevis. Schools were provided with educational material which allowed them to facilitate discussions and education sessions on human rights. The educational material was utilized primarily in secondary schools through integration into Health and Family Life Education (HFLE).

72. The current work to revise the national curriculum will cover human rights in the newly proposed core curriculum area Health and Wellness, under which components of the previous HFLE curriculum will be subsumed.

73. In December 2019, the Department of Youth in collaboration with the Department of Gender Affairs, partnered with Free Winds to conduct Human Rights educational sessions in primary schools. This has been consistent with the Ministry of Education's efforts to incorporate Human Rights education as part of the curriculum.

## **G. Criminal justice**

### **Police**

74. Criminal Justice has been identified as a high priority for the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis. In an effort to bolster the police force, a state-of-the-art Forensics Lab was established in 2018 to aid in the detection of crime and the possible prevention of it. Over a 12-month period, success was recorded in 21 matters relating to forensics (fingerprint, DNA and ballistics). From 2019 to present, 69.57% of serious crimes were solved.

75. The Special Victims Unit (SVU) was relocated in 2018 to accommodate additional staff. The Unit has allowed for improved police response, which resulted in more cases being reported.

76. Substantial investment in infrastructure remains a critical element in keeping the citizenry safe. To further address safety in our Nation, the government has begun the expansion of the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) Surveillance System to Nevis and the rural areas of Saint Kitts. We will continue to provide improved facilities for the benefit of the Security Forces; a factor which is essential for enhancing productivity and effectiveness.

77. The construction of a new police station in the town of Sandy Point commenced in March, 2019. The facility will make available accommodation for the Police Force, Fire and Rescue Services, Customs and Excise, and a Magistrate's Court, thereby providing improved security and judicial services to the people of Sandy Point and the surrounding communities. There was also the construction of a new police station in New Castle. This facility will make available accommodation for the Police force and Fire and Rescue Services, improving security for the people of the area.

78. The Crime Scene Unit (CSU) and Criminal Investigation Department (CID) have begun conducting two-week courses in Crime Scene Processing as well as CID Case Presentation Familiarization Sessions with officers from the outlying stations. The aim is to empower officers to conduct initial investigations, thereby reducing over reliance on the Criminal Investigation Department. In addition, through the CariSECURE Project financed by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), a Police Records Management Information System was officially handed over to the Royal Saint Christopher and Nevis Police Force in September 2019. The System will completely digitize the manual processes currently undertaken by the police force. This advancement in technology is expected to dramatically improve the speed of information-sharing among law enforcement agencies and boost crime detection and prosecution capabilities as the Police Prosecution Unit works more closely with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP).

#### **Judicial process (Recommendations: 91.29, 91.40)**

79. To increase the effectiveness of the judicial process, the Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis opened an additional Court. Documents are now being produced where matters are taken directly to the High Court, which has created an avenue for Criminal Court to be held all year round.

80. Services at the Judicial and Legal Complex are expected to be strengthened following the construction of an Annex that would house a third magistrate's court chamber and a mediation centre dedicated to criminal and family matters, as well as traffic and other non-contentious issues.

81. In 2019, 25 persons received certificates after being trained as Court-Connected Mediators. The attorney-general indicated that the government will continue to make the necessary provisions to allow the court to carry out its functions and ensure that the court is equipped both in terms of human resources and other support mechanisms.

82. In line with pillar 1.i of the Montevideo Strategy framework, the government took steps to remove legal and institutional barriers to effective and equal access to justice. The Legal Aid Advice Centre in Saint Kitts which has been operational since 2005 gives every citizen an opportunity to access an attorney at the private bar. In 2016, the Legal Aid Advice Centre in Saint Kitts began a thrust towards Legal Aid Clinics in rural areas and services were increased and made more accessible to persons living in those areas. The development is a manifestation of the improvement of the administration of justice that caters to the most vulnerable population in society.

83. Additionally, clients receive support from Legal Aid through the Ministry of Social Services, which has added an additional lawyer to its staff. Moreover, the Ministry has a directory of private lawyers who have indicated an interest in providing pro-bono services to victims of domestic violence.

**Correctional Facilities (Recommendation: 91.27)**

84. In 2019, the Prison (Amendment) Act, introduced the new positions of Commissioner of Corrections and a Deputy Commissioner of Corrections, who are tasked with, among other things, overseeing the overall development, expansion and improvement of the federation's correctional services.

85. In keeping with international standards, a modern correctional facility will be built with better spatial provisions for juveniles and for persons on remand. It will also include a halfway house and specific facilities for rehabilitation, and, programmes for reintegration into society.

**H. Environment and climate change**

86. Climate change threatens the enjoyment of all human rights, including the rights to health, water, food, housing, self-determination, and life itself. The Paris Agreement, the first universal legally binding climate change agreement, represents an initial step in the acknowledgement of this nexus. It calls upon States to respect, promote and consider their respective human rights obligations, including the right to development, when taking action to address climate change.

