



Embassy of the Republic of Mauritius and Permanent Mission of Mauritius to the United Nations and other International Organizations

Ambassade de la République de Maurice et Mission Permanente auprès des Nations Unies et des autres Organisations Internationales

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The Embassy and Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and with reference to its Note dated 10 November 2017 regarding the Report on Youth and Human Rights, pursuant to resolution A/HRC/RES/35/14, has the honour to attach herewith the inputs of the Government of Mauritius.

The Embassy and Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) the assurances of its highest consideration.

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Geneva, 18 January 2018

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais des Nations
Geneva



1. Is there a national law on youth in Mauritius?

There is no specific law on youth in Mauritius but there are other pieces of legislation which cater for the youth. Under the Child Protection Act, "child" means any unmarried person under the age of 18, whereas the National Youth Council Act defines youth to be a person aged between 14 and 29 years. However the National Youth Council Act will be reviewed to define youth to be a person between 14 and 35 years, in compliance with the African Youth Charter. The Constitution provides for the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals which are also applicable to "young persons", under Chapter II of the Constitution.

2. What are the main challenges that young people face in your country?

Following the Smart Youth Report 2020 commissioned by the Government in 2015, the following contemporary challenges faced by young people were noted:

. **Education** is central to the development of any country, mostly in improving the lives of young people. In Mauritius, education is free and access to quality education will address many factors which impede youth development namely poverty, vulnerable family environments and other social evils like violence and substance abuse.

. **Employment:** Mauritius is not spared by the global phenomenon of unemployment. In the first quarter of 2016, 20% of youth between 16-24 years were unemployed. Various reasons have been found to explain this issue, amongst which skills mismatch and lack of job experience

. **Youth and health:** Undoubtedly, a healthy youth population is capital for the wellness of a nation. It contributes to nation building. There are a few youth specific health issues and risky behaviours that need a targeted approach, eg healthy lifestyle and positive attitudes

3. What measures can Government take

. The Ministry of Youth and Sports has put in place a National Youth Council to initiate youth development projects and activities with the aim of encouraging the active participation of youth in the process of their own empowerment

. The National Youth Policy which is reviewed every 5 years encompasses strategic directions of youth development to ensure current needs and aspirations of young people are catered for. An Action Plan ensures the implementation of youth programmes both at national and local levels.

4. Examples of policies and programmes adopted to support and empower youth

- i. . **Youth and Entrepreneurship:** Young people are provided with training to start their own enterprises. They thus become providers of jobs instead of being job seekers.
- ii. . **Employability:** Young people are given training to become more employable , skills in CV writing , motivation letters, taking part in interviews
- iii. . **Recreational activities** are offered free of charge during school holidays to give them the opportunity to engage in healthy leisure activities
- iv. . **Youth centres** across the country give the young people the opportunities to network and realise the activities of their choice, art, literary, poem, songs, sports...
- v. . **Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Mauritius and Volunteer Mauritius** are two Government programmes to provide opportunities to young people for character building and self development

(vi) The *National Youth Council* elects executive members of 10 Regional Youth Councils in Mauritius and Rodrigues to cater for youth organizations in their respective regions.

5. How are youth organisations or youth led structures involved in developing, implementing, monitoring and /or evaluating policies and programmes on youth in your country?

The National Youth Council is a corporate body and the objects of the council are to:

- (a) to establish and maintain effective communication between Government and youth organisations;
- (b) to ensure coordination of activities of youth organisations;
- (c) to assist in the implementation and evaluation of Government policies relating to the needs of youth
- (d) to initiate youth development projects and activities with the aim of encouraging the active participation of youth in the process of their own empowerment.

The functions of the National Youth Council are as follows: -

- (a) to advise the Minister on the development and implementation of programmes to integrate youth in all sectors of national development;
- (b) to grant affiliation to National Youth Organisations;
- (c) to allocate grants to Regional Youth Councils.

There are 10 Regional Youth Councils .Each Regional Youth Council promotes the objectives of the Council and organises activities with the collaboration of youth organisations in the district.

Presently there are 582 youth clubs in the Republic of Mauritius and these clubs are encouraged to come forward with youth related projects whereby they get support from the Ministry of Youth and Sports and the National Youth Council for necessary implementations.

This Ministry allocates annual grants to Uniformed Organisations namely: Mauritius Scouts Association, Girls Guide Association, and Red Cross for their smooth operation purposes.