

Questions to Human Rights Council Resolution-25.10.13

1. **Do the national or local constitutions or laws of your country prevent or restrict access to any student with disabilities to regular schools at any levels? (E.g. based on diagnosis or an assessment of their capabilities)**

No

In Mauritius, formal Education at all levels is governed by the **Education Act and Education Regulations of 1957** as subsequently amended. The legislation was amended in 2004 to make **Education compulsory for all till the age of 16** with the introduction of 11 year schooling as from 2005.

2. **Is all education of children and adults with disabilities under the control of the Ministry of Education? Please specify if other Ministries (e.g. Social Affairs or Health) have control over some educational facilities and detail the functions of such facilities.**

Since May 2010, Education is being catered for by two different Ministries, namely the **Ministry of Education and Human Resources** (covering the preprimary, primary and secondary subsectors, including technical and vocational education and training) and the Ministry of Tertiary Education, Science, Research and Technology (postsecondary subsector). A new Ministry has also been established to look specifically after Social Integration and Economic Empowerment.

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources provides education and specialized services to children with disabilities aged from 3 to 20 years in collaboration with 38 registered NGOs to which it provides financial assistance based on the number of students through a grant-in-aid formula.

To assist in the education of children with disabilities, the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Reform Institutions provides the following facilities:

- (i) Refund of transport costs for one accompanying parent of children with disabilities attending schools/day care centres.
- (ii) Refund of taxi fares to students with severe disabilities attending university who cannot travel by ordinary means of transport.
- (iii) Scholarship Scheme by the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons to encourage students with disabilities to pursue secondary and tertiary studies.
- (iv) Annual Grant-in-Aid by the NGO Trust Fund to NGOs running special schools.

Vocational training is also provided to children with disabilities by the Training and Employment of Disabled Persons Board, which operates under the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity & Reform Institutions.

**3. Does your country have a plan or program that progressively promotes the transformation of the education system into an inclusive education system including some or all of the following measures? (Please specify with measures)**

Yes.

In 2006, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources after multi-sectoral consultations, developed a **National Policy and Strategy Document on Special Education Needs and Inclusive Education in Mauritius** to respond to both the specific and emerging educational needs of all children with special educational needs with focus on the special educational needs of all children with disabilities. It provides for the inclusion of these children in our educational system through appropriate partnership with relevant Ministries and Non-Government Organisations.

The Ministry's **Education & Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020** includes among its strategic goals "Encourage and support the inclusion of children with special needs" and "Give a greater thrust to special education needs" while the Ministry's Programme –Based Budgets as from 2011 provide a special programme "Special Education Needs of School Age Children" with clearly defined Outcome (Successful integration of children with special education needs into the world of higher education, training or work/Increased access to quality education for children with special needs"), services to be provided, service standards and quantifiable enrolment targets for 2011 (60%) to 2023 (95%).

An **outreach exercise** was carried out as from 2010 to encourage parents with disabled children to come forward and register their disabled children at the primary school nearest to their residence and to sensitize heads of schools and other staff to give them a special support. A survey exercise was scheduled as from April 2012 to determine the number of children with disabilities and the type of their impairment.



**a. Merge budgets and administration of special education and regular education within a geographical area;**

The Ministry of Education and Human Resources continued to provide textbooks free of charge to primary school children, including textbooks with enlarged prints to those with visual problems while needy students in both Government and private grant-aided secondary schools benefited under a Free Book Scheme.

**b. Transform existing special educational resources - special schools or classes - into resources to assist the mainstream system to accommodate students with disabilities;**

- i. Schools are being retrofitted with ramps in a phased manner to facilitate access to the classrooms.
- ii. All new secondary schools constructed have already been provided with adapted toilets for the disabled.
- iii. Links between building blocks have been made to facilitate access, using wheelchairs to the first floor where specialist rooms are located.
- iv. 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.

