



Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

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Written replies by the Government of Seychelles to the list of issues (CRC/C/SYC/Q/2-4) related to the consideration of the combined second, third and fourth periodic reports of the Seychelles (CRC/C/SYC/2-4)*

Part I

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 1, of the list of issues

Age of marriage

1. The disparity in the age of marriage between boys and girls still remains.

Right to know biological parents

2. A new bill has been drafted to amend Section 47 of the Children's Act on adoption. The amendment is intended to bring the provisions on adoption in line with the Hague Convention. Once enacted it will facilitate access to information on natural parents.
3. The Bill awaits presentation before the National Assembly.
4. The Civil Law remains unchanged.

Right to be heard

5. The Children's Act Section 78(2) in regards to the Jurisdiction of the Family Tribunal makes the following provisions:

“When exercising its jurisdiction and functions under this Act -

The Tribunal shall have as its paramount consideration the interest of the child who is the subject of the matter before the Tribunal;

* In accordance with the information transmitted to State parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

The Tribunal shall, where it is able to do so, take into consideration the view of the child who will be affected by its decision.”

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 2, of the list of issues

6. The Ministry for Social Development and Culture is the current ministry with portfolio responsibility for social affairs and has the authority to coordinate actions by the sectors and agencies implementing children’s rights under the Convention however this is done in close collaboration with other partners both government and non-governmental.

7. The Vision of the Social Development Department is to create a society where all individuals and families enjoy a good quality of life.

8. The mission of the Social Development Department is to:

- Empower individuals and families to reduce dependency
- Safeguard the interest and promote the well-being of children
- Integrate and protect marginalised and vulnerable groups
- Adopt an integrated and evidence-based approach to development in order to promote and ensure social functioning and self reliance.

9. The following are the sections of the Department and their functions:

Family tribunal

Secretariat

10. The functions of the Secretariat as prescribed by statute under the Children’s Act are to:

- Convene sitting of the Tribunal.
- Implement the decision of the Tribunal.
- Issue summons and other notices on behalf of the Tribunal.
- See that orders/directions of the Family Tribunal are complied with.
- Implement decisions of the Family Tribunal.
- Take appropriate steps to enable the Family Tribunal to enforce its orders.
- Maintain appropriate records.
- Manage the resources and undertake any other assigned related duties.

Family Tribunal Board

11. The Family Tribunal Board as conferred by the Children’s Act and other written laws is to:

- Hear and determine matters relating to the care, custody, access, maintenance and compulsory measures of care, matters regarding medical, dental and surgical treatment in respect of a child/children.
- Make declarations of paternity.
- Make orders for non-removal of a child from the jurisdiction.
- Hear and determine matters relating to parental maintenance.

- Make protection orders as deemed necessary for the protection of victims as per the Family Violence (Protection of Victims) Act 2000.

Population Unit

12. The function of the Population Unit is to:
- Formulate, review and analyze national social development policies based on research-oriented activities.
 - Ensure that national, subnational and sectoral development policies, plans and strategies take into account population, gender and HIV/AIDS issues and linkages.
 - Ensure the development of effective and operational monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for social development programmes.
 - Review development policies and strategies, taking account of result-based practices in work activities.
 - Propose recommendations to update and adjust policies, strategies and programmes, as may be necessary.
 - Promote the development of an effective and active collaboration process with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society.
 - Examine Seychelles population trends and their implications for the country's future development.
 - Initiate and carry out research on emerging social development issues.
 - Develop, maintain and update national databases on relevant social development issues.
 - Produce materials to inform, educate and sensitize Government and national and international partners on relevant policies, programmes and social development issues.
 - Assist and collaborate with other divisions of the department, national as well as international partners on relevant social development issues,

Gender Secretariat

13. The function of the Gender Secretariat is to:
- Initiate, strengthen and institutionalize the Gender Management System(GMS)
 - Be responsible for the overall co-ordination and monitoring of the GMS
 - Play a strategic and catalytic advocacy role, by introducing critical gender concerns into the policies, plans, programmes at all levels
 - Develop national policy guidelines for gender mainstreaming
 - Ensure that key targets and indicators on the status of women and men are set, agreed upon and met
 - Lead the overall monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the gender mainstreaming process
 - Manage the flow of information on gender issues and communicating policy changes and results

- Facilitate capacity building for gender mainstreaming

Social Services Division

14. The Social Services Division is made up of the following Sections:

- Legal Services & Child Protection
- Community Social Work
- Probation Services

The Social Services Division is a service-oriented Division that has the portfolio responsibility to promote the well-being of children, families, disabled persons and persons placed on probation orders.

