



Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Initial report submitted by Trinidad and Tobago under article 35 of the Convention, due in 2017^{*}, ^{}**

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** The annexes to the present document may be accessed from the web page of the Committee.



Introduction

1. The Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) on September 27, 2007 and ratified said convention on June 25, 2015. The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and enable the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities (PWDs), and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The UNCRPD emphasizes the critical role that governments play in ensuring that appropriate legislative, administrative, and regulatory arrangements are established for the protection and promotion of the human rights of PWDs.
2. The GoRTT is committed to implementing measures to promote the dignity and full inclusion of PWDs. These measures will be implemented, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, utilizing a holistic and integrated approach to achieve the goals of social inclusion and equality of opportunity for all PWDs.
3. A National Policy on Persons with Disabilities was established in 2005 and has since been revised to reflect the provisions of the UNCRPD. It recognises a human rights framework for addressing disability and the development of a more “inclusive and barrier-free society”, which advocates for and empowers PWDs, and the integration of PWDs into their own communities. This revised Policy will be critical in ensuring that the principles underpinning the UNCRPD are incorporated into policies and programmes impacting PWDs and their families. The UNCRPD is both a human rights instrument and a developmental instrument, which aims to address the social disadvantages experienced by persons with disabilities.
4. In commencement of implementation of the Policy, a series of focused workshops was implemented to sensitize and encourage various stakeholders of their respective critical roles in ensuring the successful implementation of the Policy, and by extension, the UNCRPD. The first workshop of the series was held in June 2006, with several consultations being held over the fiscal period 2008/2009.
5. The fundamental human rights and freedoms of all citizens, adults and children, resident or alien within the jurisdiction of Trinidad and Tobago, are protected under the Constitution. The Constitution expressly declares that the fundamental rights which it sets out exist without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex.
6. An individual whose Constitutional rights are violated or are likely to be violated by any branch of Government, or any servant or agent of the State, may apply to the High Court for redress. The High Court has original jurisdiction in Constitutional matters, with the provision to appeal to the Court of Appeal and further right of appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. In addition to the Constitution, other legislation provides for the protection of human rights.
7. The Judicial Review Act, Chap. 7:08, reviews administrative action and provides a remedy for the violation of human rights if no alternative remedies are available, and if a person’s rights have been violated by a body or authority exercising function in the nature of public law. The High Court must give leave or permission before proceedings are brought under Judicial Review. The High Court can then conduct a review of the decision or conduct of the public authority to determine whether or not the authority acted within its powers and in accordance with the principles of natural justice. The Court can also award damages on an application of Judicial Review, if such damages would have been recoverable in an ordinary action begun by claim form or Constitutional motion.
8. The Ombudsman Act, Chap. 2:52, provides an administrative authority with jurisdiction for investigating alleged infringements of human rights. The Ombudsman investigates complaints made by individuals concerning administrative acts or decisions of Government agencies. The Ombudsman holds office for a period of five years and is appointed by the President acting in consultation with the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition. The Ombudsman may refer matters to the authority competent to take disciplinary action or other proceedings where there is evidence of any breach of duty,

misconduct or criminal offence on the part of any officer or employee of any government department or authority.

9. The Police Complaints Authority, as established by the Police Complaints Authority Act, Chap. 15:05, is an independent body charged with the responsibility to investigate criminal offences involving police officers, police corruption and serious police misconduct. The Authority receives complaints on the conduct of any Police Officer and monitors the investigation of complaints by the Complaints Division. The Complaints Division, set up by the Commissioner of Police and staffed by Police Officers, investigates and resolves bona fide complaints by way of counselling, instituting disciplinary proceedings or by criminal proceedings in Court.

10. GoRTT has ratified several International Human Rights instruments which include, inter alia:

- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD);
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
- Charter of the Organisation of American States;
- The Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women (“Convention of Belem do Para”); and
- Inter-American Convention Against Terrorism.

11. In addition, Trinidad and Tobago is party to several International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions which include:

- Medical Examination of Young Persons (Sea) Convention, 1921 (No. 16);
- Equality of Treatment (Accident Compensation) Convention, 1925 (No. 19); Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29);
- Recruiting of Indigenous Workers Convention, 1936 (No. 50);
- Penal Sanctions (Indigenous Workers) Convention, 1939 (No. 65);
- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81);
- Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87);
- Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97);
- Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98);
- Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100);
- Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105);
- Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111);
- Fishermen’s Competency Certificates Convention, 1966 (No. 125);
- Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138);
- Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144);
- Merchant Shipping (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 147);
- Labour Administration Convention, 1978 (No. 150);
- Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159);
- Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

12. This report provides information on GoRTT's progress with respect to improving the circumstances of PWDs, in accordance with its obligations under the UNCRPD. The status of each initiative implemented is outlined under the relevant Articles of the Convention.

Methodology

13. This Report was prepared in accordance with the general guidance for the preparation of reports as contained in the 2009 guidelines CRPD/C/2/3. The International Law and Human Rights Unit (ILHRU) in the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago is responsible for the drafting of National Human Rights Reports including the National Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The ILHRU adopted a consultative approach, engaging with both Civil Society Organisations and Government Stakeholders. Due to the success of consultations in the preparation of previous successfully submitted National Reports, the ILHRU hosted and attended conferences with individual Government Ministries and Government agencies such as the Ministry of Social Development and the Equal Opportunity Commission as well as independent institutions such as the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities.

Challenges and Constraints

14. In the 2015-2016 National Budget, the Government allocated the highest percentage towards the fight against crime with a view to taking all means necessary to reduce criminal activity and protect the rights of persons to safety and security.

15. During the consultations with Civil Society Organisations, various concerns were raised with respect to the lack of legislation to protect the rights of disabled persons. With the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to oversee the implementation of the UNCRPD, the Government has been developing policy and legislation.

16. As a developing nation, there are capacity constraints, and competing resources prioritized for issues such as poverty and crime.

