



REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

9th Periodic report of States parties due in 2025

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List of Abbreviations

AU – African Union

CPD- Continuing Professional Development

CRC- Convention on the Rights of the Child

CSE- Comprehensive Sexual Education

ECCE – Early Childhood Care and Education

IECD- Institute of Early Childhood Development

MDA- Ministries, Departments and Agencies

MTES- Medium-Term Expenditure Strategy

NCC – National Council for Children

NCCP – National Commission for Child Protection

SDP – Skills Development Programmes

SENCO- Special Education Needs Coordinator

SHRC- Seychelles Human Rights Commission

SITE – Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education.

SNYA – Seychelles National Youth Assembly.

SNYC- Seychelles National Youth Council

UN – United Nations

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

VTRP – Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Programme

YES- Youth Education for Success

Introduction

This document serves as the 9th periodic report submitted by the Republic of Seychelles as a State Party to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in accordance with article 43(1). The report covers the period 2020-2025, and follows the submission of the initial and combined report in 2020. The report contains measures undertaken to implement the concluding observation, including legislative and policy measures put in place to implement the provisions of the Charter, taking into account the local context and existing legislative and policy frameworks. Various Government stakeholder as well as the Civil Society were consulted for the compilation of the report.

I. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

1. Seychelles acceded to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child in February 1992. This is the second submission of Seychelles to the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, following the submission of the initial and combined report in 2020. Seychelles presented and defended its report to the AU Committee in March 2022.
2. Seychelles submitted its seventh periodic report under the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 2022. The State has also submitted reports under the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography in 2021. In that same year, Seychelles also ratified the Optional Protocol to the CRC on a communications procedure.
3. This 9th periodic report contains information about developments that took place in the promotion and protection of children's rights. The report reflects contributions from a wide range of Government agencies and civil society. It highlights the challenges encountered in the promotion and protection of children's rights in the country.
4. To finalize the report, it was sent to all child protection partners for validation. The final report was then presented to the National Commission for Child Protection. Subsequently, the report was considered and endorsed by the Cabinet of Ministers.

Context

5. Following the elections that took place in 2025, Dr. Patrick Herminie was sworn in as the sixth President of the Republic of Seychelles on 26 October 2025. Following the change in Government the country underwent a transition with changes across various Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The Social Affairs Department continue to holds the portfolio responsibility for child protection and with the new transition now sits within the Ministry of Social Affairs, Family and Equality. Other Ministries also holds obligations to ensure the survival and development of children in Seychelles such as the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.
6. According to the Seychelles National Bureau of Statistics, the Seychelles population as at 30th June 2025 is estimated at 122,730, including both Seychellois and Non-Seychellois. This shows a growth rate of 1.1% over 2024. Children accounted for 23.4% of the population.
7. During the COVID 19 Pandemic, the main focus was on preventing and containing the spread of COVID 19 in Seychelles. Therefore various measures were implemented such as quarantine measures, restriction on movement including travel restrictions, limited public assemblies and vaccination. As a result, school closures were initiated and students had to adapt to remote learning. Other activities and services were also affected such as court proceedings causing delays in children related cases and limited sensitization activities and sessions supporting children and family wellbeing. The country underwent a period of economic hardship and uncertainty, but the economy picked up with the reopening of its borders and other activities and services operating as usual.

II. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION

A. Measures to improve reporting

The Committee would then like to urge the Republic of Seychelles to comply with its reporting obligation under article 43 of the Charter by sending its periodic reports in due time.

The Committee is also concerned that the consideration of the report was delayed due to unclear channels of communication.

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for adopting a consultative process in developing this report and encourages the State Party to involve children further, Civil Society Organizations and other relevant stakeholders in the preparation of the following reports.

The Committee also recommends that the Republic of Seychelles take necessary measures to disseminate the contents of these concluding observations among children and all stakeholders and to develop an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations in collaboration with all stakeholders.