Probation Services Section

15. The function of the Probation Services Section is to:

- Provide social enquiry reports and other services to the Courts in criminal cases.
- Advise, befriend, assist, counsel and supervise persons placed on probation.
- Supervise community service orders and other care orders.
- Counsel and work with at risk youths.
- Work with incarcerated persons and provide after-care counselling and follow up.
- Provide support and counselling to families in difficulty.
- Mediate in cases of spousal conflict and relationship problems.
- Provide social casework investigation, reports and other services to the Courts and Family Tribunal.

Community Social Work Section

16. The function of the Community Social Work Section is to:

- Maintain society and alleviate social problems by providing the necessary assistance.
- Safeguard the interest of the weak and vulnerable groups.
- Assist individuals and groups to restore their social functioning.
- Provide support and counselling to families and children in the community.
- Cooperate with other community resources in the education of individuals and families with regard to social forces which affect them.
- Provide assistance to senior citizens.
- Counsel families to take responsibility and care for their elderly parents.
- Empower service users to better fulfil their potentials.
- Man the Children's Helpline.

Legal Services & Child Protection Section

17. The function of the Legal Services and Child Protection Section is to:
- Identify foster and adoptive parents.
 - Arrange placements in foster homes following investigations.
 - Facilitate the adoption process.
 - Provide reports to the Courts and the Family Tribunal in relation to: custody, access, maintenance, guardianship, adoption, interdicted minor's property and interdicted disabled adult's property.
 - Provide guidance and counselling to parties regarding children's issues.
 - Work with children and their families by providing services to dysfunctional families to restore social functioning.
 - Counsel, support and guide children and their families.
 - Empower children to protect themselves.
 - Investigate allegations of child abuse.
 - Carry joint investigation with the police, in cases of alleged abuse.
 - Protect abused children and those who are at risk of harm through clear intervention plans.
 - Conduct preventive work regarding abuse of children.
 - Register children who are at risk.
 - Work in close collaboration and in partnership with child protection partners.

National Commission for Child Protection

18. Functions of the NCCP as provided for under the law:
- (a) To advise the Minister on matters of policy relating to child protection
 - (b) To recommend policies and procedures for the review and coordination of activities of various bodies concerned with child protection
 - (c) To inquire into and report or advise on matters referred to it by the Minister

19. The last meeting of the NCCP was on 7 August 2009; however work has continued to be coordinated at the level of other technical multisectoral committees such as the Inter Agency committee, the Social Services Committee and the District Task Forces. Recommendations for policies and review of procedures are channelled from these committees to the responsible Ministry/ Department.

20. Below are the terms of references of the Social Services and Inter Agency Committees

Social Services Committee (court and family tribunal related)

Members – representatives from:

- Social Services
- Health

- Education
- National Council for Children

Terms of Reference

- Look at and discuss reports pertaining to adoption, guardianship, custody, access and maintenance in an objective manner before submitting to the court and the Family Tribunal.
- Retrieve information from other agencies.
- Seek further expertise when there is a need.
- Ensure that comprehensive assessments are undertaken in respect of the issue being investigated.
- Make recommendations.

Inter Agency Child Protection Committee

Members – representatives from:

- Social Services
- Health
- Education
- National Children Council
- Police

Terms of reference

- Present cases of child abuse to the Committee
- Inform, involve and work in collaboration with other agencies and professionals in accordance with agreed child protection procedures and the needs of the child and the family,
- Ensure that the Social Services assume the leading role in the protection of children against all forms of abuse/violence against children
- Ensure effective consultation and communication between partners in respect to the child and the family plan of action

Coordination between the central and district levels

21. The Community Social Work Section of the Department (mentioned above) consists of social workers based in all the 25 districts who link up to relevant services and refer cases either through internal channels or externally where necessary depending on the cases.

22. In addition, in October 2009 the Department took the lead in a national initiative aimed at strengthening interagency collaboration in addressing social ills. The mechanism is called a district task force and was set up in all districts. District task forces are made up of all partners who are community based and who work in social related fields. This includes the police, nurse, school counsellors, the district social worker, and the district youth worker. Other relevant nongovernmental organisations are also encouraged to be part of this team and interested members of the community are encouraged to participate in activities of the task forces as appropriate.