87. Environmental preservation is one of the core elements to combating the effects of climate change. The Department of Environment continues the work in managing protected areas through the development and implementation of sustainable financing plans for the respective protected areas in the Federation. The goal of these financing plans is to allow each National Park to attain financial independence, with a view to removing the reliance on public funds. The development of the Central Forest Reserve National Park, the Royal Basseterre Valley National Park, and the Booby Island Reserve will be the priorities in 2020.

88. Climate change remains an existential threat for Saint Kitts and Nevis as a Small Island Developing State (SIDS). Saint Kitts and Nevis stands on the frontline of this climate emergency. In this regard, the Government, through the Department of Environment, commenced the development of a Climate Change Adaption Strategy in 2018. This document outlines the plan of action for the Public and Private Sectors to achieve the Federation's overarching climate change goals. The Strategy was completed in July 2019 and will be supported by the Third National Communication and the First Biennial Update Report on Climate Change which were presented in November. As such, the Government has established a National Sustainable Development Coordinating Committee which will include representatives from entities within the Public and Private Sectors and academia. This Committee will provide guidance on potential areas for the development of climate-resilient projects for submission to our development partners. This mechanism was developed cognisant that building resilience is not only the role of government but requires strong, proactive partnerships to meet our commitments and make the transformative changes required.

89. As it relates to the condition of schools and their environs and the resulting impact on employees and students, the Ministry of Education spear headed the establishment of a National Safe Schools Committee (NSSC) which is a programme output from the Model Safe Schools Programme. On July 20, 2017, the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) approved grant funding to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency Coordinating Unit (CDEMA- CU) to further implement the Model Safe School Programme (MSSP) toolkit in four CDB Borrowing Member Countries (BMCs): Saint Kitts and Nevis a chosen country.

90. In order to address some of the evident vulnerabilities, the toolkit was developed by CDEMA to guide governments on the development of National Safe School Policies, and to offer tools for assessing the level of safety and greening of schools. The NSSC is an inter-ministerial body, federal in scope, whose members are drawn from the following:

- (a) National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA);

- (b) Nevis Disaster Management Agency (NDMA);
- (c) Public Works;
- (d) Physical Planning;
- (e) Police;
- (f) Fire and Rescue Services;
- (g) Ministry of Health;
- (h) Red Cross;
- (i) Ministry of Education (School Safety Officers) and the Early Childhood Development Unit (ECDU).

91. The goal of the NSSC for 2020 is to operationalize the National Safe Schools Policy which was developed in response to issues of safety and the need for effective disaster mitigation and response.

## **I. Right to development (Recommendations: 91.57, 91.58)**

92. The Declaration on the Right to Development has an important significance for Saint Kitts and Nevis, with its adoption just three years after the birth of our twin island nation. Despite insurmountable economic and environmental vulnerabilities, the Government continues to employ various national development strategies tailored to its circumstances. This cannot be achieved without international support through concessional funding and technical cooperation.

93. In September 2019, the Federal Government, in collaboration with Saint Kitts Electric Company Ltd. (SKELEC) signed an agreement with one of the world's leading energy storage companies based in Switzerland. This agreement will facilitate the construction of the largest solar generation and energy storage project ever to be built in the Caribbean. A project of this magnitude would result in a notable reduction in our dependence on fossil fuels and in turn reduce our country's greenhouse emissions.

94. Water Resource Management has been identified as a critical area for national intervention. The government, through the Ministry of Sustainable Development, in collaboration with the CDB, has commenced the development of an initiative aptly named, 'Building Resiliency in the Water Supply in Saint Kitts and Nevis'. The vital areas that will be addressed by the project include the development of a reliable and resilient water supply infrastructure, enhancement of the organisational capacity of water supply service providers for effective and efficient management, and fostering an enabling legal, regulatory and institutional environment for the efficient performance of water service providers. The government intends to submit this project for consideration for funding by the Global Climate Fund.

## **VI. Conclusion**

95. St. Kitts and Nevis remains steadfast in fulfilling its human rights commitments and will continue to create an improved higher standard of living for its citizens. The Government is aware that it is near impossible to do so. on its own. Constrained by limited resources and capacity to meet Treaty Body deadlines, develop domestic legislation to align with international conventions, etc, the Government continues to reach out to the OHCHR, the United Nations and its other Organs, development partners, civil society and the private sector for technical and other assistance in relevant areas.

96. St. Kitts and Nevis uses this opportunity to again call upon the international community to demonstrate a similar level of solidarity displayed during the current crisis to ensure that no country is left behind with respect to human rights. We are confident that our combined efforts and resources can enable all to record a high level of achievement in

meeting our respective international obligations and attainment of our human rights potential.

97. St. Kitts and Nevis anticipates an increased level of support and deepened cooperation from the OHCHR and other global, regional and local agencies, which will partner with us to enable us to promote and protect even further the human rights of our citizenry.

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