Prevalence and Types of Disability in Trinidad and Tobago

17. In Trinidad and Tobago accurate figures are not available in the census data as invariably persons with disabilities are undercounted due to the definition used for the term "disability". The National population and Housing Census conducted in 2011 remains the most reliable source of data regarding the magnitude and prevalence of Disability in Trinidad and Tobago. At census 2011, 1,328,019 persons were enumerated in Trinidad and Tobago. Out of this total population approximately 52,243 were persons with disabilities. Out of this total number of persons with disabilities, persons were asked to identify the type of disability.

2011 Population and Housing Census data on individuals with Disabilities

Proportion of Trinidad and Tobago Population with Disabilities

Prevalence of Disability

<i>Persons with Disabilities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Yes	52 243	4.0
No	1 175 447	88.9
Not Stated	94 856	7.2
Total	1 322 546	100.0

Types of Disability

Seeing

<i>Persons with Seeing Disabilities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No	32 703	62.6
Yes	19 540	37.4
Total	52 243	100.0

Hearing

<i>Persons with Hearing Disabilities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No	46 027	88.1
Yes	6 217	11.9
Total	52 243	100.0

Walking

<i>Persons with Walking Disabilities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No	29 869	57.2
Yes	22 374	42.8
Total	52 243	100.0

Speaking

<i>Persons with Walking Disabilities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
No	42 658	81.7
Yes	9 586	18.3
Total	52 243	100.0

Articles 1 to 4

Purpose, Definitions, General Principles and General Obligations

18. The GoRTT is fully committed to promoting, protecting and ensuring the rights of PWDs, and following the ratification of the UNCRPD proposed to finalize the revised National Policy on Persons with Disabilities.

19. As part of its Vision 2030 policy, the Government proposes to further promote the integration of persons with disabilities by facilitating their access to training, education, employment and health. The Ministry of Social development and Family Services (MSD) has the responsibility to ensure that Government Strategy is being implemented to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

20. The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities outlines a comprehensive set of recommendations to facilitate the fulfilment of the economic, social cultural, political and civil rights of persons with disabilities.

21. The Equal Opportunity Act, Chap. 22:03 (EOA) aims to protect against discrimination of PWDs.

22. The term “disability” needs to be redefined to take into account the contents of the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and the UNCRPD.

23. The Disabilities Affairs Unit (DAU) in MSD advocates for the rights, protection and equality of opportunity for PWDs living in Trinidad and Tobago by monitoring and coordinating the implementation of the National Policy of Persons with Disabilities. The DAU is managed by a Director and its core roles and functions are:

- To co-ordinate and monitor implementation of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities;
- To provide technical support and referrals for persons with disabilities, their families and all other persons interested in learning about disabilities;
- To evaluate requests for assistance from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and individuals;
- To network with pertinent NGOs, mass media and international organizations to collect information and increase public awareness of issues pertaining to persons with disabilities.

24. Recommended initiatives to address issues faced by persons with disabilities as stated in the Joint Select Committee on Disability were:

- Awareness and sensitization;
- Building and strengthening the capacity of Special Education Teachers and Sign Language Interpreters;
- Comprehensive review of the legal framework;
- Attitudinal and physical access; and
- Accurate collection of statistics.

Article 5

Equality and Non- Discrimination

25. The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago confers upon all citizens, the right to enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

26. The EOA seeks to address discrimination towards PWDs, but unfortunately does not mandate the provisions or redress for issues specific to the needs of PWDs including creation of an accessible environment or the provision of assistive technologies.

27. A committee was established to review the EOA and recommend amendments to address all forms of inequality and discrimination against PWDs. It is expected that the relevant legislative amendments will be completed in 2018.

28. The objective of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities is to create a social and physical environment favouring accessibility, integration and the full participation of persons with disabilities into every aspect of society. In November 2016, the Policy was revised to make it more reflective of the obligations under the UNCRPD. The revised policy will be finalised by the end of the end of 2018. It was forwarded to organizations of and for PWDs and Government Ministries for their comments.

Article 6

Women with disabilities

29. The Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The legislative and policy measures initiated in favour of women's rights equally apply to women with disabilities.

30. In 2015, Trinidad and Tobago submitted Combined Fourth to Seventh Periodic Reports on CEDAW and was reviewed by the CEDAW Committee in July 2016.

31. The review of the Domestic Violence Act, 1999 was conducted in 2014–2015 with a view to introducing reforms for the greater protection of victims of domestic violence; the construction of 6 new safe house facilities for victims of domestic violence to be completed in 2015; and the implementation of Women City Centres which would provide integrated services for women relating to violence against women, economic autonomy, sexual and reproductive health, community education and child care.¹

32. Several non-governmental vocational centres, which benefit from financial support from the State, assist PWDs to develop skills that will allow them to participate effectively in the labour market. The State offers a wide range of skills development programmes for women, which also cater for women with disabilities.

33. The EOA provides for equal access to opportunities prohibiting discrimination on grounds of the sex; the race; the ethnicity; the origin, including geographical origin; the religion; the marital status; or any disability of that person.

Article 7

Children with Disabilities

34. Trinidad and Tobago ratified CRC in December 1991. The GoRTT is highly committed to protecting and upholding the rights of all children, including children with disabilities and has accepted the recommendation to establish a modern Juvenile Justice System to consolidate the protection of the rights of children. The Judiciary has recognised the need for juvenile justice reform and the importance of engaging in direct initiatives that are rehabilitative and restorative so as to reduce recidivism among young offenders. In this regard, the Judiciary has undertaken a project in collaboration with USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish a Juvenile Court in Trinidad and Tobago.²

35. The project will establish two juvenile and youth courts under the stewardship of trained Judicial Officers who will serve to develop civic responsibility, youth leadership and the use of positive peer pressure to encourage young people accused of committing minor offences to take responsibility for their behaviour in keeping with a more rehabilitative and less punitive approach. The project will develop court-annexed diversion programmes through coordination and referral mechanisms in cooperation with the Children's Authority, other State agencies and non-governmental organisations.³

36. The MSD maintains the mandate for social sector planning, development and monitoring, social research, and social impact and review. With regard to child development, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Gender and Child Affairs, bears the mandate for monitoring the implementation of the CRC, and the National Strategic Plan for Child Development 2012 – 2016, as well as the development of the National Child Policy.