8. Although the responsibility of preparing the report lies with the Social Affairs Department, several stakeholders were consulted in the process of preparing the report and they had the opportunity to validate information incorporated into the report before its submission.
9. The concluding observation was circulated to all child protection partners for their action. Although a national action plan was not developed for the implementation for the concluding observation, many of the issues raised were matters that were already being considered and put into the action plan of the different Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The concluding observation was also uploaded on the website of the Social Affairs Department so that the public including children could have access to it.

B. Legislative measures for the promotion and protection of the right of the child

The Committee notes with appreciation that following the ratification of various international conventions, the Republic of Seychelles has made efforts to align its laws with those conventions. Several legislative and institutional reforms have been made, as well as policies and programs put in place in this respect, including the adoption of laws on education, the establishment of an early childhood development institute, the prohibition of human trafficking, the establishment of paternity leave, allowance for semi-orphans, etc. The Committee recommends that the State Party allocate sufficient technical and financial resources for the implementation of those measures in the sense that they are of a great contribution to the realization of the rights of the child.

The Committee regrets that the National Plan of Action for Children for 2005–2009 was not renewed following its evaluation in 2012. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles ensure that children’s rights issues are accorded adequate consideration in the national action plan on social renaissance.

10. The Law Commission was put in place in 2022, following the enactment of the Law Commission Act, 2022. The Commission is responsible for reviewing the laws of Seychelles and proposing amendments and new legislations. This includes laws relating to Children.
11. In 2024, a gap analysis of the Children Act 1982 was conducted. The Gap Analysis report informed the decision for the review of the Act which was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The aim is to have a modern Children Act that addresses current child related matters and domesticates international treaties in relation to children.
12. The Children (Working with Children Suitability Check) Regulations, 2024 was approved in November 2024. The regulation provides a mandatory procedure for individuals working or volunteering in child-related services in Seychelles. It establishes a comprehensive background check process, surpassing the basic police character certificate, to ensure that individuals in contact with children meet suitability standards. Several sensitization sessions were held with different stakeholders in 2024. The regulation came into force in January 2025. Individuals already in children related work have a period of 2 years to complete formalities to obtain a suitability check clearance.
13. The Children's Care Homes (Minimum Standards of Care) Regulations, 2022 was passed in August 2022. The regulation consists of 22 standards which aims to ensure that children in residential care homes are living in a safe and nurturing environment to ensure their holistic development. Sensitizations on the different standards were conducted with all children homes. During the first phase of implementation, focus was on five standards. The full implementation of the standards is expected in 2025.
14. Seychelles ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure in 2021. The Department devised an information note on the

optional protocol, which was shared with all child protection partners. This is also on the Department's website to sensitize the public.

15. The Social Security (Benefits) (Amendment) Regulations, (2025) introduced an increase in rate of statutory benefits as well as the introduction of a new benefit related to children, namely the multiple births benefit.
16. The creation of Institute of Early Childhood Development was established in 2014 under the IECD Act 2014. It became a best practice hub for ECCE in 2017 by the UNESCO-International Bureau of Education, and its status was elevated to a UNESCO Category 2 Institute in 2021. This status was enacted in 2023 with the adoption of the new Early Childhood Development Act 2022. This international mandate necessitated a new organizational structure, which has been implemented since 2023, including the recruitment of two additional technical staff and the allocation of a small budget for programmes in 2023 and 2024.
17. However, operating as a UNESCO Category 2 Institute requires a significantly larger budget to support the exponential increase in activities, align with strategic priorities for 2025 and beyond, and ensure sustainability. Accordingly, provisions were made in IECD's 2025 budget. Unfortunately, the necessary resources were not available, leading to a subsequent request for funding in the 2026 budget, for which feedback is still awaited.
18. The 'Civil Code 2020' replaces the Civil Code 1976 and aligns itself to the 1993 Constitution as well as addresses the present social context. Many of the revisions made are relevant to children's right, mainly to equalize the rights of all children and establish qualifying relationships.
19. With the amendment of the Civil Status Act in 2021, much reform was seen in birth declarations. These reforms allowed for more efficient data collection and accurate statistics.

The amended Act makes provision for all new-borns to be examined by a doctor, nurse or midwife. The health workers will then notify the civil status office of the birth.

