



**Convention on the Rights
of Persons with Disabilities**

Distr.: General
27 November 2017

Original: English
English, Russian and Spanish only

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of Mauritius

Addendum

**Information received from Mauritius on follow-up to the
concluding observations***

[Date received: 4 September 2016]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



Background

1. Mauritius signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in September 2007 and ratified it in January 2010. Subsequently, in line with Article 35, it submitted its Initial Report in 2012 on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
2. A delegation comprising the Hon. Minister, the then Permanent Secretary, the former Head of the Disability Empowerment Unit of this Ministry and an Acting Parliamentary Counsel of the Attorney General's Office participated in the 14th Session of the Committee on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities held in Geneva from 24 to 25 August 2015, wherein Mauritius defended its Initial Report.
3. On 4 September 2015, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities submitted its concluding observations in relation to the initial report of Mauritius. In its final recommendations, the Committee requested ***“that the State party, within 12 months and in accordance with article 35, paragraph 2, of the Convention, provide information on the measures taken to implement the Committee’s recommendation as set out above in paragraph 8 and 42, which concerns the withdrawal of the State party’s reservations, the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention and the Marrakesh treaty.”***

Steering Committee

4. Government was informed of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee in September 2015 and it agreed to the setting up of a Steering Committee comprising the relevant Ministries and Disability Activists to look into the timely implementation of the various recommendations made by the UN Committee with regard to the CRPD under the Chairpersonship of the Minister of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reform Institutions.
5. A first meeting of the Steering Committee was held on 28 March 2016, during which it was decided that Sub-Committees be set up and be given specific terms of reference to look into the recommendations of the UN Committee. Five thematic Sub-Committees were subsequently set up and met under the Chairmanship of the former Head of the Disability Empowerment Unit in May and June 2016. The focal themes of the different Sub-Committees, and the dates on which they met were as follows:-
 - (a) Sub-Committee on Inclusive Education, 10 May 2016;
 - (b) Sub-Committee on Employment of Persons with Disabilities, 13 May 2016;
 - (c) Sub-Committee on Women and Children with Disabilities, 18 May 2016;
 - (d) Sub-Committee on Accessibility, 26 May 2016;
 - (e) Sub-Committee on Legislations to be amended to reflect the Human Rights approach to Disability, 10 June and 21 June 2016.
6. The Sub-Committees also discussed the recommendations of the UN Committee on paragraphs 8 and 42 of the Concluding Observations, as outlined below.

Paragraph 8 of the Concluding Observations:

7. ***“The Committee recommends that the State party withdraw all its reservations to the Convention and ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention without further delay.”***
8. The reservations to the UNCRPD are on the following:-
 - (a) Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies;
 - (b) Article 9.2(d) on the provision of public signage in buildings and other facilities in Braille and easy-to-read and understandable forms; and

(c) Article 24.2 (b) on the access of persons with disabilities to inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education.

Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies

9. Regarding the **reservation on Article 11 on situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies**, the Sub-Committee has noted that Section 16 (1) (b) of National Risk Reduction Disaster Management Act refers to evacuation of persons at risk and includes persons with disabilities. The Sub-Committee recommended the removal of the reservation. As the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2016 was proclaimed on 1 July 2016, procedures will be initiated for the removal of this Reservation.

Article 9.2 (d) on the provision of public signage in buildings and other facilities in Braille and easy-to-read and understandable forms

10. The Sub-Committee noted that the draft Building Regulations, which have been worked out by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Land Transport, will attend to the issue of accessibility to new buildings and buildings which require major renovations; and has recommended that the **reservation on Article 9.2 (d) be removed once the New Building Regulations are promulgated.**

11. As regards signage in museums, tourism venues, heritage sites and so on, actions will be taken by the Ministry of Arts and Culture to ensure that all tourism venues are equipped with signage.

Article 24.2 (b) on the access of persons with disabilities to inclusive, quality and free primary and secondary education

12. Since 2006, Mauritius has officially adopted a policy of inclusive education and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research has taken a number of measures to gradually allow for the integration of children with disabilities in mainstream education.

13. With the coming in force of the nine-year schooling programme, steps are being initiated at the level of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research for the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education. A dedicated Committee has been set up to look into the issue of inclusive education within the framework of the nine-year schooling program.

14. The Sub-Committee proposed that the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research be officially consulted to determine whether the necessary conditions are gathered for a formal submission to be made to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for the removal of this Reservation.

Ratification of the Optional Protocol

15. The ratification of the Optional Protocol to the UNCRPD will only be considered after all reservations have been removed.

Paragraph 42 of the Concluding Observations:

16. *“The Committee recommends that the State party*

(a) Accede to the Marrakesh treaty as soon as possible;

(b) Ensure accessibility of libraries, audiovisual materials and broadcast services to persons with disabilities;

(c) Ensure that tourism policies and practices are accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities, and disseminate the World Tourism Organization Recommendations on Accessible Tourism for all among travel agents and tourism agencies.”

Accession to the Marrakesh Treaty

17. As regards the Marrakesh Treaty, the Sub-Committee noted that the provisions of the Treaty have been incorporated in Section 23 of the Copyrights Act 2014, which authorises the reproduction of published works in accessible format for the benefit of blind, visually impaired and print disabled. The Sub-Committee has recommended that procedures for the ratification of the Treaty be initiated through the Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Ensure accessibility of libraries, audiovisual materials and broadcast services to persons with disabilities

18. The draft Building Regulations provide for signage in braille on passenger lifts, lobbies, lifting platforms. Provisions have also been made for new buildings to be equipped with visual and audible systems. Action is being taken at the level of this Ministry and the Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation to shift from the broadcast of the news bulletin in sign language from a weekly to a daily basis.

Ensure that tourism policies and practices are accessible to and inclusive of persons with disabilities, and disseminate the World Tourism Organization Recommendations on Accessible Tourism for all among travel agents and tourism agencies

19. Measures are being taken at the level of the Ministry of Tourism in line with the World Tourism Organisations as follows:-

- (a) Training is being provided to staff in the hospitality sector on how to deal with tourists with disabilities; and
- (b) An exercise of categorisation of hotels is also being carried out and one of the criteria being considered is accessibility for persons with disabilities.

Validation of recommendations of Sub-Committees

20. The recommendations of the Sub-Committees were validated during the 2nd meeting of the Steering Committee held on 25 August 2016, chaired by the Hon. Minister, wherein it was decided that the actions proposed by the different Sub-Committees would be referred to the relevant line Ministries and Commissions for specific actions to be initiated at their end for the timely implementation of the recommendations. The Steering Committee is insisting on a time frame to be set by the different organisations concerned to ensure that targets set are met within a pre-determined period, thus allowing for a concrete move to be made for the removal of the reservations which in turn will lead to ratification of the Optional Protocol.