37. The National Strategic Plan for Child Development initiatives were designed to be equally beneficial to all children, without discrimination on any ground. It focuses on four specific areas:

- (i) Screening for children with special conditions to facilitate early detection and treatment.
- (ii) Improved access to specialized services.
- (iii) Provision of opportunities to ensure that differently-abled children are included and finally.
- (iv) Supply of highly trained professionals in specialized fields (e.g. social workers, child psychologists, guidance counsellors, educators, healthcare providers etc.).

¹ CRIN.org. (May 2016). Trinidad and Tobago: Children's Rights References In The Universal Periodic Review, "National Report".

² CRIN Report on Trinidad and Tobago 2014.

³ Ibis 2.

38. The National Child Policy is an overarching child wellbeing policy that includes six (6) sub-policies, guidelines and frameworks, which focus on addressing specific evidence-based gaps in the child development architecture of our nation. One such area is the Framework for the Care and Protection of Children with Disabilities which seeks to ensure that children with disabilities receive all essential services.

39. In attempting to respond more effectively to the needs of children in Trinidad and Tobago, a Package of Children's Legislation was developed. The legislation seeks to ensure that Trinidad and Tobago is complying with its obligations under the CRC. Whilst the Children's Authority, as the guardian of children within our nation, may have a duty to fulfil in the implementation of any legislation relating to children, the mandate and daily operations of the Authority are guided by the following legislation:

- The Children's Authority Act, Chap. 46:10.
- The Children Act, Chap. 46:01.
- The Children's Community Residences, Foster Care and Nurseries Act, Chap. 46:11.
- The Adoption of Children Act, Chap. 46:03.

40. The Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS) partnered with the Children's Authority to establish a Child Protection Unit in 5 of the 9 police geographical divisions.

41. In 2015, the Government announced its achievement of Universal Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). At present, there are 208 operational ECCE Centres across Trinidad and Tobago.

42. Initiatives have been implemented to advance the well-being of children with disabilities:

- Inclusive education projects for children with disabilities in primary schools and early childhood and education centres.
- Financial assistance for special education schools.
- Vision and hearing screening programme for students.
- Training for special education teachers and the supply of teaching aids.
- The Family Court and the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago provide a forum for all children, including children with disabilities, the opportunity to express their views and concerns on issues affecting them in the home, in the community and nationally.
- A Special Child Grant of one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) is paid to parents of children with special needs to assist with the expenses associated with caring for the children.

43. The Child Rights Ambassadors Programme (CRA) is a programme that advocates children rights by educating children on the CRC. The CRA was launched in November 2017 to coincide with Universal Children's Day. In 2018, the CRA will include children with disabilities as ambassadors and children will work on programmes and media campaigns to promote child rights.

Article 8

Awareness-raising

44. The GoRTT continues to promote awareness on the rights of PWDs. The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities takes cognizance of the importance of raising awareness in order to minimize the marginalization and exclusion of PWDs from the social, economic, political and other aspects of society.

45. The Policy states that the Government shall seek to increase the levels of public awareness on the needs, aspirations and capacities of persons with disabilities so as to enhance their acceptance, participation and integration in society. Some of the key areas of

awareness-raising in the policy include: awareness on the different types of disabilities; promoting inclusive societies and equality of opportunities and participation of persons with disabilities in socio-economic spheres; promoting access to education, health and employment of persons with disabilities.

46. The DAU aims to sensitize, inform and educate the public about disability related issues and has continually offered public sensitizations and awareness programmes during the period 2007-2017. The deliverables of this multi-level initiative is the establishment of a networking framework with Government Ministries and Non-Governmental Organizations, offer technical assistance, training, and intervention programmes to build public awareness on PWDs, produce videos and booklets relating to disability, facilitate adequate airing of videos, distribute booklets and visit communities.

47. It is important to elevate national awareness through information dissemination and education. The purpose of the project is advanced by the Disability Affairs Unit. The Unit conducted specific sensitization workshops for recruitment agencies in the private sector to encourage the employment of persons with disabilities. In 2016 the Unit conducted a sensitisation workshop on Appreciating Persons with Disabilities for secondary school students.

48. The Unit coordinates a national celebration of the “International Day of Persons with Disabilities” annually by conducting a disability-week of sensitization activities and invites the NGO community of persons with disabilities to submit project proposals for funding support that focus on inclusion, full participation and equitable opportunity for persons with disabilities.

49. The Tobago House of Assembly has also established a Disability Affairs Unit to promote the rights of PWDs in Tobago. The Unit is responsible for the coordination, developing and implementing of comprehensive programmes for persons with disabilities. A fundamental role of the Unit is to advocate for and on behalf of PWDs.

50. Awareness-raising is also effected through collaboration with civil society organizations providing services and advocating for persons with disabilities, parents groups and other stakeholders.

Article 9

Accessibility

51. The GoRTT amended the Regulations under the Planning and Facilitation of Development Act 2014, to provide for the revision of access codes to which all developers must adhere. These codes were developed by the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards, in collaboration with the community of persons with disabilities and organisations for persons with disabilities.

52. Ramps, mechanical lifts and walkovers at major intersection and highways have been constructed, which facilitates access to the built environment by persons with disabilities.

53. Ramps have been constructed where necessary, and curb cuts have been effected in close proximity to schools, health centres, businesses, groceries, gas stations and police stations.

54. Buzzers and bells have been installed at traffic signals throughout the country to assist the visually impaired.

55. Installation of several public lifts and walkovers at high traffic areas have been installed to provide safe access for users.