Terms of reference of the task forces

- Identify youths and families at risk
- Identify places that encourage illegal and antisocial activities in the community
- Develop programmes in collaboration with other partners to meet the needs of the targeted groups
- Engage other actors and the community when necessary to assist with programmes

23. Each task force develops its action plans and prioritises the issues to tackle according to the needs of their districts. Periodic progress reports on the work of the task forces are submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 1, of the list of issues

24. No formal evaluation of the activities listed under the National Plan of Action for Children (2005-2009) has taken place but one has been earmarked to be steered by the National Population Group. However a survey of children's views on the importance of the theme 2005 "Our children, Our Treasure, Our Future" was carried out. The survey was carried out in all schools on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue. 329 classes participated from Primary 5 to Secondary 5.

Some of the findings of the survey

25. 81% felt the theme has resulted in greater emphasis on children this year compared to 19%

26. 63% felt there had been an improvement in the quality of services and delivery in general compared to 37%

27. 90 % of Primary Classes surveyed on Mahe and 71 % at Secondary level felt the theme had placed greater awareness on children because there were:

- More activities focussing on children
- More TV/Radio Programmes
- More involvement of children in the activities
- Children's rights, security and well-being promoted
- Children were the priority

28. 78 % of Classes surveyed on Praslin and La Digue compared to 22% felt the theme had placed greater awareness with regard to children because there were:

- More activities have been organised
- More awareness created on the needs/rights of children
- Children were mentioned in all activities
- Increase in TV/Radio Programmes on children
- Children have participated more actively in activities this year
- Rules against child abusers are now more severe

29. 92 % of Primary Classes surveyed on Mahé and 54 % at Secondary level felt there has been an improvement in services offered to children because there were:

- More protection for children through new laws
- Teachers have shown more enthusiasm
- Facilities upgraded, new schools being built
- Services more child-friendly
- Children's views have been taken on board
- Children's Rights have been more respected
- New Youth Centre
- People are now more serious regarding children's issues

Activities under the plan

30. The following Projects came out of the 2005-2009 National Plan of Action:

- The Risk Indicator Framework
- The child well-being study
- The setting up of a Child Development Centre
- New schools built
- New day-care facilities

Plans or strategies in relation to children adopted since the plan

31. No plans have been developed specific to children since, however children's issues have been integrated in other plans of action namely:

- The National Plan of Action to Tackle Social Ills 2009-12 (find attached)
- The National Population Plan of Action for Sustainable Development-2008-2012.

Early Childhood Care and Education

32. Additionally, a national Framework on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) has been drafted.

Background to the framework

33. Following the first United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, "Building the Wealth of Nations" held in early 2010 in Moscow, the Vice President of the Republic pledged his support to implementing the draft Moscow framework for Action and cooperation. Early Childhood Care and Education was also the focus of a First Ladies Summit in Kuala Lumpur in October 2010 which was attended by a Seychelles delegation led by the First Lady. As a follow-up a high level multi-sectoral National Steering Committee for Early Childhood Care and Education chaired by the Minister for Education with the Minister for Health as vice chair, was set up in October 2010 to develop a National Framework for ECCE.

Purpose of National Framework

34. The purposes of a National Framework are to:

- (a) Have one overarching government policy document that will guide developments and improve outcomes in early childhood care and education for all children in the age bracket 0 to 7
- (b) Provide unified vision and goals for early childhood care and education in Seychelles
- (c) Improve continuity and transition in Early Childhood
- (d) Provide early childhood professionals with guidance on revised principles, aims and objectives of ECCE
- (e) Clarify government's commitment to funding and resource allocations for the 0 to 7 age group and provide guidelines for public and private funding
- (f) Establish common standards with age appropriate indicators to raise level of service delivery
- (g) Inform parents of opportunities and facilities for children to progressively exercise their right to ECCE while allowing them to combine work with child upbringing and education.
- (h) Reaffirm the need for all partners to work together innovatively in the best interest of the child
- (i) Provide a roadmap for the creation of a comprehensive professional development system
- (j) Delineate clear responsibilities for the management, monitoring and evaluation of ECCE across the age range at ministry and community level
- (k) Address the special needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

