



**Convention on the
Rights of the Child**

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

**Second periodic report submitted by Saint Kitts
and Nevis under article 44 of the Convention, due
in 1997***

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I. Introduction

1. The twin-island Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis located in the Eastern Caribbean has a long history of both English and French occupation, with the English taking control in 1713. The official language is English, but there is a migrant minority who speak Spanish.
2. Both St. Kitts and Nevis, because of their volcanic nature, are lush lands. St. Kitts offered the perfect conditions for the growth of sugar cane for export, from the mid-17th Century right up until 2005, when production ceased.
3. The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis obtained independence in September 1983. Although one of the smallest independent countries, the Federation, joined the United Nations and declared its willingness to sign on to the various international instruments to ensure that the fundamental rights of all citizens, particularly vulnerable, marginalised and disadvantaged sectors of its population, would be observed and closely guarded.
4. St. Kitts and Nevis ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on 24th July 1990. In doing so, the Federation indicated its commitment to institute measures to ensure constant monitoring and evaluation of practices, protocols and laws concerning children. It is the view that with this transparent and closely monitored process, shortcomings could be easily identified and addressed.
5. The Federation's geographical location makes it extremely vulnerable to the ravages of hurricanes and tropical cyclones and the islands have suffered frequently from their impact. This has impacted the economy adversely, its development – both physical and financial, and its ability to optimally grow and develop its potential as an independent nation. However, despite the adverse impact, the Federation has made great strides in many areas and has since graduated from a low-income to a middle-income economy. Recently there has been a slight growth in the economy of St. Kitts and Nevis with the Gross Domestic Product per Capita exceeding \$10,000.
6. The Federation's population is approximately 55,000 people, with 42,000 people resident on St. Kitts and over 12,000 residents on Nevis. The population is a youthful one, with approximately 60% of the population under age 35.
7. The functioning of the Government of St. Kitts and Nevis is somewhat unique. While the federal government sits in St. Kitts and has overall responsibility, especially in dealing with international affairs, Nevis is governed in its day-to-day activities by the Nevis Island Administration, which is responsible for its own budget, has its own governing body, and works autonomously, to a large extent.
8. The Federation as a state party has long submitted its initial report in accordance with Article 44 of the UNCRC. The Committee at the instance of the report had observed that St. Kitts and Nevis was making efforts to undertake a comprehensive review of legislation with regards to children and the family. The Federation is now in a position to advise that the Supreme Court of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), in collaboration with UNICEF, UNIFEM and other agencies, through the OECS Family Law and Domestic Violence Reform Project developed and introduced harmonised model family legislation for the eight territories of the union. St. Kitts and Nevis has since enacted the full complement of model legislation. Current legislation regarding children includes:
 - Child Abduction Convention (International Civil Aspects) Act No.12 of 2012;
 - Child Justice Act No.19 of 2013, which repealed the Juvenile Act (Cap 4.15);
 - Children (Care and Adoption) Act No. 20 of 2013;
 - Juvenile Courts Act No. 5 of 1948;
 - Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, No.2 of 2008;
 - Female Persons of Unsound Mind (Prevention) Act No.1 of 1923;
 - Age of Majority Act No.5 of 1983;
 - Electronic Transactions Act No.9 of 2011;

- Electronic Crimes Act No.6 of 2012;
- Domestic Violence Act No.32 of 2011;
- Criminal Records (Rehabilitation of Offenders Act) No.14 of 2014;
- Gang (Prohibition and Prevention) Act No.4 of 2011;
- Guardianship, Custody and Access to Children Act, No.39 of 2012;
- Maintenance of Children Act No.42 of 2012;
- Probation and Child Welfare Board Act Cap. 12.12;
- Status of Children Act Cap.12.14.

9. New legislation, in particular, The Child Justice Act and the Children (Care and Adoption) Act both ensure conformity with the letter and spirit of the UNCRC to the fullest extent possible. While both acts mentioned form an important part of domestic law, some amendments are still required to effect practical application. This situation is under consideration and will shortly be remedied.

10. St. Kitts and Nevis remains unreservedly committed to its obligations under the UNCRC and has reviewed the Optional Protocols. The Federal government has already enacted legislation concerning these matters, such as the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act,¹ and sections 13 and 14 of the Electronic Crimes Act.² These pieces of legislation help to further carry out the objective of the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. The importation of indecent and obscene prints, videos and other materials is prohibited by section 84 (1) of the Customs (Control & Management) Act.³ The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis (GOVSKN), noting the observations of the Committee, engaged in discussion, and debate regarding signing all three Optional Protocols to the UNCRC. The Federation is likely to sign the Optional Protocols with a reservation to the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

11. St. Kitts and Nevis acknowledged the observation made by the Committee concerning the Probation and Child Welfare Board and has since ensured the Board's appointment with expanded responsibility and authority, consistent with the provisions of the Child Justice Act and the Children (Care and Adoption) Act. Since its appointment, the Board has been operating full-time and remains intimately in touch with all its obligations, by convening regular meetings and reviews and overseeing the operations of various departments.

12. Great improvements have been realised in the capture and/ or collection of accurate data relating to children in the justice system, children as victims of abuse and neglect, children in alternative care, and children in institutions. Efforts by the Department of Probation and Child Protection Services (PCPS) to establish a centralised system for the systematic collection of data have yielded some positive results, though admittedly not to the extent desired or articulated in the Committee's observation. The Probation and Child Welfare Board, with financial assistance provided by UNICEF and the GOVSKN, has introduced a digital case management system for the comprehensive collection of data, and to ensure that cases are handled effectively throughout the process from referral to closure.

13. UNICEF has indicated satisfaction with the system and has committed to funding associated expenses for all hardware required to run the system efficiently.

14. The Education Planning Division collects and manages data on student enrollment and performance. Open Sis, an electronic school information system, is being deployed in all public schools to allow access to real-time data on attendance and performance, at the school and national levels. It also has functionality that would allow parents/guardians to access their children's information.

¹ No. 32 of 2008.

² No. 27 of 2009.

³ Cap 20.04.

15. St. Kitts and Nevis has acted on the recommendation of the Committee regarding the involvement of NGOs in the preparation of the report and has sought their input and comments, with only limited success.

16. St. Kitts and Nevis is deeply appreciative of the observation of the Committee regarding the absence of a child-friendly mechanism to register and address complaints from children regarding the violation of their rights and embrace the suggestion to have this mechanism established post haste.

17. *'Project Purple'* (Promoting Understanding Respect Peace in the learning Environment) was funded by UNICEF and launched by the Ministry of Education in 2011. It provided a framework for organizing school-based activities around a theme to promote non-violent behaviour, to create child-friendly schools and change the current school culture in secondary schools in St. Kitts.

18. The Ministry of Education looked at violence, drugs and risk-taking among adolescents and asked schools to plan monthly events. The schools chose activities that were undertaken one day per week. Public service announcements were created and utilized during the implementation and have continued. While no post-implementation studies were conducted, reports from teachers and students indicated a reduction in violence in secondary schools.

19. *CARICOM- SPAIN* provided funding in support of a Citizen Security sub-project to reduce "Youth on Youth Violence" in the OECS at a secondary school in St. Kitts. The activities implemented in 2015 included: Champions for Change Club, Peace March, mentorship, and games.

20. Male Students, who were engaged in drugs, exposed to violence and at a high risk of dropping out of school, were selected for the programme. Twelve (12) other students were invited to participate in the Champions for Change Club. These were positive pro-social students who were expected to provide clear standards of behaviour and encouragement for their at-risk peers and guide them towards academic and social success. The club officers engaged in strategies to help the members build self-esteem, acquire values, learn teamwork and communication, and develop time-management skills.

21. Two orientation sessions were conducted for mentors – one for adult mentors and the other for peer mentors. Mentors also attended two (2) one-day workshops to learn new skills and techniques.

22. Mentees were matched with eight (8) adult mentors according to interests and personality traits. The adults met with the youngsters weekly to address areas such as communication and decision-making. Mentors served both as resource personnel and a source of support for mentees.

23. The *Peace March* and *fun day* provided students with the opportunity to express difficult emotions positively.

24. The participants in the programme, reported increased confidence in themselves and that they looked ahead to a brighter future of possibilities. Evaluation completed by teachers indicated improvement in school attendance, increase in overall academic performance, and decrease in serious school infractions.

25. Although the Project has ended, the club is ongoing and there are plans to increase membership. The close relationship that was formed with the communities has continued and there are plans to train more mentors. The director of the Project is in the process of sourcing funding for the training of new mentors.

26. TAPS (Teens and Police Services) is a joint initiative between the Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force, the Ministry of National Security and the Ministry of Education. The programme was piloted in 2014 and was later introduced in all secondary schools in St. Kitts in 2017. The programme is designed to encourage youths, (especially those at-risk) to have open discussions with the police, on topics directly affecting them. Topics include bullying, anger management, drug usage, team building and gangs. The officers also deal with problems that may result in crime and encourage children to take a different path. The officers also work with parents and the community.

27. MAGIC (Mentoring Advising Guiding Instructing Children) - A programme that targets primary schools replaced the Drug Abuse Resistance Education Programme (DARE) in 2012. MAGIC teaches children to avoid bad company, to stay away from drugs, and to focus on their education.

28. There is progress in ensuring access to justice for children. Advances in access to redress include:

- A child abuse hotline at the Department of Probation and Child Protection Services;
- Guidance Counsellors in primary and secondary schools.

29. At least two guidance counsellors are attached to each secondary school and one to each primary school. The counsellors work with children to reverse the negative effects of child abuse. They also work with parents/guardians to instruct them on how to act around their children, and what to discuss during their recovery period.

30. Efforts made to sensitise children to their rights have created an awareness that guides children to appropriate avenues, which continue to be widely used. The persons who regularly receive complaints concerning violence against and abuse to children, such as guidance counsellors, police officers in the Special Victims Unit and officers of the Department of PCPS, have been trained to deal with these types of sensitive matters.

31. The laws of the Federation of St. Kitts-Nevis (Probation and Child Welfare Board Act 1994) mandate that professionals in social work, health care, education, law enforcement officers report all suspected abuse.

32. The Federation is acutely aware of the observation by the Committee concerning the need to allocate budgetary resources to favour children and remains committed to investing in services for children. It is this recognition that has led to expenditure amounting to some \$9 million to upgrade and enhance services for children through a child development project with support from the Caribbean Development Bank. Various consultants and Foster Parents have raised concerns over the level of assistance to Foster Families. Stipend to foster families has since been increased in both monetary amount and in frequency. Consideration has also been given to the drafting of a Foster Care Policy.

II. General measures of implementation

33. The UN Secretary-General Global Progress Survey on Violence against Children which was completed in 2011 highlighted the improvements and the concerns which still need to be addressed per the last recommendations made by the Committee. Based on the recommendations advances have been made, with the enactment of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act, sections 13 & 14 of the Electronic Crimes Act and section 84(1) of the Customs (Control & Management) Act. There has also been the development of child-friendly services at health centres, ongoing violence prevention programmes in schools, workshops for teachers on effective ways to manage a classroom and resolve conflicts.

34. Information from the 2010 St. Kitts and Nevis Global Youth Tobacco Survey has assisted the Ministry of Health in planning drug control programmes. In addition to this, the St. Kitts and Nevis Global Student Health Survey which was conducted in 2011 helped the Ministry of Health to better appreciate the health problems of youth, and the areas that require improvement in terms of service delivery.