56. Parking accommodation has been provided for wheelchair users of Government Offices to facilitate easy access to the services.

Information and Communication

57. Over the past years, the GoRTT upheld a steady commitment to the inclusion of all citizens to access public information and communication. Ministry of Public Administration

and Communications developed a policy which states “Communication materials must reflect the diversity of Trinidad and Tobago in a fair, representative and inclusive manner and must take into account, persons from all cultures and religions and accommodate those with special needs.”

58. Section 2(1)(1) of the Draft Telecommunications (Consumer) (Quality of Service) Regulations, 2015 entitled *The Consumer’s Right of Access* states, “Part II of these Regulations ensures that consumers, including those with disabilities, have a right of access to basic telecommunications services (including directory assistance and free 24-hour access to emergency call service), broadcasting services and subscription broadcasting services... Part IV seeks to ensure a consumer’s right to information and that authorised providers provide to consumers accurate product and service information that is expressed clearly in an acceptable format and font, and displayed and distributed in a manner which would assist them in making a reasonably informed transactional decision.”⁴

59. There are twenty-four (24) public libraries in Trinidad and three (3) public libraries in Tobago. Sixteen (16) of these libraries are equipped with Assistive Technologies for persons with visual impairment.

60. Two new library facilities were opened during 2015 at Couva and Rio Claro. The facilities like others before it are equipped with ramps, accessible toilet facilities, workstations that accommodate wheelchairs and other accessible amenities. Presently, a new library is under construction at Mayaro which will be outfitted with braille labelled elevators, ramps, Job Access with Speech (JAWS) and other accessible features for persons with varying disabilities.

61. NALIS also collaborates with other organizations such as Persons Associated with Visual Impairment to provide training in the use of assistive technologies.

62. YTEPP Limited, through its training expansion initiative, enhanced their Mobile Learning Academy to include persons with disabilities. In April 2015, YTEPP launched its Computer Mobile Training Unit at the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities situated in San Fernando.

63. The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) of the Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs engaged in critical legislative reform to facilitate persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled to access published work through amendments to the Copyright Act, Chap 82:80 in order to incorporate the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled (Marrakesh Treaty).

64. The Marrakesh Treaty is an international copyright treaty administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The main objective of the Treaty is to create mandatory limitations and exceptions for the benefit of persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled. The Treaty was adopted on June 27, 2013, and Trinidad and Tobago signed the Final Act of the Marrakesh Treaty in 2013; the Copyright Act has been amended to incorporate the provisions of the Treaty.

65. The IPO has taken several steps towards implementing the Marrakesh Treaty such as the appointment by WIPO of a consultant who met with stakeholders to collect information regarding incorporation of the Marrakesh Treaty. Stakeholders included: National Library and Information System Authority, Blind Welfare Association of Trinidad and Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago Reprographic Rights Organisation, W R Torres Foundation for the Blind and National Centre for Persons with Disabilities as well as the Ministry of the People and Social Development Disability Affairs Unit, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training, Ministry of the Arts & Multiculturalism and National Archives.

66. Key provisions in the Marrakesh Treaty were discussed in depth inclusive of the terms “authorized entity,” “accessible format copy,” “beneficiary person” and “technical means of

⁴ Telecommunications Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. Draft Telecommunications (Consumer) (Quality of Service) Regulations.

protection.” Arising out of the consultations, the Consultant drafted amendments to the Copyright Act to incorporate the Marrakesh Treaty in consultation with the Office of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel (CPC), who has been extensively involved in this process. This was reviewed by WIPO to ensure compliance with the provisions of the Treaty. The copyright amendment legislation was approved by WIPO’s Copyright Law Division.

67. The guidance of the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) was obtained in the drafting process. The Consultant and the CPC finalized the draft amendments. Arising out these efforts are the finalized amendments to the Copyright Act of Trinidad and Tobago to incorporate the Marrakesh Treaty.

68. The IPO has worked on drafting a policy for the incorporation of the Marrakesh Treaty into national copyright legislation. The policy document for the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty from the United States Patent and Trademark Office provided progressive justification for implementation of the Treaty in Trinidad and Tobago.

69. The Marrakesh Treaty entered into force internationally in September, 2016 so Trinidad and Tobago, in many ways, is expeditiously progressing with the worldwide process to enact this Treaty into domestic copyright legislation.

Transportation

70. The Elderly and Differently-Abled Mobile (ELDAMO) Service was launched on October 21, 2012 and is equipped with a rear-loaded wheelchair hydraulic ramp, wheelchair restraint systems and passenger chair restraint systems. The service was designed and developed through the collaboration of primary stakeholders such as government agencies and NGO’s such as the Rotary Club. In order to utilize the service, clients are required to call-in to create a booking at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance or “Dial-a-Ride” via the free hotline number ‘800-7433’ or to other designated regional depot Public Transportation Service Corporation (PTSC) locations to make transportation arrangements. There are twenty-four (24) buses and, each has a capacity of 8 seats and 3 wheelchairs. The PTSC “Dial a ride” service is available from 4:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

71. The Public Transport Service Corporation (PTSC) continued to operate its special allocation of buses specifically operated for the transport of disabled persons, under the “ELDAMO” service. Since its inception, the ELDAMO service has conducted 98,285 client trips. There are 810 regular users of the service, 340 of whom are users of wheelchairs and 213 are elderly persons.

Legislation

72. The Government proposes to amend the Planning and Development Act 2014. When the amendments are fully proclaimed, it would allow for the establishment of a National Planning Authority which is a multi-stakeholder standing whose priority focus would be the implementation of accessible and operational Building Facility Codes.

73. The functions of the National Planning Authority include inter alia to;

- Prepare and keep under review a spatial development strategy for Trinidad and Tobago (hereinafter referred to as “the National Spatial Development Strategy”) for the purpose of section 18(1) of the Act;
- Develop regulations, standards and practices for building, engineering operations, and land development and submit them for the approval to the Minister;
- Monitor and oversee the preparation of development plans by planning authorities to ensure consistency with the National Spatial Development Strategy; and
- Ensure compliance of all development with the requirements of the National Spatial Development Strategy, the regulations, standards and practices.

