**Request from the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of person with disabilities**

**Global Environment Facility, Small Grants Programme (GEF SGP)**

**Trinidad and Tobago**

**Questionnaire on the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in decision-making**

1. Please provide information on the legislative and policy framework in place in your country related to the status, establishment, resourcing, and functioning of representative organizations of persons with disabilities at the national, regional and local levels.

Not applicable to Trinidad and Tobago as there is no formalised legislative and policy framework.

2. Please provide information on existing legislation and policies aimed at ensuring that persons with disabilities and their representative organizations, including children with disabilities, are consulted and involved in decision-making processes that directly or indirectly concern them.

On 22 June 2015, T&T ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), committing the country to creating a society respectful of the rights of and fully inclusive towards PWDs. This has been an important catalyst for refocusing national attention on disability issues.

The Disability Affairs Unit of the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services monitors the implementation of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities and is in the process of developing a host of interventions linked to strengthening the political security of PWDs, including preparing a revised/updated National Policy on Persons with Disabilities that is more aligned with the UNCRPD. T&T is also a signatory to the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention (No. 159) and Recommendation (No. 168) but efforts at translating these policies and international commitments into tangible mechanisms that improve the well-being of PWDs, have been inconsistent. Once the policy is updated, new legislation will follow and thus laws to uphold the treaty will be implemented, enforced and monitored.

3. Please provide information on any consultative body or mechanism established to consult and engage with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, including information about their composition, criteria for membership (nomination, appointment, election, etc.) and functioning.

* The Disability Affairs Unit – The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (previously The Ministry of People and Social Development)
* The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprises Development (previously the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise)
* International Labour Organisation (ILO)
* The National Centre for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD)

4. Please provide information on the efforts undertaken at national, regional and/or local levels to strengthen the capacity of representative organizations of persons with disabilities, in order to facilitate their participation in legislative, policy and other decision-making processes.

There is no structured and/or organized programmes in place currently or in the recent past that would have been directed to building or strengthen capacity of representative organizations of persons with disabilities within Trinidad and Tobago. There is only one regional body - Disabled Peoples' International North America and the Caribbean but they seem to have their own challenges that have prevented them from delivering training to their memberships. The Caribbean Council for the Blind (which is more specific) has been conducting sessions on Information Technology (IT) under the heading of capacity building. In 2014, Consortium of Organization of Disabled Persons (CODO) in T&T held a series of leadership workshops to build capacity of persons with disabilities and this was funded by Royal Bank of Canada.

GEF SGP Trinidad and Tobago, has two projects engaging/including persons with disabilities. We also have a Grantee - Asclepius Green, whose project assists capacity building of our CSO Grantees where we facilitate technical and financial workshops which strengthen the organisations’ ability to effectively and accurately report on their projects. The projects are:

* NCPD – National Centre for Persons with Disabilities – “Paper Recycling Project”. The rational for the project is the provision of creative an innovative training opportunity for persons with disabilities which would afford this vulnerable group of persons the opportunity to earn sustainable livelihoods.
* Digicel Foundation - Preparing You! ‘Disaster Preparedness Workshops for those with persons with Special Needs.’ The goal of the project is to expose persons with special needs and special needs caregivers and educators - to disaster preparedness and emergency evacuation strategies through a series of workshops.

There has been a couple capacity building workshops for civil society organizations in T&T organized by JB Fernandes Trust; Community Development Fund, Ministry of Community Development and recently by the Inter-American Development Bank but not directly geared towards CSO’s for disabled persons.

There is however, through these CSO’s dedication, representatives on various ministerial boards for persons with disabilities, such as:

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| **Board/Committee** | **Representative** |
| Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) | Dr. Beverly Beckles (NCPD) – Vice Chairman, the EOC was established in May 2009, and Dr. Beckles has served from inception. |
| Trinidad &Tobago Transport Board | Ms. Jacqueline Huggins – Member – March 2015-2017. Ms. Huggins is the Coordinator of Academic Support/ Disabilities Liaison Unit, WI, St. Augustine |
| Inter Ministerial Committee on Implementation and Monitoring of UNCRPD (ref. Article 33) | Mr. Bhawanie Persad, President of CODO - July 2015 |
| National Child Policy Committee | NCPD was asked to name a representative. This committee 1st Meeting carded for September 09, 2015 has been rescheduled for a date unknown. |

NCPD – National Centre for Persons with Disabilities

UWI – The University of the West Indies

CODO - Consortium of Organization of Disabled Persons

5. Please explain whether and how persons with disabilities participate in monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 33, para. 3), and in the nomination of experts to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art. 34, para. 3).

As a signatory to the UNCRPD, T&T more specifically the Ministry of Social Development and Family Services, Special Disabilities Unit, will need to report every 2 years on the progress made with implementation of Articles under the Convention. There is a fervent interest and desire by national stakeholders to build on this momentum and to put in place a set of activities that would allow T&T to make meaningful contributions to improve the human security of PWDs in T&T.

There are a number of organisations that are advocates to the treaty and played a major role in the ratification of the Convention and they will also participate in the monitoring and implementation when the governing bodies arrive at that stage in the process.

6. Please identify the main challenges faced by the diversity of persons with disabilities in participating in mainstream and disability-specific decision-making processes at the national, regional and local levels, including challenges faced by persons who experience multiple discrimination (e.g., on the basis of disability, age, gender, ethnic origin, geographical location).

The main challenges faced by the diversity of persons with disabilities:

* Lack of economic opportunities
* Outdated or non-existent legislation and policies
* Policy and Legislation are not implemented and laws passed are not monitored
* Stigma and discrimination
* Lack of public awareness
* Discrimination in the workplace
* Lack of accessible facilities/poor infrastructure
* Lacking in capacity to further develop NGO’s as they lack the access to resources and expertise
* Inequality in access to education

**Additional questions for civil society:**

7. Please provide information on the existence of organizations of persons with disabilities in your country, including organizations of children and women with disabilities, as well as their composition and internal decision-making processes and procedures;

**Governmental:**

* The Disability Affairs Unit – The Ministry of Social Development and Family Services (previously The Ministry of People and Social Development)
* The Ministry of Labour and Small Enterprises Development (previously the Ministry of Labour, Small and Micro Enterprise)

**NGO’s:**

* Autism Society Trinidad & Tobago
* Blind Welfare Association
* The Cerebral Palsy Association of Trinidad and Tobago (CPATT)
* Consortium of Disability Organisation (CODO)
* Caribbean Kids and Families Therapy Organization
* Cerebral Palsy Parents’ Association
* Digicel Foundation
* Down Syndrome Family Network
* F.E.E.L. (Foundation for the Enhancement & Enrichment of Life)
* Hands of Hope (Trinidad and Tobago)
* Healing with Horses Foundation
* Horses Helping Humans (HHH)
* National Centre for Persons with Disabilities
* School for the Deaf
* School for the Blind
* Scleroderma Care Foundation
* Squeaky-Wheels

8. Please identify the main challenges faced by the diversity of persons with disabilities as members of mainstream or disability-specific non-governmental organizations, and in participating in the activities of such organizations, including challenges faced by persons who experience multiple discrimination.

According to the 2011 census data:

* 3.9% of the population of Trinidad and Tobago are within the community of persons with disabilities.
* The highest percentage of disability is currently in the Tunapuna/Piarco municipality, while the lowest rate is in the Couva/ Tabaquite municipality.
* Lack of mobility has displaced poor vision as the primary form of disability.

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