C. Allocation of resources

The Committee notes that the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development are responsible for child survival and development. At the same time, the Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for the welfare of children. The Committee notes with concern that the shared responsibility (with the MOH receiving the vital part of the resources allocated to children's issues) might undermine the issues of the child. The Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles ensure that child rights issues are not overshadowed, and the Ministry's departments dealing with child rights receive sufficient budgetary allocation for implementing the Charter.

Furthermore, the Committee regrets that the report does not provide concrete and comprehensive information regarding the resources allocated to children's issues. The Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles conducts a comprehensive assessment of the budget needs of children, allocates adequate budgetary resources, and adopt a child-rights approach in planning the State budget by implementing a child's rights based budget tracking system to ensure the sufficiency and efficiency of the allocation and use of resources for children throughout the budget.

20. During budget preparation phase, all Ministries, Department and Agencies followed similar budget preparation process through the submission of Medium-Term Expenditure Strategy (MTES) for 3 years forecast. That is, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs and the Institute of Early Childhood Development will submit MTES budget proposal the next budget year and the next following 2 outer years along with other government bodies. The process for allocation of resources that is from the review to the final approval, will be based on similar approach adopted to all MDAs. In addition, the final allocation of resources/funds also depends on national priorities of government and requires Cabinet of Ministers approval.

21. The Children Special Fund, a fund created under the Public Finance Management Act consisting of funds from the government-consolidated fund. The Fund may receive donation from benefactors. A review of this scheme was carried out in 2018 in line with the government principles of transparency and accountability. Following this review, a 5-member Board was appointed to manage the fund. Different categories of applications for individuals and organisations wishing to receive funding from the fund have been introduced. Applications need to be for purposes of educational, social, medical value or community projects that will benefit children. The new application process requires applicants to attach supporting documents for consideration by the Board. For the year 2024 and 2025, 97 applications were approved in each year respectively to receive funding under the Children Special Fund.
22. The National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Trust Fund was established in 2011 to support and promote early childhood development initiatives across the country. Its main objectives include advancing national ECCE programmes and projects, mobilizing resources, and ensuring the sustainability of ECCE efforts. The fund receives contributions from various sources, including the government, private individuals, companies, and organizations, with the government being the largest contributor. The Trust Fund is managed by a Board of Trustees composed of nine members appointed by the Ministry responsible for Finance. In recent years, the Trust Fund has approved over 80 projects, with 36 projects in 2024 and 50 projects in 2025, all aimed at benefiting young children through child care services, preschools, and other sectors involved in ECCE.
23. The Disability Trust Fund (DTF) continues to provide targeted financial support to persons with disabilities, including children. Recent adjustments to the Fund have enhanced its responsiveness and accessibility, contributing to improved support for vulnerable groups and reflecting recent policy and operational changes. In 2024, 27 individuals were provided assistance under the DTF, of which 5 were children and in 2025, of the 22 individuals assisted, 2 were children. Children were assisted with items such as specialised needs stroller, transfer chair and prosthetic shoes.

D. Measures to improve coordination

As per the State Party report, many entities are involved in protecting children in the Republic of Seychelles, with statutory and non-statutory obligations. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development are responsible for child survival and development, while the Ministry of Social Affairs is responsible for the welfare of children. The Committee believes that in such instances, a strong coordination and collaboration system is required from the different entities. Hence, the Committee recommends that the State Party ensures the establishment of an entity mandated with coordination, and that such an entity is adequately resourced and mandated in order to avoid overlap in the tasks performed by the different bodies dealing with child rights issues.

24. The National Council for Children reviewed its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for managing allegations of child abuse to ensure alignment with current practices and policies. In addition, NCC actively participates in interagency meetings and collaborations, working closely with key stakeholders to enhance coordination and improve services for children and families.

25. Issues related to children are cross cutting, as such various Ministries, Departments and Agencies are involved in providing services to children that uphold their rights. The Social Services Division is mandated to undertake investigation in matters of child protection. To effectively do so, the Division leads a multi- sectoral committee, which allows for better coordination between child protection partners and facilitates the sharing of information. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, and the Police plays a crucial role in Child protection and mechanism are in place within these organization to ensure that the rights of children are upheld guided by the best interest of the child principle. Further work was carried out in 2024-2025 to strengthen the child protection procedure amongst partners. This included development of child protection sectors Standard Operating Procedures, review of the existing child protection Working Together Manual, which was still being finalized at the time of reporting.

