**Annex VIII**

**MEASURES TAKEN TO IMPROVE THE SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS SECTOR**

A number of measures have been taken by the Government to improve the Special Education Needs sector. They are as follows:

1. *Grant-in-Aid*

All NGOs running SEN schools registered with the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technologyare allocated a Grant-in-Aid (GIA) as financial support to carry out their educational activities. There are at present 53 NGOs running SEN Schools. The GIA caters for the salaries of the manager, teachers, assistant teachers, carers, a handy worker and a driver and specialised support services (Psychologists, Occupational Therapists and Speech Therapists). It also provides a per capita grant and other items such as teaching aids and utilities, and furniture and equipment.

1. *Outreach Exercise*

The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology initiated an outreach exercise for the registration of SEN children with effect from 2010. In the first year only 6 children were registered. Over the years, the number of children has kept on increasing and for 2019, it stood at 80. As far as possible, children with disabilities are encouraged to join the mainstream schools for inclusive education.

1. *Integrated Units*

With a view to further promoting inclusive education, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology has set up 11 Integrated Units (IU) in mainstream primary schools around the island with a view to reaching out to SEN children who usually have to travel long distances to go to SEN schools.

1. *SEN Resource & Development Centres (SENRDCs)*

The SENRDCs operate as a One-Stop-Shop to provide specialised services, such as those of psychologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists to learners with special needs. All these SENRDCs have at least two classrooms for learners with severe disabilities. The SENRDCs have specialised equipment including equipment for Multi-Sensory rooms, as well as specialised furniture. Seven SENRDCs are operational around the island and seven vans are presently servicing the Centres for the conveyance of children attending the Centres and for therapy purposes.

1. *Barrier-Free Access*

In a bid to provide a barrier-free access to education for students with disabilities, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology has in recent years taken a series of measures, which are outlined below:

1. schools are being retrofitted with ramps to facilitate access to the classrooms;
2. for the years 2017/2018 and 2018/2019, 32 schools have been made disability-friendly;
3. all new secondary schools have been equipped with adapted toilets for the disabled;
4. covered links between building blocks have been made to facilitate access to specialised rooms for children in wheelchairs;
5. facilities like music room, library, science laboratory, computer room are available on the ground floor where necessary. In primary schools, head masters usually make arrangements to move the whole class to the ground floor wherever necessary;
6. students with disabilities are released earlier than other students as a matter of convenience;
7. carers have been provided in mainstream primary and secondary schools to help students with special education needs.
8. the same facilities are available in private grant-aided secondary schools to enable children with disabilities to move around the school compound and participate actively in academic activities; and
9. as from the year 2016/2017, five students with special education needs are offered each year a scholarship to pursue Post-Secondary/Tertiary courses. They are also benefitting from a stipend of Rs 5,000(USD 125) monthly.

The following table shows the details of the scholarships awarded from academic year 2016/2017 to 2019/2020:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic Year** | **Number of Awardees** | **On-going** | **Completed** |
| 2016/2017 | 5(3 boys and 2 girls) | 1 | 4 |
| 2017/2018 | 2(1 boy and 1 girl) | - | 2 |
| 2018/2019 | 4(1 boy and 3 girls) | 4 | - |
| 2020/2021 | 4(1 boy and 3 girls) | 4 | - |

1. *Inclusion of SEN children in schools*

The Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology has taken additional measures to promote inclusive primary and secondary education to students with disabilities:

1. educators are encouraged to provide extra assistance to children with disabilities so as to allow them to keep pace with their classmates;
2. children with disabilities benefit from extra time for the Primary School Achievement Certificate (Grade 6) examination;
3. children with hearing impairment are provided with specialised Teacher/Interpreters in the mainstream secondary schools with the active collaboration of NGOs and for the purpose of examinations;
4. enlarged print school books / manuals and question papers are provided to children with visual impairment; and
5. presence of carers in the assessment room to assist learners with special education needs.
6. *Norms and standards*

In order to ensure the quality of education in SEN schools, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology came forward with norms and standards including human resource and infrastructural requirements for NGOs running SEN Schools. These norms and standards have been worked out in close collaboration with these NGOs. The implementation of the norms and standards is in progress.

1. *Curriculum Development and Activity Books*

A Curriculum Framework for the SEN sector has been prepared by the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE) with effect from 2014. The new Curriculum has been adapted to cater for children with hearing, visual, and intellectual impairments, as well as those suffering from Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It is complemented with activity books, a teachers’ guide, and pedagogical toys.