74. The EOA Sections 5 and 6 deal with discrimination:

“For the purposes of this Act, a discriminator discriminates against an aggrieved person on the ground of a disability where—

(a) the discriminator does not make, or proposes not to make, reasonable adjustments for the person; and

(b) the failure to make the reasonable adjustments has, or would have, the effect that the aggrieved person is, because of the disability, treated less favourably than a person without the disability would be treated, in circumstances that are not materially different.”

Article 10

Right to Life

75. The Constitution of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, under “Rights Enshrined” states, “It is hereby recognised and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist, without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms, namely:

(a) the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law...”

76. The Constitution also declares that “...without prejudice to subsection (1), but subject to this Chapter and to section 54, Parliament may not—

(a) Authorise or effect the arbitrary detention, imprisonment or exile of any person;

(b) Impose or authorise the imposition of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment;

(c) Deprive a person who has been arrested or detained —

(i) Of the right to be informed promptly and with sufficient particularity of the reason for his arrest or detention;

(ii) Of the right to retain and instruct without delay a legal adviser of his own choice and to hold communication with him;

(iii) Of the right to be brought promptly before an appropriate judicial authority;

(iv) Of the remedy by way of habeas corpus for the determination of the validity of his detention and for his release if the detention is not lawful...”

77. The Offence Against the Person Act stipulates the illegality of abortions and attempts to procure abortions. The Act states, “Every woman, being with child, who with intent to procure her own miscarriage, shall unlawfully administer to herself any poison or other noxious thing, or shall unlawfully use any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent; and whosoever, with intent to procure the miscarriage of any woman, whether she be or be not with child, shall unlawfully administer to her, or cause to be taken by her, any poison or other noxious thing, or shall unlawfully use any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent, shall be guilty of felony, and, being convicted thereof, shall be liable to be imprisoned for life, with or without hard labour.”⁵

Article 11

Situation of risk and humanitarian emergencies

78. In an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of persons with disabilities, in the event of emergencies, preparation of a National Register of Persons with Disabilities was initiated. The Register would capture critical information on PWDs, including their location/address, age, type and severity of disability, among other information. This would facilitate a level of response that is as seamless as possible in the event of emergencies.

79. The GoRTT is committed towards its citizens and its obligations under international Human Rights to the creation of an environment of safety and protection which applies to all

⁵ Ibid 1.

citizens, inclusive of persons with disabilities. The International Human Rights Instruments are as follows:

- Geneva Conventions, 1949 (Ratification/Accession:24.09.1963).
- Additional Protocol (I) to the Geneva Conventions, 1977 (Ratification/Accession:20.07.2001/Declaration Article 90: 20.07.2001).
- Additional Protocol (II) to the Geneva Conventions, 1977 (Ratification/Accession:20.07.2001).
- Convention on the Prohibition of Biological Weapons, 1972 (Ratification/Accession:19.07.2007).
- Convention prohibiting Chemical Weapons, 1993 (Ratification/Accession:24.06.1997).
- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 (Ratification/Accession:05.12.1991).
- Convention on Cluster Munitions, 2008 (Ratification/Accession:21.09.2011).
- Geneva Protocol on Asphyxiating or Poisonous Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods, 1925 (Ratification/Accession:31.08.1962).
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, 1948 (Ratification/Accession:13.12.2002).

80. Currently the primary piece of legislation governing disaster management in Trinidad and Tobago is the Disasters Measures Act Chap. 16:50 (Act 47 of 1978). This piece of legislation addresses the following:

- Compensation to those who receive damages or loss in relation to activities carried out under the act.
- Liability of persons acting in accordance with the Act.
- The authority and powers given to those responsible or appointed to act in response to a disaster.
- The Presidential proclamation of a disaster area.

81. The Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service (TTFS) and the Water and Sewage Authority (WASA) have legislation that governs their daily responsibilities. However embedded in their legislation are stipulations that distinctly align them with the management of major hazard impacts. It is useful to note that although specific reference is not made to hazards, emergencies or disasters, these elements are implied. Therefore the existing regulatory framework for disaster management is spread far and wide throughout Trinidad and Tobago's pool of legislation.

82. The Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM) was officially established by Cabinet in 2005 and provides information about different types of natural and man-made disasters, including hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, tropical cyclones, storm surges and tsunamis, forest fires and chemical emergencies. The Office publishes emergency plans to increase a family's and community's level of disaster preparedness and emergency guides. There is also the Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) in Tobago which functions in a similar way.

83. The establishment of the register of persons with Disabilities would ensure the identification and location of Persons with disabilities in the country so that assistance during national disasters would be obtained.

Article 12

Equal recognition before the law

84. Section 4 of The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago confers upon its citizens, including persons with disabilities, the right to enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

85. A committee was established to review the EOA and to make recommendations on the necessary amendments to the Act to address all forms of inequality and discrimination against persons with disabilities.

86. Civil Proceedings Rules (CPR) -The CPR allow for a person who is disabled, in particular the mentally disabled, to have legal capacity through a 'next friend'. A 'next friend' provides representation in a Court of Law to a person who may be otherwise incapable as in accordance with the CPR and the Mental Health Act (Chap. 28:02).

Article 13

Access to justice

87. The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago confers upon its citizens, including persons with disabilities, the right to enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

88. In the area of access to justice, there is ongoing improvement within the judicial system in its accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Article 14

Liberty and security of the person

89. Section 4 of the Constitution specifically protects the right to liberty and security of the person.

Article 15

Freedom from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

90. Section 5(2)(b) of the Constitution specifically protects against the cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

91. T&T is a party to the ICCPR Convention which prohibits torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Offences Against the Person Act also enforces and creates penalties for all kinds of offences including various kinds of assault, homicide and any unlawful acts that cause bodily harm.

