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PERIODIC REPORTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Reports on economic, social and cultural rights,
for the period 1 July 1969-30 June 1973, received
from Governments under Economic and Social Council
resolution 1074 C (XXXIX)

NETHERLANDS ANTILLES

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Periodic Reports on Human Rights

(1 July 1969 - 30 June 1973)

Realization of social, economic and cultural rights.

C. The right to an adequate standard of living.

1. The results of various scientific researches which have been carried out in recent years show that the standard of nutrition is generally speaking high.

5. Curaçao's largest industry, the oil industry, has been making determined and successful efforts in recent years to reduce harmful air pollution in residential districts on the island to a minimum according to international standards. There is a simple monitoring system in those parts of Curaçao which are affected by the fumes from the oil industry. Great efforts are also being made to restore the biological balance in the port waters of Curaçao.

It should also be noted that the Council for Environmental Hygiene which was recently set up on private initiative, held a scientific congress in Curaçao in 1973 on environmental pollution and the measures which might be taken to combat it. Determined efforts are being made by the Council to make the public more environment conscious.

D. The right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

1. The stillbirth and infant mortality rates in the Netherlands Antilles are the lowest in the whole of the Caribbean and South American area and are more or less comparable to those in Western Europe.

2. For the answer to this see question C.5.

3. Although the Netherlands Antilles are situated in tropical latitudes, the incidence of epidemics or endemics of infectious or tropical diseases is very low. The percentage of the population who have been vaccinated against diseases which can be prevented by vaccination, is very high. The control of tuberculosis has meant that in the period under review only sporadic cases, and all of them imported have been recorded. On five of the six islands a campaign to eradicate the yellow-fever mosquito, is in progress, in co-operation with the World and Pan-American Health Organizations; as a result the index on four of the islands has already fallen to below the level at which there is a risk of epidemics. One of the islands is already mosquito-free.

4. To meet the needs of those members of the population who do not have the right to receive medical attention under an insurance or similar scheme there is a national scheme, under which people with low incomes are entitled to free medical treatment, having the right to make use of the complete range of health services.

III. F. The right to education

Every child who reaches the age of six by 1 September during a given school year is entitled to begin his primary education. No fees are charged in primary schools. The parents of children at most primary schools, however, pay the school a small annual contribution towards expenses and accident insurance, but parents who are unable to pay are exempted.

Every child, depending on his intellectual ability, has an equal right to secondary education on completion of the primary school course. Technical, vocational and grammar-type secondary schools are available for this purpose.

Except for primary schooling, which is practically the same for all children, parents are free to choose the type of schooling they feel is best for their children. They are also at liberty to send their children, as regards both their primary and secondary education, to either a State school or private school receiving a State grant.

During the period under review two draft Ordinances governing primary and secondary education were submitted to the Netherlands Antilles Parliament. The aim of the new legislation is to introduce new rules and regulations which are more suited to modern views on education than the old legislation. A further draft Ordinance submitted to Parliament aims at making it possible for students to take a complete course of legal studies at the University of the Netherlands Antilles, which has also a Faculty of Business Studies.

In order to reduce the dependence on vocational teachers who have been trained abroad, facilities for training vocational teachers in the Netherlands Antilles themselves have been expanded during the period under review.

During 1974 similar provision will be made with regard to secondary education.