**c. Train special educators to serve as additional resources to regular teachers;**

Special Education Needs (SEN) is a sector necessitating building and strengthening of capacity for efficient and effective intervention actions. In this context, the Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), which is the training arm of the Ministry, has run and is running various courses for different categories of officers from the level of **Lecturers, Educational Psychologists, Educational Social Workers, Teachers, Educators and also courses for Parents and Carers.**

Some of the courses run are as follows:

- i. **Post graduate Diploma in Special Education** for Lecturers of MIE, Educational Psychologists and Educational Social Workers;
- ii. **Certificate in Special education** for Teachers working in the SEN Sector including NGOs;

- iii. **Teacher's Diploma in SEN** for Primary school teachers;
- iv. **Teacher's License in SEN** for Teachers already working in SEN Schools; and
- v. **Foundation Course** for all those working in SEN schools run by NGOs.

In order to successfully attain the strategic objective of Inclusion for the SEN sector, the MIE will continue providing the appropriate courses, after constantly enriching them.

**d. Progressively transfer all students from special programmes to regular classes supported by the resources staff;**

Children with mild disabilities are mainstreamed in the preprimary, primary and secondary sectors. In addition, children in Integrated Units found in the mainstream participate actively in any activity being organized by the schools, for instance, in the morning assembly, music day, sports activities etc. The goal of this Ministry is to move towards a situation that is almost normative in highly developed countries. There, children with serious disabilities are also mainstreamed instead of finding themselves in special schools. We are not there yet but the determination is there and the movement has already started but this will take some time.

**e. Allocate financial resources for adequate accommodation, including reasonable accommodation, of all students and for technical assistance to support ministry of education officials, at the district, school and classroom level;**

NGOs running SEN Schools are supported through a contribution by way of Grant-in aid payable to them. Last year there was an increase of 25 per cent in the grant-in-aid payable to the NGOs so as to help them to ensure their empowerment and the capacity building of their personnel. This year the Grant-in-aid formula is being reviewed so as to provide differentiated funding to the NGOs according to the different categories and levels of impairment.

**f. Revise testing methods to ensure that (i) accommodation is made for students with disabilities and (ii) they allow accessing adequate certification to reach the next level of education or graduate when finished;**

- i. Children with disabilities are benefitting from extra time for the Certificate of Primary Education examinations.
- ii. Enlarged print school books/manuals and question papers are being produced and provided, free of charge, for children suffering from visual impairment.
- iii. Children with hearing impairment are provided with specialist Teacher/Interpreters in the mainstream secondary school with the active collaborations of NGOs and for the purpose of examinations.



**g. provide pro-service and in-service training to teachers so that they can respond to diversity in the classroom (e.g Train teachers in classroom techniques such as differentiated instruction and cooperative learning);**

The Diploma Course being dispensed by the MIE for all Trainee Teachers for the Mainstream comprise a module on SEN which empowers Teachers to profile the children for early identification of impairment.

**h. Ensure that conditions that constrain teachers to teach inclusively are addressed (e.g. Address class size; Revise and adapt curriculum content in accordance with best practice; Ensure that school buildings and materials are accessible to children with disabilities and universal design is considered in construction);**

The National Policy and Strategy Document for the Special Education Needs sector lays emphasis on the need to adopt a child-centered pedagogical approach as well as a flexible and adapted curriculum that will help each child to develop his or her full potential. In order to successfully attain the strategic objective of Inclusion for the SEN sector, the following three crucial elements are being worked on:

- i. Norms and standards** – A Committee has also been set up and is working on the norms and standards and quality assurance to harmonise the level of educational services dispensed by the different stakeholders involved in SEN schools. The Committee is expected to submit its report by Mid December 2013.
- ii. Curriculum-** The Mauritius Institute of Education is reviewing the curriculum for Visual and Hearing Impairment and it has taken on board, all partners including NGOs with a view to benefiting from their expertise. For such other types of impairments, as autism, dyslexia, intellectual and physical impairment, the MIE has been requested to develop and adapt curricula, so that at the end of their education cycle, these learners are in presence of a certificate which will raise their self-esteem and eventually help them become independent in life.
- iii. As regards Access and Building,** please See 3 b above.

**i. Recognize sign language as a language and teach sign language users in their own language in mainstream measure;**

A Mauritian Sign Language has been developed and is being used to ease communication for children with special education needs.

**j. Ensure support to attend to mainstream schools at request on individual basis, as reasonable accommodation measure;**

A Special Monitoring Team was set up at the Ministry to work together with the NGOs in tracking children with Special Education Needs and to facilitate their admission to schools that can best respond to the specific needs of these children. Other measures are taken to facilitate integration of children with disabilities on a case-to-case basis.