Article 16

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse

92. Section 12 of the Sexual Offences Act protects the right to freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse. No proceedings for an offence under this section shall be instituted except by or with the consent of the Director of Public Prosecutions who shall have regard inter alia as to whether or not any abuse in relation to the mentally subnormal person has been committed.

93. There has been increased sensitization on the Domestic Violence Act Chap. 45:56, relating to Protection Orders, penalties, fines and possible imprisonment for the breach of the Protection Order.

National Domestic Violence Unit

94. Measures to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women are being implemented. One such measure is the National Domestic Violence Unit. The Unit raises awareness about domestic violence, and oversees the National Domestic Violence hotline (800-SAVE). This 24/7 toll free service provides counseling; initial contact with police; referral to a shelter; advice and support.

Central Registry on Domestic Violence (CRDV)

95. The CRDV was launched in 2016 and is a central repository of data on domestic violence collected by government agencies and civil society organizations. As of 2018, there are 9 agencies providing data into CRDV.

Training and public education

96. The Gender and Child Affairs Division conducted training (ongoing) and public education to reduce the incidence of gender based violence. A large volume of publications were produced and distributed aimed at public information and sensitization. The Procedural Manual for Police Officers on Domestic Violence was adopted and is being utilized.

Shelters

97. Shelters in Trinidad and Tobago are managed by Non-Governmental Organisations with the aid of Government subventions. There are currently twelve Shelters in Trinidad and one in Tobago. The TTPS manages one transitional shelter that provides short term accommodations for victims of gender violence before transition to other Shelters.

Legal Services

98. Victims/survivors of gender based violence can access legal services through the Legal Aid Department, and the Ombudsman. The services of the Ombudsman are made available in rural communities on specific days of the month.

Media

99. The Ministry of National Security has embarked on an ongoing newspaper, radio and television advertising campaign. Increased media attention to domestic violence resulted in a clear shift in public opinion from views of the past, which considered domestic violence in the home as a private matter.

The Family Court

100. The Family Court initiative, which was piloted in 2003 and institutionalized over the reporting period, provides avenues for access by victims of domestic violence to mediation and trained personnel to assist them in access to remedies for domestic violence.

Article 17

Protecting the integrity of the person

101. Section 4 of the Constitution protects the integrity of the person.

Article 18

Liberty of movement and nationality

102. The Constitution uses the language “every person” or “any person” in relation to acquisition of citizenship and does not discriminate by reason of disability.

103. The Citizenship of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago Act, Chap. 1:50 does not make any distinction of persons in relation to disability.

104. Under the Immigration Act, Chap. 18:01 a person who has a disability is free to enter into his own country (as a citizen or resident of T&T), but a person who has a disability (not a citizen or resident) may be hindered through immigration proceedings.

Ministry of the Attorney General and Legal Affairs initiatives

Online Application for Birth Certificates

105. This is to facilitate Birth Certificate applications through the internet thereby removing the need for applicants to go physically to the Registrar General's Department or other authorized sites such as Consulates and Foreign Missions in order to apply for Birth certificates. This project was implemented in 2010 and is ongoing.

E-Registration of Births at General Hospitals

106. This facilitates registration with the Registrar General's Department of infants immediately after hospital births and to also ensure a faster transfer of more accurate information to the Registrar General's Department thereby removing the need for parents and other informers to go physically to the Registrar General's Department to register new births. This project has been implemented in all major hospitals and the e-registration of births service is expected to be expanded to other venues inclusive of the district registrars in Trinidad and Tobago.

Improving Existing Birth Certificate Application Processes at Trinidad and Tobago's Consulates and Foreign Missions

107. This is to allow for T&T nationals living abroad to go to T&T consulates and foreign missions and apply for and receive computer generated Birth Certificates thereby eliminating the need to travel to, or authorize through a duly notarized letter of authorization someone living in, T&T to obtain their computer generated Birth Certificates. The first phase of this project has been implemented with a pilot at the T&T embassy in London, United Kingdom.

Births and Deaths Registration (Amendment) Act 2013

108. This is to modernize the process of issuing computer generated birth and death certificates by the Registrar General's Department.

Free Birth Certificates

109. The Ministry of Legal Affairs has also introduced free birth certificates for children. This promotes the child's right to a name and identity, which is in conformity with Article 7 of the Convention. It is envisioned that this measure would encourage increased school enrolment.

Article 19

Living independently and living in the community

110. There is no legal restriction in relation to persons with disabilities in this regard.

111. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Development has applied improved designs to its housing units to accommodate persons with disabilities.

112. The National Housing Allocation Policy states that 5% of the homes constructed through the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) are to be allocated to senior citizens and physically challenged persons.

Article 20

Personal mobility

113. In order to facilitate the mobility of persons with disabilities the Government has implemented the following measures:

- Prosthetic programme was introduced which provides grants to a maximum of forty thousand dollars (\$40, 000.00) for the purchase of prosthetic devices.
- Financial assistance in the amount of seven thousand, five hundred dollars (\$7,500.00) is provided to persons in need for the purchase of assistive equipment and devices to improve mobility/access and is also available to those that meet the eligibility criteria.
- Further aspects relating to personal mobility and the greater integration of persons with disabilities are covered in the comments on Accessibility under Article 9 of the document.

Article 21

Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information

114. The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago (as stated in Article 19) provides protection of Freedom of expression. It applies to all citizens including persons with disabilities.

115. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services is working on an action plan to promote sign language. The first phase has been completed with the launching of the Dictionary of Sign Language and the second phase would be conduct of sign language classes to all staff of the Ministry. Measures have been taken to urge private entities and mass media to provide their information and services in accessible formats.

116. Television broadcasting companies are encouraged to use sign language in their news programming.

117. At educational institutions, from primary to tertiary level, the technology is available for students to use the computer and to access the internet. Civil society organisations are also supported to provide access to ICT for the persons with disabilities for whom they provide services.