26. The NCCP, Inter Agency Committee, Child Protection Team, Social Services Committee draw upon various experts, collaborating to effectively utilize resources to provide services for children.
27. As part of the day to day work of child protection service providers, the Risk Assessment Framework is still being utilized for the referral of cases amongst partners, which facilitates services to children in need. More support services are expected to be introduced to support casework such as the Youth Hope Centre, which is in construction phase. The centre will deliver behavior modification programme to at risk adolescents.
28. The NCCP continues to advise the Government on matters important to the promotion and protection of children rights. The Commission advised the Government to set up a Child law Reform Committee following the R vs ML & Ors [2020] SCSC 256 whereby three men, including a police officer, pleaded guilty and were convicted on charges stemming from the sexual abuse of 75 girls ranging in age from 12 to 18 over a period of seven years. The Committee completed its work in 2021 and provided their final report to the President of Seychelles. The recommendations provided to enhance the legal protection of children will be taken up by the Attorney General's office. The Committee proposed a modern sexual offence legislation, however further work is needed prior to the enactment of the Sexual Offence Bill.
29. The Strategic Plan of the Social Affairs Department 2023-2026 provides the main strategic priorities of the Department for the said period. The plan puts emphasis on the collaborative work approach between multiple stakeholders to effectively provide services to children and other vulnerable individuals in the society.

E. Measures to improve independent monitoring

The committee notes with appreciation the existence of the Observatory of the Rights of the Child of the Indian Ocean in the years between 2004-2008. However, the Committee regrets that the report does not provide sufficient information on the results presented by this body and the fact that its mandate has not been renewed. The Committee encourages the government to work towards the creation of such organs, given that they allow easy monitoring of the state of

implementation of the rights of the child. The Committee also commends the efforts of the Government in establishing a National Human Rights Commission in 2009. While appreciating its work, the Committee notes that the Seychelles Human Rights Commission does not comply with the Paris Principles and hence the Committee recommends that the State Party consider restructuring the Commission to ensure its independence. The Committee also recommends that a unit which deals with child rights issues is established within the Commission. Moreover, the Committee encourages the State Party to enable its Human Rights Commission to receive complaints from children.

30. The Seychelles Human Rights Commission (SHRC) is an independent statutory authority established under **the Seychelles Human Rights Commission Act, 2018**, which replaces the former National Human Rights Commission that was established in 2009. The SHRC is led by five part time Commissioners; a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and three Commissioners. In May 2024, the newly appointed Commissioners for the second term were sworn in and the reappointed Chairperson was sworn in July 2024. Presently, the SHRC has 12 full time staff members.

31. The SHRC promotes and protects human rights in Seychelles by: Fostering understanding of human rights through education and awareness building; Engaging with organisations which actively promote human rights; Undertaking structural reviews of laws, government policies and frameworks relating to human rights and making recommendations; Monitoring implementation of, and compliance with, international and regional human rights instruments; Identifying and investigating alleged human rights violations and where possible, seek redress.

32. The mandate of the SHRC does not include a specific unit for monitoring children's rights but it covers the monitoring of **all** human rights conventions, treaties and covenants. As stated in the **Seychelles Human Rights Commission Act, 2018** in Section 14(1) b (vi) "the Commission shall monitor the implementation of, and compliance with, international and regional conventions and treaties, international and regional covenants and international and regional charters relating to the objects of the Commission".

33. The monitoring unit of the SHRC, due to budget constraints, has only one staff member. This unit has started monitoring the implementation of, and compliance with the nine core UN Human Rights treaties where Seychelles is party to all nine treaties. Moreover, the unit is also planning to monitor all of the rights under the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which include child rights. However, given the extent of its monitoring mandate, the SHRC will require more resources to meet this mandate effectively.
34. The SHRC can receive complaints from children in the presence of a parent or a legal guardian. To date, the SHRC has not received any direct complaints from children.
35. A Key function of the National Council for Children, listed under the NCC ACT 1991, amended in 1999, is to promote the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child hence NCC would be the organisation best placed to receive and report complaints from children.