A national conference was held in February 2011 and a unit has been set up at the Ministry of Education on ECCE.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 4, of the list of issues

35. The main reason which has impeded the setting up of the office of Commissioner for Children's Rights was identifying the appropriate person to occupy the post. It is to be noted however that all the duties of the post have been integrated in the Office of the National Human Rights Commission. This Office was established under the Protection of Human Rights Act 2009. It is aimed, amongst other things, at providing the people of Seychelles with a forum where they can report violations of human rights and address issues with regard to the promotion and protection of human rights. The Commission is a body corporate consisting of a Chairperson and two other members. Appointments to the posts of chairperson and member of the Commission are carried out by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice and Speaker of the National Assembly and this is published in the Official Gazette.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 5, of the list of issues

36. It has been difficult at this time to access information regarding budgetary allocations specific to programmes and services for children and family due to the fact that funds are allocated in lump sums to ministries/departments. However, the increase in activities/ services/infrastructures relating to children and families is itself an indication of increased funding. For example during the period 2005 to 2010 two new schools have been built, four day-care facilities have been completed, two existing buildings have been converted into day-care facilities and three are under construction, to be completed this year.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 6, of the list of issues

37. No specific measures have been taken by the State party to ensure that the tourism industry promotes and supports children’s rights and well-being.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 7, of the list of issues

38. Since the State Party’s report the Government has reviewed its alternative care mechanism. Seychelles has acceded to the Hague Adoption Convention and is in the process of domestication. A policy on adoption has been adopted which ensures that in adoption the paramount consideration is always the best interest of the child. The foster care system has been strengthened with the backing of the Social Security Fund. In addition, all children’s homes have been transferred under the management of the Children’s Homes Foundation with the view of developing a more accountable system. However Social Services continue to monitor and support the homes to ensure that the children are receiving the appropriate standard of care.

39. The Children’s Homes Foundation is a public, non-profit organisation that was founded in 2005 by the First Lady of Seychelles, Natalie Michel. The foundation was set up to provide another platform on which to carry out President James Michel’s mission of ensuring that every child in Seychelles has the foundations for a bright future.

40. Its primary mission is to provide support to the less fortunate children of Seychelles, acting as a fund-raiser and facilitator for organisations that deal directly with children in the community. The Foundation also supports direct interaction with children in need wherever possible.

41. The Children’s Homes Foundation works to facilitate the mission of both public and private organisations responsible for supporting and caring for children in need, as well as NGOs.

42. In addition to a monthly contribution from the government’s Children’s Fund, the Foundation has received foreign grants as well as local and international donations of both a financial and material nature.

43. The philosophy of the Children’ Homes Foundation is to provide the least intrusive level of family-centred assistance that can provide children with not only material assistance, but also personal and emotional support, at home and in the community at large.

44. The work of the Foundation is guided by a volunteer board of committed community members and carried out by specialised individuals in the field of child welfare and assistance.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 8, of the list of issues

	<i>Mains supply</i>	<i>%</i>
Treated	23 103	93.3
Untreated	6	0.0
Unknown	2	0.0
None	206	0.8
Not stated	1 445	5.8
Total	24 762	100.0

Please note the data is provisional

45. Provisional statistics from the 2010 Census in the table above indicates that most households receive treated water from the Public Utilities Company’s mains supply.

However during periods of low rainfall PUC implements water restrictions to ensure provision of water for basic necessities are prolonged. PUC also delivers water to places where due to the topography it is difficult for water to reach.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 9, of the list of issues

(a) Specialized reproductive health services for children and adolescents;

46. A National Policy for Reproductive Health has been drafted and is in the final process prior to printing and disseminating for implementation. Adolescent Reproductive Health is covered as one priority area and guidelines for providing Reproductive Health services for young people 15 to 17 years old have been reviewed and updated.

47. Children under 15 years with any sexual assaults/exposure are referred to and cared for by the existing “Child Protection Unit” in the Ministry of Health. Guidelines on sexual assaults have been recently reviewed and updated.

48. A Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5 and a National Reproductive Health Strategic Plan has recently been drafted and remaining work on those documents is in progress.