35. To help strengthen its efforts to meet its obligations in guaranteeing the rights of all children under its jurisdiction, the Federation has ratified other international conventions that address the issues of women and children in the Federation, namely:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on the 25th day of April 1985 and its Optional Protocol on the 20th day of June 2006;
- The Inter American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (Convention Belem Do Para) on 12th June 1995;

- ILO Convention No. 138 on the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment on the 3rd day of June 2005;
- ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour on the 12th day of October 2000;
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime on the 21st day of May 2004;
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court on the 22nd day of August 2006 and came into effect on the 1st day of November 2006;
- Convention of 25 October 1980 on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction;
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

III. Definition of the child

36. In St. Kitts and Nevis, a child is defined as someone under the age of 18 years old.⁴ However, conflicts in regards to the said definition exist in the laws as some laws exhibit or imply varying definitions. For example:

(a) Under the Education Act, more particularly, Sections 26, 36 and 45 of the said Act, “Every child shall attend school ... until the child attains 16 years of age or at the end of which the child obtains a certificate or diploma...” and a legal obligation is placed on parents and guardians to ensure fulltime attendance at school of children until they attain the age of 16;

(b) The Child Justice Act revised the age of criminal responsibility from eight (8) to twelve (12) years of age;

(c) The age at which a child can consent to sex is 16 years old.⁵ The Department of Probation and Child Protection Services (PCPS) in its efforts to protect all children, has been lobbying Parliament to have the age of consent increased to 18 years;

(d) The age at which a young person can be legally and fully employed is 16 years old;⁶ Children who have attained the age of 12 years old can do very light work part-time, with specific work conditions in place;

(e) A young person attaining the age of 18 years could decide to serve in the armed forces;⁷ Section 20 of the Saint Christopher and Nevis Defence Force Act also allows persons over the age of 14 but under the age of 18 to enlist in the Force once the written consent of the person in whose care they are placed is obtained;

(f) Under Section 28(1) of the Marriage Act CAP 12.09 “Where either of the parties, not being a widower or widow is under the age of eighteen years, no marriage shall take place between them until the consent of the persons or person required by this Act has been first obtained. Further under Section 28 (3) of the said Act “A marriage solemnized between persons either of whom is under the age of sixteen shall be void: Provided however

⁴ Article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Section 3 of the Age of Majority Act Cap 12.02, Section 2(2) of the Adoption of Children Act Cap 12.01 defines an infant as a person under the age of 18 years, Section 37 (1) of the National Assembly Elections Act CAP2.01 provides that persons meeting certain requirements and having attained the age of 18 years are qualified to vote. Sections 120 (4) (d) and 127 of the Magistrate Code of Procedure Act CAP 3.17 provide that children in regards to whom maintenance orders have been made in the Magistrates’ court shall be maintained until the child attains the age of 18 years. However, section 2 of the Juvenile Act Cap 4.05 defines a child as a person under 14 years and a juvenile as a person under 18 years.

⁵ Section 47 (2) of the Offences Against the Person Act CAP 4.21.

⁶ Section 2 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act CAP 18.10 describes a child as a person under the age of 16 years.

⁷ Section 20 of the Saint Christopher and Nevis Defence Force Act CAP 19.14.

that the Attorney-General or his or her representative may, in his discretion, if, for serious reasons, he or she considers it to be in the interest of the intending spouses so to do, grant a licence to marry to any person under the age of sixteen but over the age of fifteen” Thus, the minimum marriage age for girls and boys is 15 years.

37. The variances in ages across the spectrum relating to defining a “child” have been a concern to the agencies advancing the rights of children in the Federation. The inconsistencies evident in the description of who constitutes a child have spawned discussions suggesting that more effort should be made to reconcile these apparent contradictions and to establish a single definition.

IV. General principles

Article 2

Non-discrimination

38. The Constitution of St. Kitts and Nevis expressly states that every person is entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms.⁸ Section 15(2) of the Constitution states that: “...a person shall not be treated in a discriminatory manner by any person acting under any written law or in the performance of the functions of any public office or any public authority”.

39. The Constitution goes on to describe “discriminatory”⁹ as:

“Affording different treatment to different persons attributable wholly or mainly to their respective descriptions by race, place of origin, birth out of wedlock, political opinions or affiliations, colour, sex or creed whereby persons of one such description are subjected to disabilities or restrictions to which persons of another such description are not made subject, or are accorded privileges or advantages that are not accorded to persons of another such description.”.

40. Although not specifically expressed, in practice, any child within the jurisdiction whether citizen or migrant is afforded these protections against discrimination, as enshrined in the constitution.

41. While the fundamental right and freedom in regards to discrimination is spelt out in the Constitution, there are no specific measures that have been introduced to address issues of ethnic origin, race, displaced children, refugees or asylum seekers.

Article 3

The Best interest of the child

42. In dealing with matters concerning children and family not only by the courts but also by bodies responsible for dealing with these types of matters, the guiding principle is acting in ‘the best interest of the child’. This principle is concentered in our common law system of jurisprudence, by article 3 of the Convention and also in local legislation.¹⁰ The Probation and Child Welfare Board Act addresses places of care and safety for children in danger and the rights and responsibilities of parents and guardians to ensure the welfare of children.

43. The Child Justice Act, 2013: This Act aims to establish a judicial process for children that is in keeping with the values of the constitution and international obligations. The legislation is concerned not only with dealing with crime but with crime prevention. The focus is therefore not punishment, but on child learning, growth and restoration. The legislation, therefore, includes the diversion of children from court proceedings and criminal offences.

⁸ Section 3 of the Constitution of Saint Christopher and Nevis.

⁹ Section 15(3).

¹⁰ For example Section 6(3) of the Probation and Child Welfare Board Act CAP 12.12, section 3 of the Guardianship of Infants Act CAP 12.05 and section 4(b) of the Adoption of Children Act.

44. Under this act, persons involved in the administration of juvenile justice are to be guided in decision making by the following principles:

- (a) The least restrictive measures should be taken with children who are before the court;
- (b) The safety, welfare and well-being of the child.

45. The challenge is to balance the need to hold the child accountable for their actions against preventing an adverse consequence that could result from the involvement of the child in the formal criminal justice system.

46. Improvements in child justice include the following:

- (a) Change of the definition of juvenile to include all children under the age of eighteen;
- (b) Raising the age of criminal responsibility;
- (c) Ensuring the separation of juveniles from adult inmates;
- (d) Changing the type and nature of punishments to which juveniles could be sentenced.

47. Non-discrimination, best interests, right to life, right to survival and development are all enshrined in various legislation however judicial decisions are not always guided by what is prescribed. With particular regard to 'best interests', the court routinely has been delaying the hearing and dispositions of Care Applications; in some cases for periods exceeding one year, thus denying children permanence and allowing children to linger in a state of limbo without placement.

48. Additionally, several provisions in the Children (Care and Adoption) Act are not supported administratively, consequently, scores of children have not benefited from the option of adoption.

49. Diversion programmes and services are designed to help first-time offenders remedy the behaviour leading to their original arrest and avoid conviction and a criminal record. Juveniles are also allowed to compensate their victims through restitution orders and community service. They must agree to counselling, attend classes or vocational training.

50. The Child Justice Committee has been commissioned.

51. Even as it relates to divorce proceedings in the Federation, the Divorce Act No. 32 of 2005 CAP 12.03 (RESERVED) lays down certain principles which must be considered before the granting of a divorce where children are involved. Section 10 (1) (b) of the said Act states that:

“The Court shall, in any divorce proceedings, do the following, that is to say:

- (b) satisfy itself that reasonable arrangements have been made for the support of any children of the marriage, and, if such arrangements have not been made, to stay the granting of the divorce until such arrangements are made.”

52. Further, in relation to orders for custody, the Act mandates that the best interest of the child should be considered when making an order.¹¹

53. The issue of care and protection of children is also addressed in the Domestic Violence Act No. 32 of 2011 and the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act No. 10 of 2005, CAP 12.04 (RESERVED). This Act seeks to give protection to persons including children who have experienced domestic violence¹² in the context of the home, and who need protection from violence. The law recognizes the fragility of children in these households and speaks

¹¹ Section 14 (8) and (10) of the Divorce Act CAP 12.03 (Where legislation is described as reserved, the legislation has been enacted, however, it would have been passed after the revision of the laws of the federation which was last done up to 2002 and thus the CAP numbers have been reserved in the General Index to the Revised Edition).

¹² Sections 3 and 5 of the Domestic Violence Act 2000 and the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Act 2005.

specifically to their protection through injunctions and protection orders. More particularly section 6 (2) of the Domestic Violence Act 2000 states that:

54. “For the purposes of subsection (1) of this section an application for an injunction or a protection order may be made by any of the following persons:

- (a) The spouse of the respondent;
- (b) Where the alleged conduct involves a child or a dependant;
- (c) A person with whom the child or dependent normally resides or resides on a regular basis;
- (d) A parent or guardian of the child;
- (e) A parent or guardian of the dependant.

55. Sections 4 to 13 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act CAP 18.10 lays down guidelines and restrictions for the employment of children. The Federation has also ratified ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 which has strengthened the ability of the Ministry of Labour to deal with child employment issues.

56. Young persons can be fully employed from the age of sixteen and are afforded the opportunity of receiving a Social Security Card for employment and for receiving all the benefits that are provided to workers by the Social Security Board.¹³ Children between the ages of twelve and sixteen can participate in part-time employment, for stipulated hours after school and/or on the weekends but will not be included as insured persons for the purposes of social security.¹⁴

57. The Probation and Child Welfare Board has been revived. Currently, the Department of Probation and Child Protection Services (PCPS), is the primary government agency, which acts on behalf of the Board, with the responsibility for:

- Ensuring that the rights of children are upheld;
- Dealing with children in need of care and protection, and children in conflict with the law;
- Carrying out investigations and reports for matters of adoption and foster care;
- Virtually any matter in which children are the focal point.

58. The Department is staffed by a director, probation and child protection officers. Probation officers usually work along with the court system and are charged with the responsibility for assisting the court in regard to the trial of children who come into conflict with the law, through the submission of social enquiry reports and with the supervision of juvenile offenders on probation.

Article 6

The Right to life, survival and development; basic health and welfare

59. The inherent right to life is expressly guaranteed and enshrined to every person under the Constitution of St. Kitts and Nevis. Sec 4 (1) of the Constitution states that “A person shall not be deprived of his life intentionally save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of treason or murder under any law of which he has been convicted.”.

60. Further, under section 3(1) of the Offences Against the Person Act CAP 4.21, the “sentence of death shall not be pronounced on or recorded against a person convicted of an offence if it appears to the court that at the time when the offence was committed he or she was under eighteen years; but in lieu, thereof the court shall sentence him or her to be detained during the Crown’s pleasure; and if so sentenced he or she shall be liable to be detained in

¹³ The Social Security Act CAP 22.10.

¹⁴ Section 19(3) and (5) of the Social Security Act.

such place and under such conditions as the Governor-General may direct and while so detained, be deemed to be in legal custody.”.

61. Prenatal health care in the public sector of the Federation is available to all expectant mothers, free of cost, at the eleven (11) community health centres in St. Kitts and six (6) in Nevis. Prenatal health care includes assessment for pregnancy-induced illnesses, monitoring of the foetus in utero, blood pressure, levels of glucose in the blood system, and any other pregnancy-related illnesses. Blood investigations are also carried out for detection of Anaemia, Sexually Transmitted Infections including HIV and Hepatitis B and monitoring of kidney functions.

62. All health centres offer Family Planning services and cancer screening of the breasts and cervix. Other services include lectures on self-breast examination, screening and assessment for chronic diseases, a general medical clinic, Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) for HIV/AIDS and other STI's, antenatal health, child health, school health and nutrition health clinics. The health centres are served by a District Medical Officer and services at the Health Centres are free to all persons.

63. Data obtained from the Ministry of Health indicate that between 1995 and 2018, there were a total of 334 infant deaths (ranging from under 1 day old up to 11 months old) in the Federation. Antenatal services and care are readily available and widely utilized on the islands. In addition, nurses who work in the community health centres are often engaged with the persons in the community and have great influence over encouraging expectant mothers to utilize the health centre's resources.

64. Child Health Clinics at all health centres are widely utilized, with immunization programmes being comprehensive and accessible. As a result, St. Kitts and Nevis has an almost 100% immunization record re: infants and children (across the years). There is free access to health services for all children.