F. Measures to promote public awareness of the African Children's Charter

From the State Party report, the Committee notes that the Charter is not well known at the local level, despite some efforts that have been made over the past few years to disseminate information about the charter in commemoration of the Day of the African Child. The Committee encourages the Republic of Seychelles to carry out more activities to disseminate and popularize the content of the Charter. In this regard, the Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles intensifies its efforts to popularize the contents of the Charter, including by translating the Charter to local languages, incorporating the Charter in the education system at all levels, undertaking popularization events among government officials working on child rights issues as well as other stakeholders, and increasing the meaningful participation of children in the celebration of the Day of African Child (DAC).

36. Slow progress against this – in Seychelles, more emphasis is made on the celebration of the Universal Day of the Child in November. However, a successful outcome of the celebration of the African Day of the Child by NCC in 2024 was the facilitation of a 'Conversation with the Minister of Education' led by NCC. This involved a group of 13 year olds, from each

secondary school, sharing their views about various educational policies and practices. This led to the change in the school hair policy in 2025.

III. DEFINITION OF THE CHILD

A. Definition of the child under Seychelles law

The committee notes with satisfaction that the age of majority is 18 years old for both boys and girls. However, the Committee is concerned about the lack of clarity on some issues regarding the other legal minimum ages. The State party report alluded that a 7 years old child cannot be held responsible for a criminal offence, and a child between 7 and 12 can only be held accountable when he/she is considered to understand what they are doing is wrong. The Committee is concerned about the minimum age of criminal responsibility and the basis on which a child between 7 and 12 is considered to understand that what they are doing is wrong. In this regard, the Committee recommends that this age is reconsidered and aligned with international standards. In addition, the Committee would like to recommend that the Republic of Seychelles improve the measures of separation of children from adult detainees and their treatment received by children in prison.

The Committee is further concerned that the age of marriage is not in conformity with the Charter as the report indicates that a child below 18 can get married with the consent of his parents, and boys below 18 and girls below 15 can get married with the authorisation of a government official designated by the government. The Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles take measures to prohibit the marriage of children under 18 years old with no exception and to harmonise the age of marriage to 18 years old for both boys and girls.

37. The age of criminal responsibility has been increased from 7 to 10 years of age. It should be noted that under section 94(1) of the Children Act, Cap. 28, no child under 14 years of age can be sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

38. Following the enactment of the Civil Code of Seychelles Act, 2020 (Act 1 of 2021), Section 40 of the Civil status Act was repealed doing away with the disparity in the age of parties

contracting a marriage. Therefore, all parties contracting in marriage have to be 18 years and above.

39. In early 2024, the Youth Offenders Facility on Praslin was opened. It is a place for juvenile to serve sentences imposed on them by the court. The opening of the institution creates the separation of children and adult in Prison establishment.

IV. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A. Non-discrimination

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for the measures undertaken to ensure that children are free from discrimination based on their parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status. The Committee nevertheless recommends that the Republic of Seychelles continue to swiftly address all forms of discrimination, including multiple forms of discrimination, against all groups of children in vulnerable situations and to raise awareness of its harmful impact and combat discriminatory societal attitudes.

The Committee notes with appreciation the measures that have been taken to address gender disparities and disadvantages faced by the girl child. However, the Committee recommends that the State party build on the outcome of these measures to enhance targeted intervention in educating the girl child, with a stronger emphasis on advancing their representation in technical and vocational areas.

40. The Civil Code 2020 aims to provide more fairness and equality in the lives of all individuals from birth to death. For instance, Section 260 of the Civil Code (2020) recognizes a “qualifying relationship” as a domestic relationship between two persons of full age and capacity characterized by stability and continuity. Additionally, the status of legitimacy and illegitimacy in reference to children has been abolished in the newly promulgated Civil Code to comply with the equality of rights provisions in the Constitution.

