**Annex III**

Biographical data form of candidates to human rights treaty bodies

(**Please respect the specified amount of lines when completing this form** **and return it electronically in word format)**

Name and first name: **NARAYEN** Rookmeenee Narainamah.

Date and place of birth: 15th April 1941

Working languages: English & French & Creole

Address: 11, Avenue Osman, Quatre Bornes, MAURITIUS

Email: vydianarayen@gmail.com

**Current position/function:**

**Chairperson Financial Services Review Panel**. I chair the said panel when an aggrieved person appeals the decision of the Financial Services Commission Enforcement Committee. On the hearing of the application for review, the Review Panel may confirm, amend or cancel a decision made by the Enforcement Committee. This often includes interpreting complex financial regulations and the Code on the prevention of money laundering & terrorist financing.

**Main professional activities:**

1. **Chairperson** Financial Services Review Panel (2016-to date)
2. **Ombudsperson** for Children (2011-2015)
3. **Vice –President** of the Sex Discrimination Division of the National Human Rights Commission.(2003-2011)
4. **Judge** of the Supreme Court Mauritius (1993-2003)
5. **Master & Registrar** of the Supreme Court & Judge in Bankruptcy.(1989-1993)
6. **Presiding Magistrate** Industrial Court (1984-1989)
7. **Magistrate** of Intermediate Court.(1981-1984)
8. **District Court Magistrate** (1975-1981)
9. **Chairman** of Prison’s Board (1977-1979)
10. **Practising Barrister**, Mauritian Bar (1971-1975)

**Educational background:**

I was called to the Bar of England & Wales in November 1970. I am a Barrister-at-Law, Lincoln’s Inn, United Kingdom.

**Other main activities in the field relevant to the mandate of the treaty body concerned:**

Since I returned to Mauritius in January 1971 as a Barrister, I have been a crusader on human rights issues more particularly the right of the child and women’s right. I was instrumental to the amendment of laws discriminatory towards women and children. Throughout my career in the Judiciary I had to address issues relating to human rights including social justice. As Judge of the Supreme Court, I delivered leading judgments on human rights issues such as the right to bail and the right to education. As Ombudsperson for Children, in addition to the significant number of investigations conducted, I relentlessly conducted awareness-raising campaigns to foster a culture supportive of children’s rights. The **four** annual reports I presented bear testimony to the remarkable achievements. I urged the State to sign and ratify the Third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**List of most recent publications in the field:**

Published **four** annual reports as Ombudsperson for Children:

* Ombudsperson for Children Annual Report 2012
* Ombudsperson for Children Annual Report 2013
* Ombudsperson for Children Annual Report 2014
* Ombudsperson for Children Annual Report 2015

Mrs Rookmeenee Narayen is a woman who has shattered many glass ceilings. She made history in January 1971, when she was the second woman to be called to the Mauritian Bar and the first woman to actively practice law at the Bar for four years before joining the Judiciary. The challenges and obstacles which she faced in a completely male dominated profession and unfriendly and often hostile environment, makes her the golden girl of her era.

A young but powerful orator; a barrister whose cross-examination was often described as incisive and focused; her preparation careful and detailed, Mrs Narayen was spotted in 1975 an appointed as District Court Magistrate. Between 1975 and 1981 Mrs Narayen served in several District Courts in Mauritius as well as Rodrigues. In 1977, though a young Magistrate, Chief Justice Rault appointed Mrs Narayen as Chairperson of the Prison’s Board.

Her intellectual prowess as well as her remarkable knowledge of the law allowed her, against all odds, to rapidly rise through the ranks. In 1981 she was appointed as Magistrate of the Intermediate Court.

In 1984 Ms Narayen was appointed Presiding Magistrate of the Industrial Court until 1989 when she was the first woman to be appointed as Master and Registrar of the Supreme Court and Judge in Bankruptcy.

On 11 January 1993, Ms Narayen made history by assuming office as the first woman Supreme Court Judge, crowning a legal career of decades of exemplary service to the judiciary. Mrs Narayen is a woman of unparalleled experience in the judiciary with the distinction of having served at different times as acting Senior Puisne Judge and Chief Justice. Many female Barristers see Ms Narayen as a role model, a mentor and recall how as a Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court, she took up the mantle of encouraging women in their legal careers.