Year	Male		Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Total	Grand Total
	Under 1 day	1-6 days	7-27 days	1-11 months	Male	Female	Male	Female						
1995	3	6	3	2	0	1	3	4	9	13	22			
1996	3	1	5	3	2	3	3	0	13	7	20			
1997	5	0	7	3	2	1	0	2	14	6	20			
1998	1	4	5	7	1	1	3	2	10	14	24			
1999	3	2	2	5	0	0	0	0	5	7	12			
2000	2	0	2	6	0	0	2	1	6	7	13			
2001	0	0	3	2	0	1	2	3	5	6	11			
2002	1	3	4	3	1	2	1	2	7	10	17			
2003	2	0	5	2	1	1	2	0	10	3	13			
2004	1	2	5	2	0	0	1	0	7	4	11			
2005	0	0	4	2	1	1	1	0	6	3	9			
2006	2	1	2	0	1	3	1	4	6	8	14			
2007	0	1	5	6	1	1	0	0	6	8	14			
2008	1	0	2	2	2	1	2	0	7	3	10			
2009	5	2	0	4	2	1	1	0	8	7	15			
2010	0	1	6	0	1	0	2	2	9	3	12			
2011	0	0	1	2	0	1	2	2	3	5	5			
2012	1	0	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	4	6			
2013	0	0	5	4	0	1	0	0	5	5	10			
2014	1	1	2	1	2	3	3	2	8	7	15			
2015	0	5	4	2	2	1	1	1	7	9	16			
2016	3	0	4	2	2	2	0	2	9	6	15			

Year	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total		Grand Total
	Under 1 day		1-6 days		7-27 days		1-11 months		Male	Female	
2017	0	1	4	3	0	2	1	0	5	6	11
2018	2	0	2	1	6	1	3	1	13	3	16

65. The Department of Community Development and Social Services, St. Kitts and the Department of Social Services, Nevis provides food vouchers for poor and vulnerable families. The value of the voucher depends on the household size with households with infants and senior citizens receiving extra concessions because of their special needs.

66. Social protection reform initiatives to assist families include MEND (Mould, Empower, Nurture and Direct) programme aimed at eradicating indigence which was launched in 2013. Objectives of the programme include:

- Building and strengthening the resilience of the indigent population thereby enabling them to benefit from investments in human capital development;
- Providing streamlined, effective and efficient wrap-around services to the indigent population.

67. The programme provided financial and comprehensive support and services to twenty-one of the poorest and most vulnerable households during its pilot.

68. In 2013, thirteen (13) families were selected for the RISE (Restore, Inspire, Secure and Empower) pilot programme on Nevis. The programme sort to remove the families from the social assistance scheme by training them to become more productive citizens.

69. Most of the families have been weaned off the welfare system however the Department of Social Services continues to monitor the families to ensure that they do not revert to their previous situation.

Article 12 Respect for the views of the child

70. Sections 3 and 12 of the Constitution of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, entitles all persons in the Federation the right to freedom of expression. Children who are deemed capable of forming and expressing their opinions are allowed to be heard in matters concerning their wellbeing in the public arena and the court.¹⁵ Section 4(b) of the Adoption of Children Act provides that:

“The Court, before making an adoption order, shall be satisfied...that the order, if made, will be for the welfare of the infant, due consideration being for this purpose given to the wishes of the infant, having regard to the age and understanding of the infant;”.

71. The law does not state precisely the age at which a child may voluntarily give testimony in court, but rather seeks to provide safeguards to ensure that a child who gives testimony understands the duty of speaking the truth and that his privacy is protected as provided for in the Child Justice Act.

72. The magistrate usually questions a child before he/she is given the oath. A child must understand what it is to take an oath. The juveniles are usually asked a series of questions.

73. The test is to find out if they know it is wrong to lie. If a child doesn't know what it is to tell a lie, the magistrate will adjourn the case if the child needs religious training.

74. If a child seems young, unsworn evidence will be given by him/her. However, the magistrate must warn the jury that the juvenile did not swear to tell the truth because he/she

¹⁵ Section 4 of the Adoption of Children Act CAP 12.01.

was too young. That might have legal implications and the law might require another witness to support what the child is saying.

75. Maintenance of Children Act 2012 provides the legal framework for shared parental responsibilities. The duty exists irrespective of whether a child is born in or out of wedlock or is in their custody. The Act allows men to take women to court for child support payments and also provides for the Court, on application in the prescribed form by a child over the age of fourteen years on his own behalf or by a person on behalf of a child to make Maintenance Orders requiring a parent or any person having an obligation to maintain any child.

76. Several mechanisms, both at the community and national level, have been deliberately established to provide for the practical implementation of Article 12. In primary and secondary schools, students are allowed to express their views appropriately and respectfully through the Effective Schools Framework. The St. Kitts National Youth Parliament Association (SKNYPA) and Nevis Youth Parliament also engage in mock debates of draft legislation that affect children and the community at large. Membership of SKNYPA is open to persons between the ages of 13 and 30 years old. Improvements could however still be gained in this area since not many children are involved in this process. "Totally for Kids" is a radio programme, on the national broadcasting station co-hosted by children for children that started in the late 1990s and is aired every Saturday morning. The programme engages children and the community on issues of national concern seen from the perspective of children. Von Radio's weekly programme, 'Youth on the Go' allows the hosts and listening public to interact with children and to hear their views on various topics.

77. Further, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth, ZIZ broadcasted a weekly television programme, 'Youth Express from the Steps' which comprised a youth panel discussing various issues. Although this programme has ended in St. Kitts, Nevis has a similar programme.

V. Civil rights and freedoms

Articles 7 and 8

The Right to a name and nationality

78. The domestic legislation and practice in St. Kitts and Nevis relating to name and nationality conform with the letter and spirit of Articles 7 and 8 of the Convention.

79. The unique socio-political history of St. Kitts and Nevis, evolving from colonialism through Statehood in 1967 to Independence in 1983, predisposed the Constitution to expressly provide in Section 90 the list of persons that would become citizens of the Federation on the day of Independence. Section 91 lists the persons, who shall become citizens after independence. Further, Section 92 indicates the persons who shall be entitled to be registered as citizens upon making an application. Also, in Section 93 of the Constitution, provision is made for a person to become a citizen of the Federation even though he may have citizenship for another country.

80. Under Section 92 of the said Constitution, all persons born in Saint Christopher and Nevis after 19th September 1983 shall be citizens of the Federation.¹⁶ Section 92 (1) (g) of the said Constitution provides that "any person under the age of eighteen years who is the child of a citizen or the child of a person who is or would but for his death have been entitled to be registered as a citizen under any of the preceding paragraphs;" shall be entitled upon making application to be registered as a citizen if he does not already possess citizenship.

81. The Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act Cap 12.13 mandates that:

¹⁶ "Provided that a person shall not become a citizen by virtue of this paragraph if at the time of his birth (i) neither of his parents is a citizen and either of them possess such immunity from suit and legal process as is accorded to the envoy of a foreign sovereign power accredited to Saint Christopher and Nevis; or (ii) either of his parents is a citizen of a country with which Her Majesty is at war and the birth occurs in a place then under occupation by that country..".

“The father or the mother of every child, or if both father and mother be dead, the possessor or occupier of the house or of the apartment or of the dwelling in which such child has been born, or the head of the family or of the household or of persons residing or being in such house or apartment or dwelling shall, within thirty days after the birth of any child, whether the same be born alive or be still-born, give or cause to be given notice of the birth of such child to the Registrar of the parish in which such child shall have been born, and such notice shall contain and express the following particulars:

- The day of the birth of the child, the sex of the child, the name of the child if a name shall have been given it;
- The name of the father and mother and their respective ages on the day of the birth of the child, as well as the order of the birth of the child among the children of the mother;
- If still-born, such fact to be stated;
- And in case of any new-born child being found the person finding the same or first having charge of such child shall forthwith give notice and information thereof, and of the place where such new-born child was found to the Registrar of the parish.”.

82. The process of registration begins at the hospitals, where mechanisms are in place to make records of the birth, and the name of the parents to whom the child is born, and for this information to be forwarded to the Registrar of Births, ensuring that an official record is made of the birth. The identity of the child is preserved once the name is registered. Names changed legally are also registered.

83. The Status of Children Act CAP 12:14 is an Act that gives effect to Section 15 of the Constitution¹⁷ by removing the legal disabilities of children born out of wedlock¹⁸ and providing for related or incidental matters. The Act stipulates ways a declaration of paternity may be made and what constitutes evidence and or proof of paternity. The Act also stipulates that a child, whether born out of or in wedlock, shall use the surname of his or her father.

Articles 13 and 17

Freedom of expression – see discussion on article 12 above

84. Children have a right to express their views appropriately at home, in public and at school. Further, there are various avenues in St. Kitts and Nevis that support the notion of freedom of expression of young people in the Federation:

- (a) National consultations on matters such as crime involve feedback from young people in the process of articulating the problems and crafting solutions to these problems;
- (b) Organized Youth Rallies and Youth Chats;
- (c) Youth Panel Discussions;
- (d) Youth Group consultations;
- (e) National Youth Dialogues with Ministers of government;
- (f) A National Youth Policy has been approved by parliament;
- (g) One of the effective avenues created to allow children to express themselves and to request information about matters of concern to them, is an activity during the

¹⁷ The said section provides for protection from discrimination as ‘no law shall make any provision that is discriminatory either of itself or in its effect.’ This section is subject to other subsections.

¹⁸ Section 2 of the Status of Children Act provides that: “(1) Subject to subsection 4 and to sections 5 and 14, for all the purposes of the law of Saint Christopher and Nevis, a person is the child of his or her natural parents and his or her status as their child is independent of whether the child is born out of wedlock. (2)The rule of construction whereby in any instrument words of relationship signify only legitimate relationship in the absence of a contrary expression of intention is abolished.”.

Ministry's annual Child Abuse Prevention Month (November) during which primary school children can hold discussions with cabinet ministers, ambassadors, and other persons of influence.

Access to appropriate information (Article 17)

85. Children in the Federation have access to all forms of media and media content.

86. Matters about child abuse are discussed in the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) course in secondary schools. The HFLE curriculum that is used is based on the Regional Curriculum Framework, which sets out the HFLE philosophy and identifies the desired knowledge, skills and behavioural outcomes for students using four themes adopted from the core curricular guide developed for teachers' colleges as part of a PAHO initiative (see PAHO/Carnegie, 1994).

87. The four thematic areas are as follows:

- Self and Interpersonal Relationships;
- Sexuality and Sexual Health;
- Eating and Fitness;
- Managing the Environment.

88. HFLE is currently offered in all public primary and secondary schools as a time-tabled curriculum subject in most grades and forms. At the primary level, HFLE is taught by classroom teachers while at the secondary level, it is taught by HFLE teachers and guidance counsellors. Nurses, employees of the Ministry of Health and the Department of Gender Affairs, and other resource persons are often invited to facilitate various topics.

89. Some of the secondary school guidance counsellors attended interactive lifeskills workshops and have implemented the life-skills methodologies advocated by the CARICOM Multi-Agency Project. Counsellors and teachers were also provided the option of selecting the methodologies that best suit the learning styles of their students.

90. Community-based initiatives for information sharing includes;

- The Police Drum Corps was revived in 2008. They have played for many functions including school sports days, church parades, and marches. Membership is opened to students from grades 5 and the organization has a membership of twenty-eight children and twelve adults. Day-to-day operations are conducted by two police officers. The drumming sessions have increased participant's communication and listening skills and their respect for others. Drumming has also helped them to be more focused, and they have transferred this skill to other areas of their lives;
- Operation Future is a project which was conducted mainly by police officers of the Royal St. Christopher and Nevis Police Force which was initiated to educate children about the dangers of crime, violence and drugs. The mission statement for Operation Future is "To interact with, educate and embrace our nation's youth, in our concerted quest to positively guide and nurture their young minds to heighten their awareness about crime and keep them on the straight and narrow path." Police officers visited schools and made presentations to students in regards to violence, including child abuse and bullying and illegal drugs. The curriculum included the following:
 - Gangs and family/friends;
 - Gangs and self-esteem;
 - Gangs and belonging;
 - Drugs;
 - Gangs, weapons and violence;
 - Gangs and abuse of power;