(b) Teenage pregnancies and abortions

49. Nothing new on “teenage pregnancies and abortions”. The existing “Termination of Pregnancy Act” remains unchanged.

(c) Drug and alcohol abuse

50. The country is currently looking at how to improve/strengthen rehabilitation services for persons who abuse drugs.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 10, of the list of issues

(a) Conduct a study on the reasons for students dropping out of schools, especially boys, and the follow up measures taken, if any

51. A study on the reasons for students dropping out of schools has not been conducted, but information is mostly obtained from correspondences from parents who give reasons for their children to drop out. Also some information is obtained from the catalogue of cases—a tool used to give feedback on students’ issues.

52. Two main policies are implemented as follow-up measures; a Teenage Pregnancy Policy and Special Education Program (SEP). Students who are pregnant can remain in school up to 6 months pregnancy and can return to complete their education after delivery. Secondary students with difficulties adapting to school/studies and who are behaviourally challenged were enrolled in SEP since 2005 with parental consent. SEP provides four days vocational training and one day students attend school for academic activities.

53. The secondary school curriculum is being adjusted to provide more technical and vocational studies.

Statistics – SEP
Enrollment of Students from 2006 to 2008

Year	Number of Students		
	Male	Female	Total
2006	28	1	29
2007	48	1	49
2008	57	2	59
2009	73	30	103

(b) Eliminate gender-based stereotypes which lead to discrimination against girls in schools as well as end discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and disability in schools and youth forums

54. All schools offer the same opportunity for both male and female students.

(c) Integrate children with disabilities into the mainstream school system and accommodate children with special needs, especially children with hearing impairments

55. Currently, most children with disabilities are still being educated at the School for Exceptional Child which is a separate school for children with disabilities as well as at the Praslin Centre for Exceptional Children which is integrated within Baie Ste Primary School, a mainstream school. However, several steps have been taken that will eventually facilitate the inclusion of some of these children within mainstream schools.

56. In April 2009, in collaboration with the University of Roehampton, United Kingdom, through the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP)-European Union (EU) programme in higher education (EDULINK), a group of people underwent a train-the-trainer programme in special/inclusive education. The aim was for them to embark on an extensive training programme for in-service teachers in order to build their capacity in special/inclusive education practices and to promote inclusion in the schools. The trainers' initial task involved contextualising the training modules to make them appropriate to the local context and then delivering them to a pilot group of trainees in order to evaluate the modules. The training programme is currently being validated by the Seychelles Qualification Authority.

57. As of January 2011, pre-service teachers who are enrolled on the Early Childhood/Primary Bachelor of Education programme at the University of Seychelles (in partnership with the Edith Cowan University, Australia) are following a module on "Celebrating Diversity" which has several components on teaching students with disabilities as well as on inclusion.

58. The Educational Reforms 2009-2010 within the Department of Education, particularly in the area of pastoral care, have led to the creation of a structure within all State schools which aims at providing support to children with special needs. The structure which is known as the "Special Needs Support Team" is an ongoing team of school personnel which undertakes thorough assessment of students with educational needs or otherwise referred by the teacher after support has been given at the level of the class. It prepares intervention programmes appropriate to the student needs. It also assists classroom teachers to develop and implement instructional and/or management strategies. Currently these teams have been set up in most schools but are not yet fully functional. Capacity building for team members is ongoing.

59. In September 2010, a class for children with hearing impairments was opened within the new Au Cap Primary School, which is a mainstream school. The class, which is run in collaboration with the expertise of personnel from the Association for People with Hearing Impairment (APHI) enables children with hearing impairments to be taught in the Seychelles Sign Language within an integrated school setting.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 11, of the list of issues

60. No study has been carried out specific to child sexual exploitation, prostitution and child sex tourism however one has been carried out on prostitution in general. This study was part of the National Plan of Action for Social Ills and was commissioned by the Social Development Department to a local consultant in July 2010. The objectives of the study were to establish the gravity of the situation regarding prostitution in Seychelles, identify the causes and target groups involved in this activity and recommend strategies to tackle this situation.

61. The study findings are based on the perception of a total of 374 respondents. This represents a combined number for general public survey, focus group discussions, key informant interviews and meetings with the target group.

62. The final report was handed over to the Social Development Department in late February 2011.

63. Findings relevant to this question are as follows:

All categories of respondents commented on the fact that the age of those involved in this activity has gone down considerably. The most common starting age bracket mentioned was 15-17, although some mentioned girls of 13 to 14 years of age. However most of the prostitutes observed during the study appeared to be 18 to 30.

