



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO  
TO THE OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, GENEVA**

**Note No. 209/2010**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the United Nations Office in Geneva and its Specialized Agencies in Europe presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to refer to the latter's communication dated 5 August 2010 on the subject of Human Rights Council Resolution 13/11 entitled *"Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: national implementation and monitoring and introducing as the theme for 2011 the role of international cooperation in support of national efforts for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities"*.

The Permanent Mission notes that the deadline date of 15 October 2010 has passed and in apologizing for the delay in submitting a response, wishes to nevertheless forward for your attention the response of the relevant capital-based authorities.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago to the Office of the United Nations in Geneva and its Specialized Agencies in Europe, avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the assurances of its highest consideration.

**Geneva – 12 November 2010**



**Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities: national implementation and monitoring and introducing as the theme for 2011 the role of international cooperation in support of national efforts for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities**

i) **Key measures adopted at national level to implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

**Awareness – raising**

- Public service announcements are used via radio and television to combat stereotypes and to raise awareness throughout society. These advertisements also seek to portray recognition of the skills, merits and abilities of persons with disabilities.

**Accessibility**

- A fleet of accessible buses has been acquired and dial-a ride services are offered by both the national transport provider and non-governmental organizations. The service provided by the non-governmental organizations is subsidized by the government.
- Free bus passes are provided to persons in receipt of social assistance benefits.
- Many Government Ministries, public and private offices, shopping and recreational facilities are physically accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Several sidewalks across the country have been modified to facilitate wheelchair users and visually impaired persons.
- The National Housing Policy reserves 5% of homes under the National Housing Programme for persons with disabilities and older persons.
- Various accessible technologies are available at the national library for visually impaired persons. The library is also physically accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Several government websites contain accessible features.
- Publications by various government offices are available in accessible formats and public events and national addresses are often interpreted in sign language.

- A dictionary documenting signs of Trinidad & Tobago has been produced and television advertisements teaching sign language are aired.
- The weekday news is interpreted in sign language and is also captioned.

### **Education**

- Government has approved an inclusive education policy.
- The staff complement of the Ministry of Education has been considerably strengthened to give effect to this Policy.
- Many teachers have been sensitized on various disabilities and they have also been trained in key areas to facilitate teaching of students with disabilities.
- Several schools have been modified to facilitate access to students with disabilities.
- Entry level students at primary schools are screened for visual and hearing impairments.
- Students have access to technological devices to assist them in the classroom.
- The Government offers scholarships for students with disabilities to pursue tertiary level education.

### **Employment**

- The Government implemented a pilot programme to place visually impaired persons in the workplace.
- Government provides grants and soft loans to persons with disabilities for employment related initiatives.
- Staff, including Human Resource personnel in Government Ministries are sensitized to the abilities of persons with disabilities.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Act has been proclaimed and an Agency has been established to ensure the safety of all persons including persons with disabilities, in the workplace.

### **Personal Mobility**

- Grants are provided to persons with disabilities to purchase assistive devices and mobility aids.
- Tax concessions are provided for the import of some assistive devices.

### **Health**

- Persons with disabilities receive free medical and rehabilitative services including immunization at the various health facilities.
- Persons with disabilities receive free prescription drugs
- The Government implements on a continuous basis, public awareness programmes that encourage healthy living.

### **Legislation**

- A draft Disability Bill has been prepared

### **Social Protection**

- Persons with disabilities can access a monthly grant in the amount of *US\$200.00 (approx.)* and a one off grant in the amount of *US\$1,000.00* to purchase assistive devices.

### **Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport**

- Coaches have been trained to include persons with disabilities in sporting programmes.
- Several sporting and community facilities, including swimming pools are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- A guide to accessible recreational facilities in Trinidad and Tobago has been published.

### Statistics and data collection

- Statistics on disability have been collected through the 2000 census and the Survey of Living Conditions (2005).

(ii) **Challenges and obstacles to the full implementation at national level of the Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities.**

The most significant challenge to full implementation is the need for issues related to disability to be fully mainstreamed in all government policies and programmes.

A secondary challenge is the need for greater awareness in the society of the abilities of persons with disabilities.

(iii) **The existence, scope and content of policies and/or guidelines adopted at national level to guide international co-operation in support of the Convention at national level.**

International co-operation is guided by the measures contained in the national policy on persons with disabilities as well as the United Nations Convention.

(iv) **Forms of international co-operation at bilateral and multilateral level that as a complement to national levels can play a key role in assessing the realization of the Convention at national level.**

Sharing of best practices, transfer of technologies and expertise can contribute to the realization of the Convention at national level.

(v) **Examples of engagement in international cooperation and assessment of their impact on promoting the realization of the Convention**

International co-operation has been limited mainly to participation at meetings and other fora.