- The St. Kitts and Nevis Explorers Youth Clubs owe their origin in 2017 to community policing. So far, eight clubs have been established with more than 700 young people as members. The clubs were created to put children in a safe environment in which they would feel secure, be encouraged to think and act positively and overall, given practice in character building. By keeping the pledge and motto, members of the Explorers Youth Clubs practice much-needed virtues such as discipline, impulse control, helpfulness, making good decisions, crime free-living and in general good citizenry. There are opportunities for members to participate in competitive sports, drumming, dancing, summer camps, hiking, community clean up campaigns, cooking sewing, drilling and the annual Independence Day Ceremonial Parade. The participants in the clubs feel safe to participate in activities as police officers are assigned to each group/club and work along with parents and community personnel;
- The Department of Probation and Child Protection Services (PCPS) conducts public awareness programmes about children's rights and abuse targeting the general public. Child Abuse Prevention Week and Children's Day are celebrated annually and used to raise public awareness of child protection issues. The Department continues to develop a closer relationship with Guidance Counsellors to raise awareness through HFLE sessions;
- Blue Bear: Break the Silence: End Child Sexual Abuse Campaign was launched in St. Kitts in October 2013. The campaign aimed to increase public awareness about issues related to sexual abuse and incest. Activities were conducted in schools and various communities including training for school officials so that they could identify signs that may be exhibited by students who are abused and training for other organizations that provide services for children. The campaign reported positive outcomes and activities are ongoing. The Department of Social Services on Nevis engages in several activities to assist youth;
- "Yes To Success' Diversion Program (YTS) Programme" which started in 2015 seeks to address the absence of sufficient coordinated and sustained efforts which would facilitate rehabilitative measures in dealing with at-risk juveniles and those passing through the court system in Nevis for certain offences. It incorporates job training and personal development training sessions directly connected to the acquiring and retaining of a job. Weekly sessions of two hours are incorporated through Personal Development Training Sessions and cover topics such as Job Interview Skills; Basic Resume Development; General Workplace Ethics; Conflict Resolution; and Positive Decision Making, as well as other soft skills areas. Participants practically apply the skills learnt in internships with local tradesmen. They are also assisted in their search for long-term employment;
- Baby Think it Over is a teen pregnancy prevention programme for at-risk juvenile girls. The programme is aimed at building awareness of the difficulties of teen pregnancy and the responsibilities of parenthood;
- Positive Moves C&F Intervention is a personal child and family-centred intervention by social workers to children of 8-12 years of age who are exhibiting extreme risk behavior that might lead to full-fledged delinquency and /or illegal activities in their teen years.
- The Single Parent Group conducts an annual parenting seminar and quarterly round table discussion on the Social Development outlook;
- Second Chance Teen Mothers Programme offers teen mothers life-skills training, short-term job skills training, assistance with job search and funds, and enrollment in academic skills training classes for teen mothers who opt not to return to the mainstream school system;
- In addition to the children radio programmes mentioned above, birthday greetings are sent out every morning to children who have birthdays on that day. On Saturdays, there is a 1-hour programme for children designed to inspire, entertain, uplift and educate children;

- There is also a Saturday cartoon line-up from 10:30 a.m. to noon for children. The cartoon series is action-themed and adventure-based and is geared for children aged 10-12 plus. Kids Block, which lasts for 1 hour 30 minutes is intended to stimulate the imagination of children 5 to 8 years old;
- Nevertheless, while we recognise that more can always be done, measures have been put in place to safeguard children from harmful information. The cable television services allow parents to control the programmes their children view via parental control settings. The laptops provided by the government have internet and programme restrictions installed on them. The internet service provided on the school grounds of the Federation has been established in such a way that persons cannot access pornographic websites;
- Section 13 of the Electronic Crimes Act No. 27 of 2009 prohibits the publication of child pornography through a computer system, the production of child pornography for publication through a computer system and the possession of child pornography in a computer system or on a computer data storage medium for publication. Further, the Customs (Control & Management) Act prohibits the importation of indecent or obscene prints, paintings, photographs, books, cards, lithographic or other engravings, phonograph records, videos or any other indecent articles or matter. The Small Charges Act¹⁹ also prohibits the use of any abusive, blasphemous, indecent, insulting, profane or threatening language:
 - (a) In any public place;
 - (b) In any place to the annoyance of the public; or
 - (c) Tending to a breach of the peace.

Article 14

Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

91. This right is also established by Section 11(1) of the Constitution of the Federation. Section 11 (2) of the Constitution stipulates that “except with his own consent (or, if he is a person under the age of eighteen years, the consent of a person who is his parent or guardian) a person attending any place of education, detained in any prison or corrective institution or serving in a defence force shall not 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 is not his own. Further, under section 19 (1) of the Education Act No. 9 of 2005 “A student may express any religious, political, moral, or other belief or opinion so long as the expression does not adversely affect the rights or education of other students or the rights of other persons in the school.”.

92. Job Attachment Programme for At-Risk Youth is an extension of the Youth Department’s Summer Job Attachment Programme. It is available to teens from 3rd to 5th form that would normally not make the mainstream program. They are allowed to work under rigorous supervision, with the added benefit of awareness sessions to improve employability and manage extreme behaviours.

93. Child month is celebrated annually in June. The 2019 Theme was: “Celebrating Our Progress As A Nation, 35 Years of Early Stimulation.”.

Article 15

Freedom of association and peaceful assembly

94. Sections 3 and 13 of the Constitution of the Federation provide for the freedom of assembly and association of all persons in the Federation. Young people can therefore associate and assemble peacefully. This is evidenced by the fact that young people are engaged in youth rallies, youth town hall meetings and youth chats among others. in addition

¹⁹ Section 9 of Cap 4.36.

to youth groups in which children are encouraged to join all political parties in the Federation have established youth arms. Still, checks and balances are in place, and Section 15(1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act Cap 4.05 criminalises children under the age of sixteen loitering on the streets after 10 p.m.²⁰ Further, the **Gang Prohibition Acts** prohibits persons from joining gangs.

Article 16

Privacy

95. Section 3 (1) of the Constitution entitles every person in the Federation to protection for his personal privacy. As it relates to children, this principle is further advanced by the Child Justice Act, No. 19 of 2013 and the procedures established therein. Section 52 of the Act states: “A person shall not be present at a sitting of the Court in a matter relating to a child unless the presence of the person is necessary in connection with the proceedings of the Court or unless the judge has granted the person permission to be present. Also with the enactment of the Evidence Act No. 30 of 2011, section 20 of the said legislation provides for witness anonymity orders to be made so that specified measures can be taken to ensure that the identity of witnesses in criminal proceedings is not disclosed in or in connection with the proceedings.

Protection from corporal punishment & other cruel or degrading forms of punishment

96. Section 7 of the Constitution provides that “a person shall not be subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading punishment or other like treatment.” Section 49 (1) of the Education Act No. 9 of 2005 stipulates that in public schools, assisted private schools and private schools, degrading or injurious punishment shall not be administered.

97. St. Kitts and Nevis has acknowledged that the committee “remained gravely concerned that corporal punishment is still widely practiced within the State Party and that domestic legislation does not prohibit its use...” In addressing the grave concern, the State Party declares that while corporal punishment remains in domestic legislation, corporal punishment has not been ordered or carried out by the judicial system since the initial report.

98. The Department of PCPS has engaged the population in discussions, debates and live panel discussions to bring wide public awareness to the fact that this type of punishment is cruel and inhumane. The suspension of its use for one day within schools had been a regular of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

99. Corporal punishment is still allowed in schools, but how it is administered is dictated by Section 49 of the Education Act. The said Act states that “Corporal punishment may be administered where no other punishment is considered suitable or effective...”²¹ Further, Section 50 of the said Act allows the Minister of Education to suspend or abolish corporal punishment in public schools and assisted private schools.

100. Except as otherwise provided, corporal punishment shall be administered on the palms of the hands of a student. No more than four strokes shall be administered to a student on the same day and the instrument used shall be a leather strap eighteen inches long, one and a quarter-inch wide and not more than a quarter-inch thick or an instrument recommended by the Chief Education Officer. The person issuing the punishment must be the same gender as the student and another member of staff of the same gender shall be in attendance.

101. The Education Sector Plan 2017-2021, which replaced the 2009-2019 White Paper on Education, sets the direction of policy action at the Ministry and school level. While corporal

²⁰ “Any boy or girl under the age of “sixteen” found wandering or loitering on the streets after ten o’clock in the evening and failing to show to the satisfaction of a constable that he or she is engaged on an urgent or unusual errand may be stopped and taken to the nearest police station and there held until released to the father, mother or other person having the lawful care or charge of such boy or girl.”

²¹ Section 49(2) of the Education Act 2005.

punishment, as described above, remains a method of last resort used in the schools, and some schools continue to use cleaning and writing lines as disciplinary measures, much more emphasis is being placed on positive behavior support techniques in schools. In line with the sector plan priorities and with support from UNICEF, The Ministry of Education launched the Effective Schools Framework in November 2017. The Framework characterizes effective schools as those that provide a safe and healthy learning environment and are guided by the tenets of student-centeredness, inclusion, and democratic participation.

102. The Framework is being implemented at the primary level and plans are in place to pilot it at the secondary level. All primary schools in St. Kitts were trained in implementing positive behavior management techniques to be used at the school and classroom level, such as establishing and teaching expectations and rewarding positive behaviors. Additionally, all primary schools in the Federation received a sample rewards package to be used in schools' implementation of positive behavior management. Additionally, at least one primary school has implemented parenting sessions to assist parents with positive behavior support and study skills to use with their children.

103. As outlined in the Sector Plan, existing legislation that contravenes the policy direction of the Ministry will be reviewed and revised as appropriate. This applies to sections of the Education Act that address corporal punishment in schools, as the Ministry is taking great strides to ensure that schools and the teaching-learning enterprise is truly student-centred and will urgently ask Cabinet to address this matter more holistically.

VI. Family environment and alternative care

Articles 5 and 18

Parental guidance and responsibility

104. The common law which forms part of the local jurisprudence gives guidance on the responsibilities and duties of parents. The responsibility to maintain the child is enforced by provisions of the Magistrate Code of Procedure Act.²² The Maintenance of Children Act CAP 12.07 and the 2012 Child Maintenance Act, makes provision for the Magistrate to prohibit the parent of a child who is under the age of fourteen years and born out of wedlock from leaving the Federation if they have not made adequate provision for the maintenance and care of the said child during their absence.

105. The Small Charges Act 4.36 gives guidance as to parents' responsibilities and duties and provides for the protection of children. Section 25 of the said act criminalises cruelty to juveniles. Particularly, it provides that:

(a) Any person being wholly or in part able to maintain his or her children, whether legitimate or born out of wedlock, and if a male his wife, by work or by other lawful means, and wilfully refusing and neglecting to do so, shall be deemed to be an idle and disorderly person within the means of this Act, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one month;

(b) Any person who deserts his wife or children shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months;

(c) Any person who runs away and leaves his wife or his or her child or children, shall be deemed to be a rogue and a vagabond within the meaning of this Act, and shall be liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months.

106. It is recognized that parents may sometimes require assistance in equipping themselves with requisite skills and competencies to be able to discharge parental duties effectively. Hence, parent education classes are offered throughout the Federation.

107. Early Childhood Education Unit offers workshops and a series of classes for parents. The parent education programme in the Federation has been described as a successful

²² Sections 120(4)(d), 121, 124, 125 and 126 of the Magistrate Code of Procedure Act, CAP 3.17.

venture. This is a structured programme undertaken by the Unit in which parents are brought into seminars and workshops designed to give helpful knowledge about the development of children, and designed to give practical perspectives and encouragement with regards to the implementation of various methods of child interaction and disciplining measures. Facilitators speak on topics such as Child rearing, Meal Preparation, and Craft. Facilitators are available before classes for individual discussion. The programme recognizes parenting as an important exercise and duty that requires knowledge, experience, commitment and energy.

School-based parental training

108. The Ministry of Education (MoE) supports parents' efforts to create happier and more successful family relationships. The MoE collaborates with school guidance counsellors to provide instruction to parents on the principles of child development and specific parenting skills.

109. Parents are taught how to support and guide children as they develop social skills. They learn how to reduce power struggles, promote positive behaviours and apply consequences that teach and help.

110. The national television station ZIZ has also begun re-broadcasting a weekly Barbadian parenting programme called My Child and I. The said programme offers advice on parenting and interacting with one's child.

Articles 18 and 26

Assistance to parents, child care services and facilities and social security

Education

111. There is free primary and secondary education for all children at public schools. Government nurseries and daycare centres also provide child-care services to children under the age of five (5) years for a small fee of \$15.00 per week, which is significantly subsidized.

112. Children in government schools in St. Kitts have been the beneficiaries of a feeding programme called the School Meals Programme, in which children in all of the primary schools are offered a free, hot meal daily. Eligible students at the secondary school level also benefit from the Programme. In Nevis, the School Meals Programme costs \$25.00 weekly. Social Services and other local businesses provide financial support for families that cannot afford this fee. Further, once the Department of Social Services reviews the application of any vulnerable parent within a certain earning bracket and the application is successful, the child of that parent would be assisted by the government with two (2) sets of uniforms for the school year.