Reply to the issues raised in part I, paragraph 12, of the list of issues

64. The Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centre (YRTC) was not intended to be a centre for children in conflict with the law. In reality there is an initiative to develop a juvenile centre and one for children at risk of being in conflict with the law.

65. The YRTC, which was relocated in 2006 to the main island, faced multiple problems, especially security of the delinquents, mostly as an outcome of its inappropriate location and lack of qualified staff. Consequently, it was decided that community-based care for these young people would be appropriate whilst a thorough exploration of the best rehabilitation facilities can be finalised. The government recognises that there is a need for such facilities and effort is being put into capacity building and programme development. In the meantime probation services continue to follow up on this category of children.

Children in detention

CHILDREN REMANDED

YEAR	GENDER		LOCATION
	M	F	
2007	5		Police station
2008	9		Police station
2009	4		3 Police & 1 Prison
2010	3		Police station
2011 (June)	2	1	Police station

CHILDREN CONVICTED

YEAR	GENDER		LENGTH OF SENTENCE
	M	F	
2007			
2008	1		1 yr imprisonment
2009			
2010	3		1 yr imprisonment each
2011 (June)			

Part II**Reply to the issues raised in part II of the list of issues**

In this section the Committee invites the State party to provide a brief update (no more than three pages in length) on the information presented in its report regarding:

(a) New bills or laws, and their respective regulations;**Maternity rights and parental leave**

66. Since 1 January 2008, the number of weeks for maternity leave has increased from 12 weeks to 14 weeks. (S.I 49 of 2007) Employment (Conditions of Employment) (Amendment) Regulations, 2007.

(b) New institutions (and their mandates) or institutional reforms

67. None.

(c) Recently introduced policies, programmes and action plans and their scope and financing

68. The following programmes and actions plans include components relating to children:

- National Strategy on Domestic Violence (available at www.genderseychelles.sc)
- The National Gender Based Violence Action Plan (available at www.genderseychelles.sc)
- The National Plan of Action to Tackle Social Ills (find attached)
- Culture Department strategic plan: This plan is designed to ensure cultural developments at all levels

Decent Work Country Programme

69. Seychelles will soon sign its decent work country programme (DWCP), a five-year technical cooperation Programme with the International Labour Organization (ILO). Amongst the three identified priorities, the DWCP will address employment and

unemployment, particularly for women and youth, i.e. those aged between 15 and 35 years old.

Education Reform

70. The Department of Education has reviewed its Pastoral Care System Policy, which adopts a whole school approach to managing students' learning and training. The reviewed policy promotes the holistic development of the person with emphasis on a value-based learning environment and empowerment of staffs and pupils. It has also introduced relevant structures that cater for needs and provide forums for students to express themselves at their local schools and at national level. Students' leadership training is being provided by local partners. The pastoral care system has an action plan which is evaluated monthly.

Teenage Pregnancy Policy

71. The Teenage Pregnancy Policy allows teenage parents to complete their education. Girls who are pregnant can attend school up to six months in their pregnancy and then defer their schooling until after having given birth. The policy is currently under review.

(d) Recent ratifications of human rights instruments

72. Human rights instruments recently ratified are as follows:

The SADC Gender Protocol

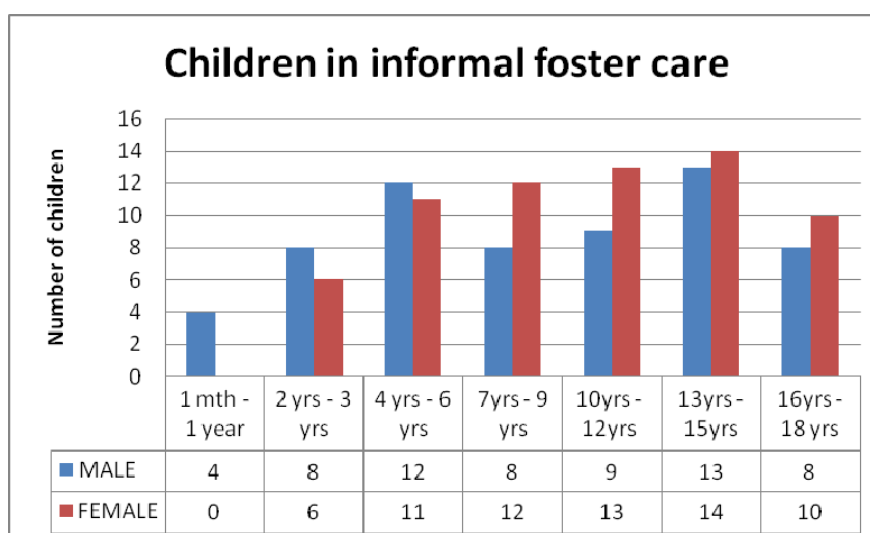
The Seychelles signed this protocol in 2008

Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities

73. Seychelles acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in October 2009. This international agreement requires that Governments around the world uphold the rights of children and adults with disabilities.