Article 22

Respect for privacy

118. The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago confers upon its citizens, including persons with disabilities, the right to enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

119. Under the Freedom of Information Act (Chap. 22:02) – every person has the right to access official documents. However, the Act prevents unreasonable disclosure of personal information of “any person” which includes PWDs. However, the definition of “personal information” does not expressly include “disability”, but includes medical history.

Article 23

Respect for home and the family

120. The Constitution Section 4 protects the right of the individual to respect for his private and family life.

121. The Cohabital Relationships Act, the Family Law Act and the Matrimonial Proceedings and Property Act make provisions for a Court to make maintenance orders, or orders relating to custody and other matters. In making those orders, a Court may take into consideration certain factors including whether the parent or the child may be disabled.

122. The Adoption of Children Amendment Act (which is awaiting proclamation) does not stipulate the rights of PWDs to be adoptive parents, nor does it make mention of the rights of children with disabilities. However, it must be noted that under the Act, the Court must be satisfied that best interest of the child will be promoted by the adoption, that consideration is given to the wishes of the child, that the adopted parent(s) is a fit person and sufficiently capable to bring up, maintain and educate the child.

Article 24

Education (Access to education)

123. Education challenges at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels include:⁶

- Lack of Teacher and Student Aides and Sign Language Interpreters;
- Lack of computer software to assist the students;
- Frequent bullying of students within the Secondary school system;
- Lack of awareness and sensitization of teachers, students and the general public;
- Lack of training for teachers to deal with Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) in a regular classroom setting;
- Shortage of Special Education Teachers; and
- Lack of technical assistance for teachers and students within the classroom.

124. Increasing efforts have been made to address the educational needs within the mainstream system. The right of children with disabilities, to access education has also been recognised and is supported by the Special Education Unit of the Student Support Services Division of the Ministry of Education. The role of the Special Education Unit includes:

- Servicing special education needs of students diagnosed with a disability;
- Providing initial diagnostic assessment for students suspected of having a disability or a special education need;
- Providing alternative intervention strategies to teachers;
- Identifying and referring students for specialised assessment and therapeutic services where necessary; and
- Sensitizing regular education teachers to respond to students' identified special education needs.

125. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services continues to provide social services for persons with disabilities such as a free bus service, Disability Assistance Grants, Special Child Grants, Medical Aids and Equipment Grants, as well as dietary, housing and clothing grants.

126. A Personal Assistant training and placement programme has been implemented. This was a collaborative project between the Ministry of Education and the University of the West Indies. The programme provides assisted support in the classroom for students with disabilities.

127. The National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) is a non-governmental agency (NGO) which promotes the full participation of persons with disabilities in society. NCPD is a leading agency in the Caribbean promoting equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities through training, information, research and consultative services. The Centre provides persons with disabilities with quality training and rehabilitative services that enhance their quality of life and promote their integration into the wider community. The Centre provides consultative services to public, corporate and civil society organisations seeking to develop their service offerings, policies and programmes for persons with disabilities.

Article 25

Health

128. Trinidad and Tobago has attained universal access to health care which includes persons with disabilities.

⁶ JSC Report 2016.

129. The Ministry of Health continues to engage in several new initiatives to improve and advance its health care services. One of the most successful programmes of the Ministry of Health in 2014 is the External-Patient Programme which provides services such as MRI, cataract surgery, CT Scans, prosthetics and orthopaedics, knee and hip replacement, dialysis and angiograms.

130. The public health sector has benefited significantly from the commissioning of new health facilities, which would assist in meeting the high demand for health services. These new facilities include the San Fernando Teaching Hospital which was commissioned in January 2014 and caters to maternal and child health among various other services. The Carenage Health Centre, a primary healthcare facility which will serve the needs of approximately 50,000 people in the north-western peninsula of Trinidad was opened in August 2015 and includes services such as dental, Point of Care testing, pharmaceutical and wellness.

131. PWDs benefit from free prescription drugs under the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (C-DAP).

132. Family planning services are provided for all PWDs at health facilities.

Article 26

Habilitation and Rehabilitation

133. The Health Sector aims to provide support to persons with disabilities, through its health care providers and the early rehabilitation of persons, as well as specific rehabilitation and outpatient treatments.

134. Annual subventions and other transfers are provided to civil society organisations providing services for PWDs. Approximately TT\$80 million of such funding is provided to organisations annually.

135. Construction was completed of a facility for the establishment of a National Development Centre for Persons with Disabilities to provide a range of therapeutic and rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities.

Article 27

Work and employment

136. The EOA affords protection from discrimination in the sphere of work and employment to persons with disabilities, specifically in section 4.

137. A National Employment Service was established to integrate PWDs into the labour market, including a pilot placement programme for visually impaired persons.

138. The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development is working assiduously to ensure that programmes are implemented to serve persons with disabilities in the areas of training, retaining and job placement.

139. In addition, awareness programmes have been carried out by both Ministries to change the attitudes of employers towards persons with disabilities.

140. The government sponsors two programmes that facilitate participation by PWDs:

The Multi-Sector Skills Training Programme (MuST)

141. This targets PWDs, former inmates of prison facilities, or displaced/retrained workers. This programme provides training in construction, hospitality and tourism for eligible citizens of Trinidad and Tobago. Trainees are placed with crews at construction sites or with staff at hospitality and tourism establishments. Participants also receive instruction in literacy and numeracy skills. At the end of the programme, participants are offered permanent employment based on work performance and the existence of vacancies.

The Re-Training Programme

142. This programme allows for the participation of PWDs and provides in addition to vocational training, participants attend life skills seminars and partake in literacy training. At the end of the programme, trainees are placed in internships in the public or private sector.

Civil Society

143. Civil Society also plays a major role in working with persons with disabilities to develop skills to equip them for the working environment. There are approximately 20 non-governmental organizations that provide services and programmes for persons with disabilities. There is also opportunity for job placement in the private and public sector according to capability and needs.