113. The Ministry of Education also manages the SELF (Student Education Learning Fund) project, which provides textbooks free of cost to students who cannot afford to buy required textbooks. The programme is universal at the primary level and targeted at the secondary level. These books are returned to the school at the end of the year, for use by another cohort of students. Parents pay a small maintenance fee.

114. The Ministry of Education also assists by paying examination fees for high school students sitting overseas exams for families with a monthly income below XCD 4,000. Support is also provided to students pursuing further education through the SAFE Programme which provides scholarships for registration fees, books and examination fees to citizens who are pursuing courses of study at local tertiary institutions.

115. The St. Kitts National Foundation established in 2015 invests in public education to advance student achievements and prepare them to learn and thrive in a rapidly changing environment. Members of the public contribute to the Foundation and the money is used to provide educational supplies for disadvantaged children.

Health Care

116. Health care is free for children at government health facilities. Health professionals promote the bio psychosocial approach to understanding children and adolescents.

117. Services provided include:

- (a) Immunization Programme;
- (b) Hearing Programme (Hearing tests; therapy service; referrals for hearing aids; educational sessions for parents);
- (c) Dental Programme (Prevention care; restorative care; oral health education);
- (d) Early Identification Programme and Early Treatment Programme for at-risk children (Screening; referrals; follow-up);
- (e) School Health Programme (Visits to schools and tracking student health progress);
- (f) Programmes aimed at disabilities caused by environmental factors;
- (g) Education programmes for parents;
- (h) Dissemination of leaflets on health topics.

Social Services

118. The mandate of the Ministry of Social and Community Development and Gender Affairs speaks specifically to programmes that secure the wellness of families, and ultimately, seek to secure the welfare of children in their development. The initiatives supported by the various departments within the Ministry include ongoing support for teen mothers, a Youth- in- Transition programme, which is a programme designed to ease the transition of young people from secondary school to higher education or the world of work, adolescent development workshops and the support of community-based, after-school programmes. Also, the Ministry, through the Department of Social Services provides financial assistance to vulnerable families.

119. In 2002, the Department of Gender Affairs launched Project Viola, which aimed to help teenage mothers stay in school until they graduate. Over the years, Project Viola has enabled teenage parents to benefit from parenting education, financial and emotional support, financial education and job skills training.

120. Teenage mothers are strongly encouraged to attend college. Hence, several participants of Project Viola were provided scholarships for two years of tertiary education at a local institution.

121. Domestic Violence Support to Families and children: A broad range of services is provided to children and families. These include counselling, educational programmes for those at-risk of abusing or being abused, family support services, and alternative living arrangements.

122. Outreach to schools: Gender Affairs partners with schools to meet the needs (academic and non-academic) of students and their families. Seminars for parents on issues of health and parenting are also conducted. Sessions are delivered through engaging activities, multimedia and thoughtful reflection.

123. The Probation and Child Protection Services has developed a variety of social programmes to provide support for children. The major programmes include:

- Diversion;
- Probation scheme;
- New Horizons Rehabilitation Services;
- Counselling Services;

- Health, wellness, inter-personal.

124. The diversion programme was implemented to keep juveniles who have broken the law away from the formal judicial system. It is a method of rehabilitation and is executed mainly through counselling, and productive avenues such as sports and music.

125. The Probation scheme provides information, advice and other support for children and their families. Probation officers monitor and work with offenders to reduce re-offending. Offenders attend programmes to help them work on their deficits or excesses such as alcohol abuse, domestic violence or aggression.

126. The New Horizons Rehabilitation Centre was opened in December 2013. The Centre caters to juvenile offenders including those on remand through quality care and child development services which help residents discover their full potential. Services are provided by a team of persons trained in general education, remedial education, psychology, counselling, health and family life education, and mental health. The teachers facilitate learning and constantly nurture every resident. The programme is based on educational assessments and is tailored to each resident's individual needs.

Counselling Services

127. Various types of support and treatment including individual counselling, group counselling and therapy are available for children and youth. Information on health and wellness is provided to promote and encourage healthy decisions, behaviours and lifestyles.

Gap(s)

128. The absence of a Social Assistance Development Board is considered a gap in this area. However, The Social Protection Reform initiative has resulted in the drafting of a Social Protection Bill that would repeal and replace the Social Development Assistance Act. The bill has had its first reading in Parliament.

Articles 9 and 10

Separation from parents and family reunification

129. The Federation fully subscribes to the principle that the best place for a child to be raised is in his or her family environment.

130. In keeping with this principle, the PCPS Department facilitates counselling for parents and children to help preserve families and/or facilitate the reunification of the family at some point.²³ However, St Kitts and Nevis also recognises that no child should be allowed to remain in an environment which exposes him or her to actual or potential harm. Domestic legislation provides for protection of all children from abuse and neglect.²⁴ Services include:

- Kinship and Foster Care;
- Children's Home;
- New Horizons Rehabilitation Centre.

²³ Section 9 (1) (f) of the Juvenile Act CAP 4.15 allows the court before which a juvenile is brought to make an order requiring his or her parent or guardian to undergo a programme of rehabilitative treatment or such other programme as the Probation and Child Welfare Board may recommend.

²⁴ Section 4 of the Juvenile Act CAP 4.15 states that "Every court, in dealing with a juvenile who is brought before it as being in need of care or protection or as an offender or otherwise, shall have regard to the welfare of the juvenile and shall, if it deems it necessary, take steps for removing the juvenile from undesirable surroundings. See also section 7 of the said Act and the Domestic Violence Act.

Article 11

Illicit transfer and non-return

131. St Kitts and Nevis acceded to the Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction on May 31st, 1994. Since acceding, the Federation has enacted the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act which includes abduction in its definition of trafficking in persons.²⁵

132. In situations where a child is taken from a custodial parent without the permission of the said parent, the PCPS Department leads the way in liaising with the relevant national, regional and international governmental entities and agencies, to intervene on behalf of the child and custodial parent, to have the child returned to the said parent. In this regard, the Department continues to strengthen collaboration with the International Social Services (ISS) body.

Articles 19, 24, 34 and 39

Abuse and neglect of children and sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children

133. Section 5(f) of the Probation and Child Welfare Board Act CAP 12.12 gives the Board authority “to take into custody in a child care centre for a maximum of twenty-eight days victims of child abuse and children in need of care and protection or in imminent danger to their life or health without having to apply to the court, and may enter any house, building or other place for such purpose;”

134. The PCPS Department has the primary responsibility for ensuring that children are provided every opportunity to live and grow as children and in making decisions or recommendations, to always observe children’s rights. In cases where protection must be sought for a child, outside of his home, the Department ensures that every effort is made for the parent to have structured and healthy access to the child if such access is in the child’s best interest. Foster parents are encouraged, through ongoing training and sensitivity, to recognize that ultimately, the goal of fostering, is the reunification of the family. This reunification, if possible, takes place after timed and structured interventions, which are aimed at strengthening the parent-child dynamic.

135. In cases where a child must be removed from a home because of abuse or neglect, unless the parent has demonstrated that he/she will jeopardize the healing or development of the child, the Courts then makes the parent aware of the child’s placement and is encouraged, through the department, to make supervised visits with the child. In matters regarding the removal of the child from one home into alternative care, and/or in cases where the child is of developmental and emotional maturity, engagement with the child is sought to determine his views about placement, and if possible, his concerns and considerations are respected in the placement process.

136. In 1998, the government approved a proposal for the establishment of a National Foster Care Programme to provide alternative care for children. The programme derives its legal authority from the Probation and Child Welfare Board Act²⁶ and is regulated by procedures which speak extensively to the care, protection and rights of children while in foster care. The regulations classify foster care as:

- Short-Term: a period not exceeding three (3) months and will provide care under the following conditions:
 - During parental illness or family crisis;
 - To provide emergency placements for place of safety orders;
 - For assessment and opportunity to make long-term plans;

²⁵ Section 2 of the Trafficking of Persons Act No. 32 of 2008.

²⁶ Section 5 (c) and (d) of the Probation and Child Welfare Act CAP 12.12.

- Pre-adoption care and preparation;
- Long-TermFostering: This situation is designed to provide children with benefits of family life and refers to any period exceeding three (3) months;
- Voluntary Placement: An agreement is entered into between the natural parent of a child, a foster parent and the probation and child welfare board for the placement of a child.

137. The foster care programme has had remarkable successes, having cared for a vast number of children since it was established. At a ceremony in 2008, UNICEF, which provided technical and financial support for the establishment of the programme, recognised foster parents and spoke of its willingness to adopt the foster care programme as a model for the Caribbean region.

138. To optimally meet the needs of foster children, the PCPS Department offers ongoing annual training to foster parents. These sessions are conducted by the National Counselling Unit, doctors, guidance counsellors, and staff of the PCPS. Topics covered include: How to deal with the changes young people experience from pre-teen to teen, neglect and trust.

139. Institutionalisation is viewed as a last resort, and every effort is made to find suitable foster families. There is a need to expand the system to provide for a greater number of children needing that type of environment. However, the system needs to be improved, and adequate financial and other support should be provided to these homes.

140. The PCPS Department is the central agency for the investigation of matters of alleged child abuse. The department has a structured protocol for the investigation, recommendation of treatment and follows up of cases involving the abuse of children.

141. The Federation notes the concerns of the committee about reporting, investigating and management of child abuse, neglect and abandonment and acknowledges with regret the jeopardy this is causing to children. Regrettably too, the number of reported cases has been increasing exponentially over the years, with a record of over two hundred and forty (240) in 2018.

142. The ratio of staff to caseload is still way below universally accepted standards, with currently only four (4) line staff members and a supervisor who respond to referrals, carries out investigative functions, finds placement for children, files and appears in court with care applications; provide services to families etc. With a ratio of four (4) staff to a caseload of sixty (60), the inadequate response is not surprising.

143. It must be emphasized, however, that judicial intervention is contributing to the difficulties. Foster Parents who have been making several appearances to court well over a year and have not been able to have care orders granted for children already in their physical custody are now indicating their readiness to return the children to their original abode.

144. A major concern involves judicial sanctions applied to perpetrators of sexual abuse of children. Notwithstanding the efforts of the Probation and Child Welfare Board and several meetings with police, there remains a reluctant and serious lack of response by the police to address this issue. As a result, perpetrators continue to walk the streets with unofficial licence to continue the abuse.

145. The Committee's recommendation for St. Kitts and Nevis to seek the assistance of UNICEF is noted. The Federation is always assured of support and assistance of UNICEF, which continues to demonstrate a high level of commitment to assist in effectively dealing with this vexing matter for more than thirty years. The Federation feels obliged to make the committee aware of this most indispensable and invaluable contribution provided by UNICEF.

146. The Counselling Department within the Ministry of Community Development, Gender Affairs and Social Services provides invaluable support and works in close collaboration with the Department of PCPS to provide counselling intervention for children who have suffered from abuse, and with the parents of these children so that healthy reunification of the family is possible.

147. While the national standard for reporting is not yet realized, research funded by UNICEF was carried out and documented in a report informing of “The Status of Child Protection in St Kitts /Nevis-The Need for A National Reporting Protocol” in the Federation. The Department has acted on the findings of this research by drafting a reporting protocol which will be adopted and implemented as the official response to child protection issues. The said protocol will guide the investigation of child abuse cases and includes, as a part of the procedures, an aspect of internal data collection. A small committee was set up to finalize the draft National Protection Protocol.

148. The Department also works in tandem with the Early Childhood Development Unit and the community as well as the hospital-based nurses to establish early identification of children at risk of being abused. The Department is engaged in ongoing training with its staff to build capacity to increase its abilities to intervene in cases where abuse is suspected.

149. The Department of Gender Affairs in 2018 launched The Domestic and Sexual Violence Complaints and Response Protocol. The objectives of the protocol are:

- (a) To provide information to complainants on the various Agencies/institutions that assist complainants of domestic and sexual violence;
- (b) To provide service providers within the key institutions and Departments with the necessary information and process to respond to complainants of sexual and domestic violence;
- (c) To reduce and eradicate the frustration faced by complainants;
- (d) To reduce and eradicate the duplication of complaints/response amongst Service Providers.

Article 20

Child deprived of a family environment - placements

150. The Department of PCPS is responsible for placing children in need of care and protection in places of safety. Although there are foster care programmes, several children remain in environments not conducive to their proper development.