Part III

Reply to the issues raised in part III, paragraph 1, of the list of issues



74. Informal fostering has been a common feature of families in Seychelles, mostly with relatives stepping in and taking on the responsibilities of caring for children where the

biological parents are unable to do so. It is mostly considered a family affair and not reported to the authorities.

75. The above graph shows the social services division record of children in informal care. These are children who have a case with this division and continue to be monitored by social workers. The most common reason behind these arrangements is neglect of the child. Only 11% of these arrangements are with persons who are not related to the child.

76. It is part of the Social services' policy to urge all persons who are taking care of a child or children and who are not related to that child/ children to come forward and let the authorities know so that relevant support can be provided and follow up undertaken where necessary to ensure that the child is safe.

Reply to the issues raised in part III, paragraph 2, of the list of issues

Sexual abuse cases by sex

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Female	72	97	101	64
Male	9	13	7	7

Reply to the issues raised in part III, paragraph 3, of the list of issues

77. The number of children with disabilities is as follows:

- (a) Living with their families; not been possible to compile at this time
- (b) Living in institutions; 1 male with a physical disability
- (c) Placed in foster care; there have not been children with disabilities in foster care over the period mentioned
- (d) Attending regular schools; table 2
- (e) Attending special schools; table 2
- (f) Not attending school; table 2.

Disabled, Population & Housing Census

Table 1
By age and sex

		Female	Male	Total
Age group	0- 9	195	182	377
	10-19	191	192	383
	20-29	166	196	362
	30-39	210	184	394
	40-49	190	154	344
	50-59	125	112	237
	60-69	75	55	130
	70-79	58	32	90
	80-89	24	10	34
	90-99	4	1	5
Total		1 238	1 118	2 356

Source: NBS

Table 2
By school attendance

		<i>Attending school</i>	<i>% of disabled</i>	<i>Total disabled</i>
Age group	0- 9	179	47.5	377
	10-19	286	74.7	383

Source: NBS

Table 3
By types of disability reported

	<i>No. persons</i>	<i>% of all disabled</i>
Sight	327	13.9
Hearing	234	9.9
Speech	229	9.7
Physical	1 135	48.2
Intellect / emotional	583	24.7

Source: NBS

Reply to the issues raised in part III, paragraph 4, of the list of issues

(a) The number of students dropping out of schools disaggregated by sex, age and socio-economic background

Drop-out cases 2004

<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total by School</i>
35	31	66

Drop-out cases 2005

<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total by School</i>
34	44	78

Drop-out cases 2006

<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total by School</i>
66	30	96

Drop-out cases 2007

<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total by school</i>
44	40	84

Drop-out cases 2008

<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total by school</i>
57	50	107

Drop-out cases 2009

<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total by school</i>
71	39	116

78. Students who drop out of school do not come from any specific socio-economic background. Reasons for their dropping out vary from teenage pregnancies, not being able to cope academically, those wishing to join the world of work and students with behavioural challenges that hinder their functions. All of these students come from different backgrounds.

79. It is to be noted that all students who are economically disadvantaged are assisted through a dedicated fund provided by the Government since 2009. Prior to 2009, some students in economic need were either assisted through means testing by Social Security Fund or from the school funds depending on availability of the fund. Recent statistics on number of students accessing the dedicated fund are as follows:

- 1,529 crèche and primary students
- 732 secondary students.

(b) The number of children and adolescents who are employed in different sectors of economy

80. Applications¹ from employers requesting exemption for employment of young persons has increased compared to the past few years. This may result partly from the increased number of school dropouts. In 2010, the Employment Department received 18 applications for employment of young workers, out of which 83% were male. All of the applications were from tourism establishments. Approval was given on the basis that the employment did not interfere with the child's education; the job on offer was not hazardous; those who were aged either 15 or 16 years old and had no work experience were put on a special training programme. It is important to note that there has been no registered case of child labour with the Employment Department or with the Employment Tribunal. There has also been no registered case by a young worker protesting his/her conditions of employment.