The Lady Hochoy Vocational centre

144. The centre has partnered with the Ministry of Tertiary Education and Skills Training to provide its trainees with an opportunity to be a part of the On the Job Training Programme (OJTP). Trainees have a “two year training” in vocational skills and receive certification as being trained within the programme. The certification is nationally recognized.

145. At the National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) programmes are certified by the National Training Agency (NTA) and the National Examination Council (NEC) of Trinidad and Tobago. Trainees can acquire the Trinidad and Tobago National Vocational Qualification (TTNVQ) at the NTA level and the Technical Vocational Education Training Certificate of Performance at the NEC level.

146. The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development operates a National Employment Service (NES) to integrate persons with disabilities into the labour market including a pilot job placement programme for visually impaired persons in the public and private sectors. The National Employment Service also provided funding assistance to an NGO, the Torres Foundation for CareerTech Assistive Technology and Employment Seminar in 2009. This seminar was aimed at breaking down barriers and opening up opportunities for people who are visually impaired through technology and innovative programming.

147. Employment for parents of children with cerebral palsy -The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services implemented a programme to provide employment for parents of children with cerebral palsy which also allows them to be caregivers to their children.

Labour Market Integration of Persons with Disabilities

148. The National Employment Service hosted several seminars for Human Resource Officers on the “Integration of Persons with Disabilities in the Workforce”. The seminars were geared towards raising the awareness of Human Resource Officers to issues pertinent to the employment of persons with disabilities. The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprise Development also promoted the employment of persons with disabilities through a series of television advertisements.

Occupational Safety and Health Agency

149. The Occupational Safety and Health Agency was established in the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise Development to ensure the safety of all persons including persons with disabilities in the workplace.

Article 28**Adequate standard of living and social protection**

150. The Government has put in place several social protection programmes for the marginalized and vulnerable citizens, which apply equally to persons with disabilities:

151. The annual income qualifying ceiling for qualification of the Disability Assistance Grant was increased from three thousand, six hundred dollars (\$3,600.00) to twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000.00). This measure allowed for an increase in the amount of persons with disabilities who would be eligible for the grant. The grant of TT\$1800.00 monthly is paid to persons with disabilities 18-64 years of age, whose disability prevents them from earning an income. Approximately 24,000 persons receive the Disability Assistance Grant.

152. Cash Transfers are provided to PWDs as a priority, to assist in the purchase food items.

153. The Ministry of Social Development Grants and Service offers various grants to the citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, these range from disability assistance, public assistance, senior citizen's pensions, disaster relief, food cards, minor house repair, sanitary plumbing, electrical house wiring and general assistance (clothing, pharmaceutical, household items, school supplies, rental assistance, funeral assistance, education grant, domestic help and dietary grant).

154. Microbusiness grant funding is provided poor and vulnerable individuals, up to a maximum of TT\$15,000.00, including PWDs, to establish Micro Enterprises or to improve their skills to enhance employability.

155. The Geriatric In-Home Care provides access to in-home care for elderly persons residing in Tobago who either live alone or are alone during the day. This service may be requested by elderly persons or their relatives.

156. The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services continues to provide for the elderly by way of the Retiree Adolescent Partnership Programme and the Geriatric Adolescent Partnership Programme.

Article 29

Participation in political and public life

157. The Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago confers upon its citizens, including persons with disabilities, the right to enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

158. The Constitution protects the rights of all citizens, including those persons with disabilities, to participate in political life in as much as it guarantees the rights to vote at election's subject to limitations provided in Law.

159. The preamble of the constitution describes T&T as a democratic society in which all persons may, to the extent of their capacity, play some part in the institutions of the national life and thus develop and maintain due respect for lawfully constituted authority.

160. The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities takes cognizance of the importance of raising awareness to minimize marginalization and exclusion of persons with disabilities from the social, economic, political and other aspects of the society.

161. Representation of the People Act (Chap. 2:01) Election Rules (Subsidiary Legislation) Section 38 also protects the right to participate in political and public life.

Article 30

Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

162. The Ministry of Community Development, Culture and the Arts has taken positive steps to ensure the participation of persons with disabilities in cultural and recreational activities on an equal basis. A National Sport Policy was developed which encourages all persons, including persons with disabilities to lead healthy lifestyles by including sport as part of regular living routine.

163. Disability Training Programmes for Coaches and Swimming Pool Instructors were implemented.

164. The availability of accessible Sporting and Recreational Programmes, including the conduct of several Regional Sport Festivals for Persons with Disabilities were increased.

165. The Government provides ongoing provision of financial assistance to the Trinidad and Tobago Blind Cricket Association, Special Olympics Organisation of Trinidad and Tobago and Paralympics Organization of Trinidad and Tobago.

166. A number of Stadiums, Indoor Sport Arenas and Community Swimming Pools have been modified to make them more accessible for PWDs.

167. Community Centres throughout the country have been made accessible by equipping them with ramps, handrails, accessible toilets and elevators.

Article 31

Statistics and data collection

168. Questions relevant to the situation with PWDs have been included in the data collection questionnaires of the Population Census and the Survey of Living Conditions.

169. The new Central Statistical Agency aims to provide current and relevant data collection as it relates to the disaggregation of statistics by types of disability, age, sex, school attendance, educational attainment and current activity status.

Article 32

International cooperation

170. There is on-going collaboration with UN agencies on issues related to persons with disabilities. The UNDP is working with the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services on the implementation of the disability register project and the Government of Peru has offered technical co-operation to Trinidad and Tobago for the implementation of a project for persons with disabilities in the area of Accessibility to Information and Communication with specific reference to Public Libraries.

Article 33

National implementation and monitoring

171. An Inter-Ministerial Committee to Promote, Protect and Monitor the Implementation of the UNCRPD, was established. All Ministries represented on the Committee are required to report on a quarterly basis on initiatives implemented in fulfilment of the requirements of the Convention.