151. Places of safety identified by the department for children in need of care and protection include temporary placement at the hospital in an emergency, homes in the community where a child could be placed temporarily on an immediate basis, family members willing to accept the children, the established Foster Care placement and the St. Christopher’s Children’s Home.

152. In emergencies where a child, especially a young child or a baby must be placed urgently, the Paediatric Wing of the Joseph N France General Hospital in St. Kitts has been used as a place of safety. While this has been an arrangement that has been in place for several years, it is recognized that the hospital environment cannot replace that of a nurturing and stabilizing home environment, and so children are placed there only for a short-Term stay, while a more suitable, long-term environment is identified.

153. The St. Christopher Children’s Home is an option for placement that is considered as a short-Term option and a place of last resort. The Home is a semi-autonomous entity that operates with a private Board and is supported by an annual government subvention. Even though its administrative functions are guided by a Board, the Home does receive a financial subvention from the government, and children have been placed there by the Department of PCPS in situations where no other residential placement exists. Children placed at the St. Christopher Children’s Home can be placed there through an emergency order obtained by the Court, after which time the Child Protection Officers could make an application to the court to have the said children placed there for an indeterminate period or until a foster home has been identified.

Article 21

Adoption

154. The Children (Care and Adoption) Act No. 20 of 2013 regulates adoption in the Federation. The Act limits who can be adopted.²⁷ Adoption matters are heard by a Judge of the High Court. The assistance of the Department of PCPS is solicited in regards to preparing reports, as to the fitness of the adoptive parent to adopt the said child, for submission to the court before an adoption order is made.

155. In all adoption matters, a guardian ad litem is appointed for the child. This guardian is usually an officer from the Department of PCPS. This guardian conducts the investigation and prepares and submits the report referred to above. If the proposed adoptive parent lives in the Federation, the guardian ad litem will interview not only the parents of the child but also the proposed adoptive parent and inspect the applicant's home. Where the proposed adoptive parent lives overseas, the guardian ad litem liaises with the Child Protection Authorities in the country of residence of the adoptive parent so that the investigation of the adoptive parent and their home can be done. That information will assist the guardian ad litem with the preparation of his report.

156. Appropriate steps are being taken to address the concern regarding intercountry adoption. In this regard, St. Kitts and Nevis is reviewing the process of acceding to the Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

Article 25

Periodic review of placement

157. In cases where a child must be separated from his parents and placed in protective custody, the Department of PCPS is responsible for ensuring that the Care Order and the circumstances which warranted the separation are continually being reviewed and that ongoing assessment regarding the success of intervention strategies and the readiness of the biological parents to again have custody of the child are done.²⁸

Article 27

Recovery and maintenance for the child

158. When determining the sum of maintenance to be paid for children, the Courts use their discretion and engage in an exercise where evidence as to the needs of the child and the means of the parent are presented, and the Court then determines a reasonable maintenance amount. Maintenance matters are heard in both the Magistrate and High Courts.

159. To ensure that there is no gender discrimination in the court, the Maintenance of Children Act was revised in 2012. The law allows men to pursue women for child support if the male parent has custody of the children.

160. At present, there is no legal recourse that could be taken in situations where the father of a child lives abroad and has not arranged for the maintenance of his children in the Federation. However, to better serve their clientele, the Department of PCPS has established reciprocity arrangements with Social Services Departments in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and Canada for these authorities to assist in matters relating to the maintenance of children in the Federation by parents who have migrated abroad to those countries. However, due to the absence of reciprocal treaties, recovery requests are very often

²⁷ Section 3 of the Adoption of Children Act, for example Section 3 (5) states "An adoption order shall not be made in respect of any infant who is not a citizen of Saint Christopher and Nevis or of any Commonwealth country and who is not resident in Saint Christopher and Nevis."

²⁸ Section 9(2) of the Juvenile Act states that "Any order made under subsection (1), may from time to time be renewed, varied or revoked by the court on its own motion, or on the application of any person or Board."

problematic resulting in several children being deprived of contributions towards maintenance by parents absent from the jurisdiction.

VII. Disability, basic health and welfare

Article 23

Disabled children

161. All persons in the Federation, including the disabled, are entitled to the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The Cotton-Thomas Comprehensive School (CTCS) in St. Kitts, and the Cecele Brown Integrated School in Nevis, are the government's response to providing services to children with special needs, across the developmental spectrum. These schools also fall under the mandate and protection of the Education Act 2005. Children are educated at these facilities until the age of 16 years. At the schools, children with disabilities are taught life skills and social skills for optimal functioning in society. There have been situations whereby some children who were students at the Special Education Units from early ages have been re-integrated into the mainstream school system, thus, every effort is made to ensure that the potential for the child with disabilities is met and achieved.

162. CTCS works closely with the Ministry of Health to support the well-being of young children by identifying and following up on developmental issues before they start school. Trained teachers visit daycare centres and conduct formal and informal observations. Observations are discussed with the child's/children's parents or guardian(s). Early stimulation and therapy is provided for the children.

163. Workshops are conducted annually for teachers and parents on developmental delays. These workshops are also designed to help parents understand how to use the Individualized Education Programme to benefit their child.

164. Some children with developmental issues are removed from their regular schools and given specific treatment, then replaced in their schools. Primary and high school children with dyslexia are monitored by the Student Support Officer and the Learning Support Coordinator.

165. A rehabilitation specialist provides services to children who have impairments or functional limitations. A physiotherapist also works with the children to improve a range of conditions. Autistic children undergo therapies and counselling. To further improve their social and communication skills, the government opened The Spectrum Services Autism Centre in September 2018. The Centre has provided opportunities for children and families to receive quality and effective services.

166. Physical education is a regular part of school activities. Children participate in sports and exercise such as swimming, track and field, skip roping. They get at least 90 minutes of physical activity per week. They play to develop individual skills but also for fun and friendship. Sports have helped them to improve their leadership skills.

167. Children with disabilities are supported at school and in their communities to ensure that they feel safe and capable. Hence, they engage in sports in their communities, take an active part in football competitions, participate in carnival activities, are involved in the drum fest and attend clubs.

168. Special emphasis is placed on the Special Olympics programme which has been successful in allowing children with disabilities to participate in the Special Olympics and other events in the region, and internationally. The participation of our children in these events has contributed to the increase of public sensitivity and understanding of the potential of children with disabilities.

169. Over the past seventeen years, Special Education teachers have had excellent relationships with employers. The senior children are sent on job placements and at these sites where they cement the skills they need to become employable. They are usually employed at the end of their training.

170. Children with disabilities are also catered to in the government-run Early Childhood Development Centres. The centres, which deal with the children from birth until the age of 5 when they move into Kindergarten, accept children with mild cases of Autism, Down's syndrome and some mild physical disabilities. Teachers receive training in working with children with disabilities. Parents of these children are taught methods of treating and coping with disabled children successfully in the home. Special Education preschool children under the age of 5 years who have more pronounced developmental and physical disabilities are serviced through the CTCS, in a special classroom designed for their young ages.

VIII. Education, leisure and cultural activities

Articles 28 and 29 Education

171. School attendance between the ages of 5 and 16 years is mandated.²⁹ In addition to the free public education, school meals, SELF programme, examination fee assistance and school uniform assistance, transportation is also provided. Moreover, scholarships funded by corporate entities are offered and made available to students.

172. The Government places a high value on education and invests approximately 16% of its budget in the sector (MoE, 2017). There is a total of seventeen (17) public primary schools in St. Kitts and seven (7) public primary schools in Nevis. The number of High Schools that are public schools is six (6) in St. Kitts and two (2) in Nevis. There are also several Private institutions offering primary and secondary education in the Federation.

173. All schools have Attendance Officers who work in zones and visit various schools that fall within their zones. The School Attendance Officers have the mandate of recognizing early patterns of truancy, of making determinations as to the main causes of the truant behaviour, and defining intervention measures to deal with this manifestation.

Goals of education

174. The 2005 Education Act offers the legal framework for education provision and provides the overarching goals for the education sector. Drawing from the Act, the MoE is implementing the 2017-2021 Education Sector Plan (ESP) under the theme: "Education for All: Embracing Change, Securing the Future".³⁰

175. This plan, which builds from the White Paper on Education Development and Policy 2009-2019, provides a strategic roadmap for the MoE to follow to improve the provision and administration of education over the medium-term plan period. Guided by the MoE vision to provide holistic lifelong education for all, the ESP responds to the developmental priorities outlined in several national policy and strategy documents and demonstrates the Federation's commitment to regional and global education imperatives, communicated, for example, through the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 for 2030.

176. The plan is guided by three overarching policy goals and responds to the key policy issues outlined below:

Policy Goals

Policy Issues

Improve equitable access to and participation in education at all levels

Increasing enrolment in ECE and higher education and improving retention in upper secondary school

Improving access to quality and relevant TVET and reducing gender disparities in participation

Promoting inclusion in mainstream schools and safeguarding equity in access for vulnerable groups

²⁹ Section 26 of the Education Act No. 9 of 2005.

³⁰ The Education Sector Plan can be accessed on the Ministry of Education's website: www.moeskn.org

<i>Policy Goals</i>	<i>Policy Issues</i>
Strengthen the quality and relevance of education at all levels to improve learning outcomes	Attracting and retaining properly qualified persons as teachers Optimum deployment and utilization of teachers Curriculum relevance and development Adequate and fulfilling teaching and learning environment Underdeveloped and resourced student support services
Enhance governance, planning and management to improve efficiency and effectiveness throughout the sector	School leadership Improved data management systems to support evidence-based decision making. Enhanced accountability measures at all levels Policy coordination and action

177. Several relevant actions have been taken since the Plan's launch at the end of 2017 to improve student's educational experiences and outcomes. In addition to implementing the Effective School Framework, there has been a significant amount of training for classroom teachers in primary and secondary schools in classroom management and differentiated instruction techniques. To date, more than 100 primary and secondary teachers have benefitted from a week-long sensitization training in Differentiated Instruction and the annual training of teachers in August 2019 focused on the same.

178. The Ministry of Education is currently undertaking a far-reaching curriculum and assessment enhancement process, from early childhood to the post-secondary level. Guiding the development of curriculum materials in all courses at all levels is an overarching curriculum and assessment framework. This document outlines the essential education competencies that our education system must develop in learners as follows:

179. An educated person in St. Kitts and Nevis:

- (a) Is an engaged, responsible, caring, tolerant participant in civil society;
- (b) Is creative, enterprising and resilient;
- (c) Thinks critically, communicates effectively and solves problems;
- (d) Leads a healthy and active life;
- (e) Demonstrates technological empowerment;
- (f) Uses literacy and numeracy to understand, appreciate and act in the world;
- (g) Demonstrates an appreciation for the culture of St. Kitts and Nevis

(Curriculum Inception Report, pg. 69, 2019).

180. This framework is complemented by a Quality Teaching, Learning, and Leadership Framework, which uses four (4) key components of measuring educational quality- (1) equity, (2) engagement, (3) excellence, and (4) empowerment—to establish broad expectations for effective teaching, learning, and leadership. It also identifies critical supports for achieving the standards, such as professional development, resources and technology, and governance. These documents guide the development curriculum, teaching and assessment, and student learning guides, which commenced in July 2019. Piloting of the new curriculum at the primary and secondary level will begin in January 2020 and a phased approach to full implementation will start in September 2020.

181. Critically, it will be a student-centred curriculum that recognizes the font of knowledge students bring to the classroom. It will promote developmentally appropriate instruction and facilitate continuous assessment to inform teaching and learning. Development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills will undergird teaching and learning, and curriculum content will be informed by national priorities for education, leading models of practice, and OECS Learning Standards at the primary, Caribbean Examination Council and Caribbean Vocational Qualification standards at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

182. The Primary Curriculum will consist of five core subjects: Health/Wellness, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. It is anticipated that content and competencies from music, arts and craft and technical and vocational education, and other areas will be integrated into these five subjects. The Secondary Curriculum will consist of a broader selection of subjects with the core five subjects continuing from primary (Draft Curriculum Development Strategy 2019).

183. It is expected that a robust implementation and monitoring of the Education Sector Plan, along with a continuous and adaptive assessment of the same, will lead to an improved, more efficient, relevant and productive education and training system in the Federation.