**k. Support organisations of persons with disabilities , civil organizations, including those of parents of children with disabilities, to build capacity on the right to education and how to influence policy and practice.**

Kindly refer to 3 e above, please.

**5. Does your country have disaggregated data on children and adults with disabilities in education by facility (mainstream school, special school, social facility or institution, mental health institution, others) gender, impairment and environmental barriers that prevent or restrict access to education (transport, accessibility of services, other)? Please provide the available data.**

Please find below disaggregated data on Special Education Needs children by Zone, Administration, Gender and Impairment for 2012 in five tables.

*Table 1. Distribution of Special Education Needs (SEN) schools by zone and type of administration, 2012.*

Zone	Type of Administration			
	Total	Government School	Government Integrated Unit <sup>1</sup>	NGO <sup>2</sup>
1- Port Louis/North	16	-	2	14
2-B.Bassin-R.Hill/East	17	1	1	15
3-Curepipe/South	8	-	-	8
4-Q.Bornes/Vacoas-Phoenix/West	8	-	2	6
Republic of Mauritius	50	1	5	44

<sup>1</sup>Government Integrated Unit is a class in a primary Government school catering for Special Education Needs

<sup>2</sup> NGO: Non-Government Organisation

Table 2. Enrolment in Special Education Needs (SEN) schools by sex and zone, 2010-2012

**All schools**

Zone	2010			2011			2012		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
1- Port Louis/North	498	304	194	503	319	184	564	365	199
2- B.Bassin.R.Hill/East	554	316	238	726	431	295	609	366	243
3- Curepipe/South	290	183	107	306	187	119	366	220	146
4- Q.Bornes/Vacoas-Phoenix/West	276	193	83	268	180	88	275	189	86
Island of Mauritius	1,618	996	622	1,803	1,117	686	1,814	1,140	674
Island of Rodrigues	43	35	8	50	41	9	48	38	10
Republic of Mauritius	1,661	1,031	630	1,853	1,158	695	1,862	1,178	684

Table 3. Enrolment in Special Education Needs (SEN) schools by age and sex, Republic of Mauritius 2010-2012

**All schools**

Age (Years)	2010			2011			2012		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
3	19	10	9	10	5	5	6	2	4
4	14	10	4	15	8	7	73	56	17
5	45	32	13	35	23	12	44	27	17
6	58	38	20	61	43	18	70	48	22
7	91	54	37	103	73	30	122	88	34
8	95	60	35	113	80	33	139	101	38
9	123	81	42	147	89	58	178	118	60
12	114	70	44	156	90	66	141	84	57
13	151	88	63	151	90	61	120	71	49
14	141	83	58	135	85	50	107	60	47
15	119	73	46	135	81	54	101	66	35
16	87	54	33	113	61	52	82	50	32
17	86	50	36	71	42	29	85	44	41
18	44	21	23	62	29	33	47	26	21
19	35	18	17	44	28	16	49	21	28
20	17	10	7	28	19	9	64	41	23
21 and over	148	91	57	130	81	49	147	75	72
Total	1,661	1031	630	1,853	1,158	695	1,862	1,178	684



Table 4. Number of pupils in Special Education Needs (SEN) schools by type of impairment and sex, Republic of Mauritius, 2012.

Impairment	Total	Boys	Girls
Autism	117	86	31
Deafness and Hearing Impairment	102	62	40
Down's Syndrome	164	89	75
Dyslexia	106	73	33
Emotional Disturbance	90	66	24
Epilepsy	128	77	51
Intellectual Impairment	547	352	195
Physical Disability	207	136	71
Severe and Multiple Disabilities	166	106	60
Visual Impairment	109	53	56
Other	126	78	48
Total	1,862	1,178	684

Table 5: Personnel in Special Education Needs (SEN) schools by sex, Republic of Mauritius 2010-2012

Personnel	2010			2011			2012		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Teaching Staff	261	34	227	394	40	354	278	37	241
Administrative and Ancillary Staff	73	27	46	100	35	65	94	35	59
Medical and Para-Medical	44	14	30	53	21	32	50	18	32
Total	378	75	303	547	96	451	422	90	332