Ms Narayen did not slow down when she retired as a Supreme Court Judge in 2003. In April 2003, she was immediately appointed as the first Deputy Chairperson of the newly established Sex Discrimination Division of the National Human Rights Commission.

Her appointment was far from being a fortuitous one. Although she never wanted the spotlight, since she returned to Mauritius in 1971 as a young Barrister who had just called to the UK Bar at Lincoln’s.Inn, Mrs Narayen was an outspoken advocate for gender equality and a leading feminist. Although she had no big plans to be a crusader, things that were commonplace in those days bothered her and so, she started to speak up for what she thought was right. Mrs Narayen advocated for the equal rights of women and demanded the repeal of discriminatory laws. Although never brash, she was persistent and lobbied for changes in the law which were indeed quite radical for the time but she nevertheless succeeded as subsequently, the Civil Code was drastically amended to restore equality between men and women.

With this background, the work of Ms Narayen in the Sex Discrimination Division of the National Human Rights Commission, was remarkable. Many will remember her excellent mediation skills and the way in which she adjudicated and resolved conflicts. For Ms Narayen, disputes, unlike wine do not improve with aging and delay in settlement or disposal of conflicting claims is a primary enemy of justice and peace. As such she not only diligently resolved all disputes before her but also ensured a win-win outcome for all. She always believed that there is no such thing as a good war or a bad peace and she always ensured that the parties. very often aggrieved women against their employers all left happy.

The awareness-raising campaigns conducted by Ms Narayen atthe Sex Discrimination Division to sensitize a broad range of stakeholders including the Police; employers of the private sector; health professionals; trade unions, teachers and students on women’s rights issues are impressive. Ms Narayen has also addressed the problems faced by a diverse range of women in different fields of work from the Sugar industry to the factory workers. She has particularly focused on issues of gender equality, discrimination and sexual harassment on the work place. She has also been very sensitive to the plight of other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of women.

After dedicating 8 years to the promotion and protection of women’s rights and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against them, Ms Narayen was appointed as Ombudsperson for Children in December 2011. The 4 annual reports presented by the Office of the Ombudsperson for Children bear testimony to the remarkable work done by Ms Narayen in Mauritius, Rodrigues and Agalega. In addition to the significant number of investigations conducted by her Office, Mrs Narayen has relentlessly conducted awareness raising campaigns to foster a culture supportive of children’s rights.

With her remarkable legal background and her life experiences, Ms Narayen has left no stone unturned during her 4 years. She has been very instrumental in bringing the spotlight on challenging issues such as:

* Depression in children and adolescents;
* Youth and tobacco control;
* Youth and drugs;
* Protection of children and the risks in their use of the internet and Facebook;
* Absenteeism in schools
* Bullying in educational institutions
* Parental neglect; amongst other pertinent issues.

The 4 years of Mrs Narayen as Ombudsperson for Children will specially be remembered for her efforts to consult and involve children and the direct influence of her country-wide consultations with them in her work programmes. Mrs Narayen has paid special attention to the interests and views of marginalized groups of children such as disabled children; children in care institutions; street children to name but a few.

During the years that she served at the Sex Discrimination Division and as Ombudsperson for Children , Mrs Narayen has dealt with several intractable and highly emotionally charged cases and situations, making excellent use of her patience and pragmatism in seeking possible resolutions. She has demonstrated her great sensitivity, which has resulted in her being described as ‘an extremely safe, capable and committed pair of hands’.

**Conclusion**

Ms Narayen  is a highly respected and accomplished woman known to listen to the forgotten people [women, children, the elderly; prisoners and the list goes on] who need her probably the most to craft policies that will empower and enrich their lives, policies that will deal with justice and equal rights. Today we are very optimistic because Mrs Narayen is a mother, a mother who understands what it takes to raise a future generation.

To sum up who is Mrs Narayen, one can say that she is no less than a **moral idealist committed to a vision of social justice,**