184. Post Secondary and Tertiary Level Education- This level of education is not mandated but is strongly supported. The Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College (CFBC), a quasi-autonomous institution of higher learning, is the main tertiary level institution in the Federation. It is mandated to provide technological, vocational, and professional instruction and training. Up until 2012, it was run by the Ministry of Education (MoE). In 2012-2013, the staff who worked for the government was seconded to the college and subvention began.

185. CFBC is run by a Board which was appointed by the MoE to ensure that the policies of the Government are adhered to. The Board is responsible to the MoE and cannot increase tuition fees without the government's permission. The fees are highly subsidized by the government and tuition has not increased substantially over the years as the government wants to ensure that tuition does not outstrip students' ability to pay.

186. The policy of the MoE is to have one (1) person in every four (4) households attend college. The idea is to make tertiary education accessible to all, regardless of religious, economic, or social standing. CFBC is largely financed by the government, and in 2016 the government provided \$8.7 million, which was the bulk of resources needed to fund the college. Presently, the college is looking at ways to raise funds without heavily depending on the government.

187. In 2007, the MoE created five collegiate divisions, namely:

- Arts, Science and General Studies;
- Technical and Vocational Training;
- Teacher Education;
- Nursing;
- Adult and Continuing Education.

188. Forty (40) percent of the students are enrolled in the Division of Arts and General Studies, forty (40) percent in Technical and Vocational Education, and twenty (20) percent are enrolled in the other three divisions.

189. CFBC fulfils an important role in society. It contributes to improvement of higher-level education at all levels, including the training of teachers for early childhood, primary and secondary school. It promotes skills for practical work and for creativity. There are many future entrepreneurs enrolled at the institution. Presently, TVET students who are enrolled in ITC are programming robots. These students have participated in an international robotics competition, using their skills to build drones, and they performed rather commendably. Students in other disciplines such as agriculture (practical) are honing their skills in greenhouse technology, and graduates will be able to build their own greenhouses.

190. The student-centred nature of CFBC is realized through a variety of initiatives at the local and regional levels. The range of activities included:

- Inter-Schools Track and Field Competition;
- Leeward Islands Debating Competition;
- CFBC Choral Concert;
- CFBC Dance Ensemble Recital;
- CFBC History Club visit to sister Caribbean islands.

191. Scholarships are offered by the government through SAFE Programme. The scholarship covers tuition, examination fees, allowance for books and a monthly stipend of \$250.00. All applications for SAFE scholarships are reviewed by the Department of Social Services, which makes recommendations for the scholarships based on specific criteria. Private companies also assist and CFBC offers bursaries each year to help a few students who are in need. Students can apply directly to other institutions for scholarships.

192. CFBC has relationships and liaisons with international universities which offer scholarships. These include The Seneca College in Canada, Universities in Cuba and Taiwan, Monroe College in New York, Mid-Western State in Texas, U.S.A, Switzerland, and Dalhousie University in Canada, the Bahamas, and the University of the Virgin Islands offer scholarships and tuition fees as if the students were in-state.

Challenges

- Finding ways to increase revenue while still being affordable and accessible.
- CFBC wants to deliver the type of training government desires – emphasis on TVET, but not neglecting academia.

Early Education

193. The Early Childhood Education system in St. Kitts and Nevis is one hailed as extremely successful in its mandate to:

- (a) Engender positive early childhood experiences;
- (b) Foster positive socialization;
- (c) Facilitate appropriate social and moral development of young children, and
- (d) Enhance the parenting skills of its members.

194. There are 19 government-run Early Childhood centres and 83 private institutions in St. Kitts and Nevis. The Early Childhood Development Unit, which oversees the functioning of these centres, strives to maintain a teacher/child ratio of 20/2, and a ratio of 5/1 in the nursery arm of the centres.

195. Training and retraining of teachers in the Early Childhood education system is critical to the maintenance and improvement of the system, and there are weekly, monthly and annual workshops that focus on upgrading the skills and knowledge of the teachers. Apart from these targeted training sessions, workers in the system are encouraged to seek and engage in correspondence training or any other type of training that would enhance their skills and knowledge base. The Unit is presently looking at the possibility of establishing a structured and developed training module which would be administered through the local tertiary level institution on the island of St. Kitts.

196. While the Early Childhood Unit is governed by the Education Act of 2005, which allows for corporal punishment, by practice, corporal punishment is not allowed in any of the early childhood centres. Teachers and workers in the centres are trained in other methods of child discipline and behaviour management, and they are required to use those strategies when managing children's behaviours.

197. All centres operating on the island must be licensed by the Early Childhood Development Unit, which then has the responsibility of maintaining a check and balance system of ensuring that centres are run in keeping with the policies of the unit.

198. The CARICOM Monitoring Checklist is used for licensing. Home Base CARICOM Monitoring Checklist is used for Reaching the Unreached (RTU) nurseries. The Pre-School Quality Assessment (PQA), which is adapted from the High scope-preschool programme, is also used. The regulatory framework (inspection and licensing) has proven to improve performance at all levels.

199. All centres are required to meet certain standards such as the proper ratio of child to caregiver and to provide a safe environment free from abuse.

200. An Early Childhood centre was established in the Industrial Estate to accommodate the needs of the vulnerable women who work at the Industrial Site. The children of these women get first preference to space in the said Centre.

201. Children who attend the Early Childhood centres are allowed to practise their religion in the way they dress, for example, by wearing dreadlocks.

202. To ensure continuity of service and provision of places of safety for children, the government-run centres operate on a year-round basis, closing only for a few weeks in December. Consideration is also made to the financial abilities of the families seeking care for their children at the Centres, and in that regard, fees at the centres are usually minimal, with financial commitment from the government subsidising the cost for parents.

203. The Early Childhood Development Unit boasts several innovative and successful programmes. The Better Parenting Sessions are parenting sessions held annually by the Early Childhood Development Unit and geared towards the parents of the children in the centres. Sessions are held in different centres throughout the island, and the duration of the programme is approximately 14-16 weeks. Sessions regarding child sexual abuse, developmental stages of children, promoting self-esteem in children and communicating with children are just some of the topics that are facilitated at these sessions. Parenting skills are also enhanced through the monthly parent meetings conducted at the centres. Some centres have also established Father's Clubs. The implementation of the Care for Child Development (C4CD) model is designed to improve care practices and play and communication activities offered to children from birth to three (3) years.

204. The Transition to School Programme is a programme designed to facilitate the smooth transition of children from the preschool setting to Kindergarten. Kindergarten teachers in the public schools in St. Kitts and Nevis are brought together in a two-week orientation workshop where they learn:

- Teaching strategies;
- Classroom management strategies;
- Classroom arrangement;
- The use of learning material;
- And other practices at the preschool level which would make the transition to Kindergarten easier and less traumatic for children.

205. The Reaching the Unreached programme is one designed to reach children who are not attending a structured early learning setting. Since compulsory education is not stipulated until age 5, parents who decline preschool options for their children can do so freely and not break the laws of the Federation. The RCWTA programme reaches out to caregivers in the homes and introduces them to:

- Developmentally appropriate toys;
- Training on ways to interact with children;
- Training about child development and child-appropriate milestones, both socially and emotionally and
- Training in any area that would support positive parenting outcomes.

206. The workers travel to these homes with kits that contain all of the material necessary for the training and visit each home about twice per week with a total duration of 2 hours per session.

207. In 2015, ECD officers were trained to use the Effective Early Childhood Health Outreach Stimulation (EECHOS) programme, which was designed to enhance the development of young children. Before the training, a steering committee comprising Ministry officials from education, health and social services met to plan the way forward. Parents were sensitized about the EECHOS Programme and children were selected for participation therein. Activity books and songbooks were designed so that children could be engaged in developmentally-appropriate activities.

208. The programme was beneficial, but there were many constraints and challenges. The population sample for the intervention had to be changed twice as children enrolled in ECD centres. Some parents relocated and discontinued the programme. Other parents found the process too tedious and did not follow through.

209. Children in the Federation have access to Early Childhood facilities and as they are usually enrolled in the centre at an early age, the EECHOS programme was not suitable for them. Moreover, as a result of government subvention policy, poor families can enroll their children in centres at a reduced cost.

210. Although the programme was discontinued, the EECHOS activity and songbooks, as well as assessment instruments, will be implemented in the infant, toddler and RTU nurseries programme.

Vocational & skills training

211. St. Kitts and Nevis is served by various institutions which focus on Vocational Education and Skills training for the youth of the Federation.

212. The Ministry of Education has recognized the need to upgrade the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program in St. Kitts-Nevis, to meet the demands of the local and regional workforce and marketplace. The training will ensure that certified trainees will have the competence to perform at whatever given level of the occupation anywhere in the world. To facilitate this process, the government has secured \$32 million for the TVET Enhancement Project, which is scheduled for implementation within 3 years.

213. The project will involve the following:

- Upgrade of schools;
- Purchase of tools and equipment;
- Upgrade of skills (teachers);
- Training of teachers in literacy and content delivery.

214. All principals and some teachers of specific subject areas were sent overseas (Caribbean islands) to observe how training sessions for the Caribbean Vocational Qualifications (CVQ) are conducted. On their return, they are expected to facilitate the training or retraining of their colleagues.

215. The TVET program is expected to train the literate and the semi-literate so that they acquire and demonstrate the specific knowledge, skills and attitudes to be certified with a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ). This will enable students who enroll in the program to access quality training, irrespective of their academic ability.

216. The Non-Formal Skills Training Programme, formerly the Youth Skills Programme, caters for young people from the age of 16 years who have exited the traditional education system. This programme exposes young people to a combination of hands-on skills training with life skills training. This is done to prepare young people to not only learn a marketable skill on which they can depend for an income but also to equip them with the skills of esteem building and other life lessons.

217. The National Skills Workplace Development Programme offers weekly courses for students of secondary schools and gives a small stipend to provide lunch and transportation. Out-of-school students attend daily training sessions and are also given a stipend.

218. Advanced Vocational Educational Centre (AVEC) is a formal competency-based institution that caters for students of all ages and backgrounds. While imparting theoretical knowledge to students, most of the activities are practical. (70% practical work: 30% theoretical).

219. AVEC allows students who are technically oriented to secure an ability to further their education. Apart from a skills development approach, AVEC ensures that its students have a rounded developmental experience, supporting their skills training with the development of personal ethics like attitude and esteem-building experiences. The students are engaged in the programme for two years and study core subjects and electives. They are also attached to

various worksites to develop skills in the areas of their interest. Students who complete the programme and who are so inclined may further their education and training at the Technical and Vocational Division of the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College or may decide to proceed to the world of work.

220. There is a high drop-out rate at AVEC, and the main reason given for this is the length of the program. Hence, the goal of the institution is to shorten the program and modularize it, with options for multi-certification.

221. Presently, there is ongoing dialogue with employers to ensure that their needs are incorporated into the programme. If, for example, there is a need for a specific skill-set, AVEC students will be trained in that area. Discussions are also conducted with administrators of the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College (CFBC) to set a clear path of progression visible to the participants.

222. Multi-approaches would be employed so that students who lack foundational skills will receive training to bring them up to the required standard. The aim will be mastery, so students will work at his/her own pace. Hence, instructors will be trained to develop multi-approaches within a single class.

223. AVEC will continue to cater for students from Nevis, but Nevisians will access the training from their island. The new classrooms that would be built will have smart rooms so that persons in Nevis can access information in real-time.

224. Project Strong was established in June 1998 to provide rehabilitation for students who were under-performing in the high schools in the Federation of St. Kitts-Nevis. The institution had four objectives:

- To raise the self-esteem of its teenage trainees;
- To inculcate discipline in their lives;
- To enable them to avoid conflict with the law;
- To equip them and keep employment in the adult world;

225. Project Strong provided a niche for young people at risk of being in trouble with the law, and who had demonstrated learning and behavioural problems in the school system. These persons have been considered high risk for dropping out of school and coming into conflict with the law. Project Strong has proven to be a viable option for re-training and re-focusing on children who may have been unable to excel in traditional systems. Many of these children seem to find acceptance, esteem, and confidence in the environment provided at the institution. Even though this is a privately-run institution which depends on donations and the goodwill of charitable business and persons in the community, the government has communicated its support via its contribution— both actual and anticipated – by providing various concessions, grants and monies to assist with the upkeep and the day-to-day running of the institution.

226. In 2016 Project Strong merged with AVEC, and by September 2022, National Skills will also merge with AVEC to constitute one institution.