81. Provisions relating to prohibition of employment of young persons are stated in S.I 34 of 1991 Conditions of Employment Regulations, Section 22, paragraphs 1 to 3. Exemption to this provision and as referred to above is outlined in S.I 34 of 1991 Conditions of Employment Regulations, Section 22 paragraph 4.

¹ Source: Industrial Relations Section

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82. It is difficult to find information on the number of children who abuse substances and alcohol; however the following findings from the child well-being survey give some indication of the situation.

83. Project Child Well-Being Survey was a research exercise undertaken by the Social Development Department from 2005, involving 4,059 children from all schools in Seychelles and child-related institutions from the ages of 6 to 19, from Primary to Post Secondary level.

84. The main objective of the project is to provide a base-line over time in the quality of life or well-being of Seychelles' children and young people based on a Seychelles Model of Child Well-Being. It also captures the views and feelings of children themselves on their life situation at home, at school and in their communities.

85. The complete document can be accessed on www.genderseychelles.gov.sc .

86. Statistics relevant to this question are as follows:

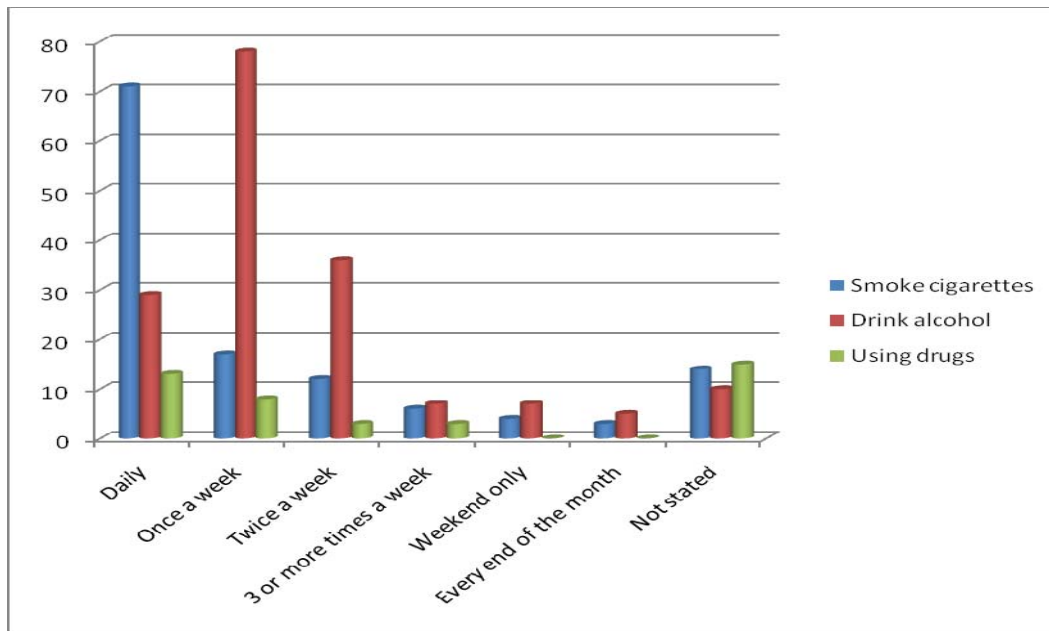
Drug and alcohol abuse

87. Almost 9 in 10 children of that category have drunk alcohol, with more girls reporting it. However only half of the children said that they have been drunk. Beer is reported as the most common drink and it is consumed at night fairs and shows where there might be minimum supervision of parents. Children reported that they drink because it is the normal thing to do.

88. Half of the boys of 14-17 years of age reported that they have smoked cigarettes. Again this has been done mostly at night fairs and shows.

89. One in four boys reported having used drugs and cannabis is the most popular type of drug used by them. Most of them did not say why and when they use drugs but more importantly 7 per cent admitted to having a drug problem at that age.

90. A third of children reported that their parents talk to them all the time about drugs, especially the boys.



Source: National Youth Study

Reply to the issues raised in part III, paragraph 6, of the list of issues

91. Increasing the integration and participation of children with disability into mainstream society.