227. The Technical, Vocational and Hospitality Divisions of the Clarence Fitzroy Bryant College (CFBC) in St. Kitts serve as an institution of learning for teenagers and young adults who have completed Secondary Education and who are seeking engagement in those areas of study. The CFBC is governed by the Education Act of 2005, and students enrolled at the college enjoy the rights and freedoms of education without discrimination. Students engage in subject areas such as Woodwork, Carpentry, Mechanics and Hotel Management.

228. The Ministry of Education proposed the program of studies for the New Horizons Rehabilitation Centre. This was done to ensure that the residents do not fall behind educationally and that they are engaged in positive learning activities. The emphasis is on addressing the true needs of the residents. This support has led to academic success.

229. The skills offered at the Centre are based on students' interests and the availability of teachers. The staff at National Skills trains residents in Video Editing, Information Technology, Electricity, Life Skills, Food and Beverage and Agro-Processing. Residents also

receive instruction in English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Woodwork, Reading and Principles of Business.

230. The administrators and teachers at the New Horizons focus on the development of character, academic excellence and vocational preparation. The culture of collaboration and engagement at the Centre has fostered a love of learning. Hence, students who wrote the external examination (CXC) in 2016 - 2019 registered a high pass rate. Also, the attention from teachers and staff give them the support necessary to get them back on track and provides educational and vocational training for residents. The academic subjects include English, Mathematics, and Social Studies. Skills training include electricity and carpentry. Counselling services are also provided.

231. In the Federation, the view is that discipline in schools should be administered, whilst bearing in mind that there must be respect for the child's dignity and rights. There is some degree of alternative discipline in schools. However, now that it has been legislated as to who can administer corporal punishment, teachers have generally adopted a hands-off approach to physical discipline. Training has been conducted with teachers on alternative forms of discipline and schools are encouraged to develop discipline plans. School management teams also assist with the management and control of students. The newly established Special Victims Unit within the police force is strengthening its collaboration with schools.

Article 31

Leisure, recreational and cultural activities

232. The Ministry of Sports, Youth and Culture recognize the vital role that youth involvement plays in cultural, recreational and social activities, and how this affects the overall development of young people. As such, the Ministry plans various activities that are designed to stimulate the social and cultural development of young people.

233. The Sports Department facilitates sports camps, tournaments and festivals as a part of their responsibility to young people. Both the Department of Culture and the Department of Youth engage in activities that promote involvement in cultural and recreational activities. There are music, dance and drama programmes in schools and camps in music, folklore, drama and dance are conducted regularly. Children are encouraged to participate in National Carnival and community festivals. There are also playgrounds, football fields and basketball courts for teenagers and young adults in communities.

234. The Department of Youth plans and implements programs to identify areas of need and strengths for children and youth, and also support them in using areas of strength to promote positive change.

235. Youth programmes emphasize the importance of young people conducting themselves responsibly and contributing to their safety. The Department has lived up to its mission which is to provide an inclusive and enabling framework for mainstreaming youth development across all sectors so that young people have access and opportunities to transition into healthy and happy adults and enablers of sustained growth and development in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Article 32

Economic exploitation

236. Sections 4 to 13 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act CAP 18.10 stipulate prohibitions and restrictions in regards to the employment of children and young persons. The legislation also lays down guidelines for the employment of children. The Federation has also ratified ILO Conventions No. 138 and No. 182 which has strengthened the ability of the Ministry of Labour to deal with child employment issues.

237. Children, from the age of 12 years and until they attain the age of 16 years, are allowed to participate in part-time employment, for stipulated hours after school and/or on the weekends.

238. Some of the problems identified in this area are:

- The absence of a central registry or central point of registration for young workers;
- The lack of sufficient personnel in the Department of Labour;
- Lack of liaisons between various departments and business houses.
- The lack of a general youth education programme as it relates to employment, social security and the process;
- The current employment legislation is old and exists in various, separate pieces. However, efforts are currently being made to have an updated and amalgamated Labour Code. The first was completed in June 2018, and a completed version of the Code is expected in December 2019.
- Attention needs to be paid to the development of guidelines for online employment;
- There is too little reporting of instances about the employment of children

Articles 33 and 39

Drug abuse, substance abuse and mental health

239. The office of the National Council on Drug Abuse Prevention is charged with the responsibility of assessing the prevalence of the drug problem in the Federation and recommending interventions to be able to deal with these problems.

240. In 2013, the National Council of Drug Abuse Prevention conducted a National Secondary School Drug Survey of secondary school students in the Federation. Information was collected from students in second, fourth and fifth form, which included the approximate ages of 13 yrs, 15 yrs and 17 yrs respectively. Data was collected from students to establish a basic biographical profile, the student's familiarity with the impact on his/her health as a result of the illicit use of drugs and the details of use by these students.

241. The survey sought to elicit information about cigarettes/tobacco, alcohol, inhalants, marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy and prescription drugs. Survey results indicated that alcohol was the most highly used mood-altering drug, with 66% of the respondents indicating that they had tried alcohol at some time in their lives. According to the data, 42% reported using "any illegal drug", and 24% stated that they tried marijuana at least once.

242. The survey highlighted the tender age onset of initial use of illegal drugs, with indications being that the initiation age for the use of stimulants and cocaine is age 10. The average age at which the respondents first used cigarettes, tranquillizers and inhalants is age 11. The respondents first used alcohol, marijuana and any illicit drug at the age of 12 years. Students indicated that it was relatively easy to obtain marijuana, but a little more difficult for them to obtain crack/cocaine. Also evident in the survey was the fact that students reported that those among them who saw themselves as having behavioural problems also reported higher use of alcohol, marijuana and other illegal substances. This finding suggests that drug prevention education should begin in primary schools.

243. Mental Health and Substance Abuse services are a critical part of any country's development. With the particular emotional and psychological vulnerabilities of youth, they need to be captured in Mental Health and Substance Abuse data collection. This data would allow for informed decisions to be made in policy and programme planning for addressing mental health issues. All of the Community Health Centres on the islands have mental health clinics on particular days during the week, with specially- trained Community Mental Health nurses as well as the Federation's Psychiatrist providing clinical services to those in need. There are no mental health professionals in the Federation who are specifically trained to deal with children and adolescents. Youth with mental health issues are served in the clinic and Joseph N France General hospital (JNF). In situations in which residential psychiatric treatment is necessary, these children are also treated at the Psychiatric wing of the JNF hospital in St. Kitts. This wing also serves adults.

244. In Nevis, the main hospital, the Alexandria Hospital, has no Psychiatric Ward, and young people with mental health issues worthy of hospitalization are housed in the Medical Wing.

245. Community mental health services are centralized in the capitals in both St. Kitts and Nevis. Outpatient clinics are coordinated at the main hospital in St. Kitts, while the Ministry of Health in both islands provide various types of mental health interventions for residents. The Outpatient clinic at the hospital in St. Kitts does not have interventions specially targeted to youth and adolescents, however, these populations are afforded services based on need, just like the mainstream population.

246. Youth seeking mental health intervention are treated in the community mental health system to address mood disorders, anxiety disorders, major depression, conduct and oppositional defiant disorders, and disorders related to substance abuse.

247. To meet the growing needs of the population, a counselling unit was established at the Joseph Nathaniel France (JNF) Hospital in 2005. In-patient referrals are made by doctors on the ward, and out-patient referrals are made by guidance counsellors, parents, family members and friends. Children are referred and treated for conduct disorder, adjustment disorder, depression and, in rare cases, for psychotic disorder.

248. Treatment varies according to the severity of the situation. Services include treatment planning to enhance recovery and resiliency. Some individuals receive counselling only; while for others it is a combination of counselling and psychotherapy. Psychotropic intervention is sometimes necessary but only psychiatrists prescribe medication.

249. Children and their families also have access to mental health treatment and support from school guidance counsellors and counsellors from the National Counselling Unit. School programs and services aim to improve the school environment and broadly promote health as well as academic success.

Gap(s)

250. The Federation lacks the prerequisite specialized personnel to work with service children, adolescents and youths.

Articles 37, 39 and 40 Children deprived of liberty and sentencing of juveniles

251. The age of criminal responsibility in the Federation is 12 years old.³¹ The law states that children in conflict with the law, whose crime is so grave that it requires incarceration or separation from society, cannot be held in adult prisons with other adult prisoners. It is strongly recommended that in cases where children must be incarcerated, that they be held in a juvenile detention centre acceptable for such detention.³²

252. The New Horizons Rehabilitation Centre which opened in December 2013 was constructed to accommodate 20 males and 10 females in a setting that would provide rehabilitative care for youths who had committed criminal offences. Residents receive academic, vocational and technical training, counselling and life skills training. Career development training sessions are conducted and re-integration and family re-unification are promoted.

253. The indicated gaps in this area are:

- The lengthy time that elapses between the alleged incident and court proceedings;
- The need for the establishment of a juvenile and family court that can deal with matters expeditiously;
- The need for more training for persons who have first contact with juvenile offenders and juvenile victims;
- More training for media professionals;
- Community service is not exercised by the Court;

³¹ Section 3 of the Juvenile Act.

³² This is supported by section 12(1)(g) of the Juvenile Act.

- Curfews need to be enforced. They already exist in law;
- Juvenile records should be kept separate and apart from those for adults.

Juvenile matters

254. Juveniles, who find themselves in conflict with the law, are supervised by Probation Officers from the Department of PCPS. Juveniles who have been charged with a crime are given educational instruction while awaiting trial.

255. When sentencing juveniles, the court has a variety of options. It can order the juvenile to receive strokes, to perform community service, or to serve time in a rehabilitation centre. Instead of a sentence, the court can also place the juvenile on probation, including a curfew.³³

256. The Federation notes the concerns expressed relating to juvenile justice and acknowledges that the areas highlighted the need to be remedied.

257. The Child Justice Act, for the most part, has adopted and includes in its provisions key prescriptions consistent with the various U.N Standards referenced by the Committee. The Juvenile Courts Act and The Magistrates Code of Procedure Act both provide legal guidelines. Regrettably, however, judicial officers have not been as effective as the letter and spirit of the law demands.

258. The following highlight some of the major realities in this respect:

(a) While the Juvenile Court Act specifically provides for the composition of the Juvenile Court, Probation Officers are prohibited from attending hearings and are not allowed to carry out relevant functions as prescribed. In addition, Probation Officers have been ordered by the court not to include recommendations in social inquiry reports. The Child Justice Act makes this a legal duty, stating that recommendations shall be included. Accordingly, some magistrates are of the view that the authority of the court is being usurped. Police Officers have been asked to supervise juveniles and provide the court with reports. For the last five years, no juvenile has been placed on probation, given community service, or benefited from any community sentence;

(b) The Juvenile Court Act provides for the frequency of Court sittings, the districts in which sittings shall be held, and that magistrates assigned to each district shall preside over Juvenile Court in those districts. However this is not practiced; juveniles are required to journey from the districts where they reside and travel several miles to a court outside of their district to have matters heard and in some instances, the cases are adjourned repeatedly;

(c) Cases other than those involving juvenile cases are also heard in the same court during the same sitting;

(d) Deprivation of liberty is not used as a last resort and for the shortest possible time. There continues to be several juveniles remanded for lengthy periods, in some cases over a year, awaiting trial, although for the most part not housed within the same confines and compound as convicted seasoned criminals;

(e) Records of juvenile offenders are not extinguished from the files of the criminal record office upon the attainment of the juveniles eighteenth birthday as is required;

(f) The process being used by the juvenile court does not encourage finding root causes of infractions and instituting measures to support redirecting lives but rather emphasizes a search for guilt or innocence, and eventual disposal through punishment.

IX. Conclusion

259. St. Kitts and Nevis has worked assiduously to ensure that matters relating to children receive the utmost attention in the Federation's laws and practices. Great strides have been realized in many areas, particularly as they relate to the issues of:

³³ See Probation of Offenders Act CAP 4.27.

- (a) Identification;
- (b) Access to health care services;
- (c) Early childhood education and access to education in general;
- (d) The ability of teenage mothers to return to school;
- (e) The reactivation of the Probation and Child Welfare Board; and
- (f) Notable work by the PCPS Department in advocacy.

260. Work is continually being done:

- (a) To introduce legislation;
- (b) Improve practices;
- (c) Develop databases with information relating to children, MIS;
- (d) To sensitise the public on issues of child abuse and the impact on society.

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