41. Children have free access to education regardless of their socio economic background, gender or race. With the aim of promoting equity and breaking barrier, awareness sessions on inclusion are conducted in schools as well as some Professional Centers for advance education. The Ministry of Education is progressively providing assistive technology and specialized teaching and learning resources for students.
42. In 2024, the Inclusive Education Policy (2015) was reviewed with the involvement of different stakeholders for sensitisation and endorsement. Capacity building of Special Education Needs Coordinators from Primary and Secondary Schools is ongoing so that they lead provision and implementation of inclusion in schools. In early 2025, the Ministry of Education implemented the Guidelines on Access Arrangements of Key Stage End of Year Assessment for all learners with additional educational needs. Additionally, an increase in the number of girls taking courses in technical and vocational areas has been observed.
43. A targeted Vocational Training and Rehabilitation Programme (VTRP) was introduced in 2022 for youth with disabilities with a vision to help youth with disabilities prepare for and find an employment or some form of meaningful activity that will enable them to integrate into mainstream society, become independent and contribute to the economy of the country. The programme uses individual needs, abilities and orientations, to tailor skills development and employment programmes and bridge the existing gap between learning and the needs of the labour market.

B. Best interests of the child

The State Party report indicates certain issues that prevent cases involving children from being given priority in order not to prejudice the well-being of the child. The report also indicates that the situation has improved over the last couple of years with changes to reform the justice system. The Committee appreciates this improvement even though the Report does not give enough information as to which measures have been put in place. Moreover, the Committee recommends that the State Party follow up on the implementation of these measures to ensure that cases involving children are given priority.

The Committee stresses that the principle of the best interests of the child has to be the primary consideration in any action affecting the child, including in law enforcement, family setting, schools and in providing other services. In this regard, the Committee encourages the State Party to train judges, the police, social workers, teachers, and health care personnel on how to implement the best interests of the child in their respective sectors; and to create platforms to inform parents, families, and all other stakeholders on how to apply the principle in all settings and in any action affecting the child.

44. The Children (Amendment) Act, 2025, which seeks to amend Section 77 (1) to increase the number of Vice-Chairpersons from two to three and remove the statutory limit on the amount of members that may be appointed to the Family Tribunal will ensure that the Tribunal's capacity to cater to the increased caseload is bolstered. This will, in effect, reduce delays and ensure that the well-being of the child is prioritized.
45. The Children (Amendment) Act, 2025 which amends Section 6 has retained the Tribunal's discretion to refrain from ordering the imprisonment of a parent if it is not in the child's best interests, unless it finds that a fine alone would be inadequate or inappropriate.
46. The amendment of Section 78 of the Children Act empowers the Tribunal to refer a matter to mediation at any stage of the proceedings where it is deemed in the best interests of the child. This measure promotes the amicable resolution of disputes and encourage parents, as much as possible, to maintain constructive relationships which ultimately serves the best interests of the child.
47. In the draft Family Tribunal Rules which are currently under development, particular emphasis is placed on the best interests of the child. The rules provide for child-friendly procedures and safeguards, including the appointment of a guardian ad litem to represent and safeguard the best interests of children in matters involving them. The best interests of a child is a key focus in the Family Tribunal Rules currently being drafted.

48. In 2024, a total of 3,674 children participated in various well-being and safeguarding programmes delivered and facilitated by NCC. Additionally, 492 adults received training on parenting or the safeguarding and protection of the child. All training initiatives were designed to actively engage participants in upholding and ensuring the best interests of the child. 335 children also received some form of therapeutic intervention/support in 2024.
49. The National Council for Children introduced risk categorization of its cases in 2024 with high risk cases being allocated a therapist within twenty four hours.
50. In line with this effort, the existence of the Child Protection Unit within the Police since 2015 has continued to ensure that cases involving children are given priority and that the well-being of the child is safeguarded throughout the investigative process.
51. A revision of the relevant legal provisions including those governing the Identification Parade are under way.
52. In addition, the provisions of the Evidence Act, which allow for the use of live television links and special measures for witnesses classified as vulnerable, are now consistently applied by the courts. This ensures that children are able to give evidence in a manner that minimises trauma and safeguards their best interests.

C. The right to life, survival and development

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for the various policies that have repeatedly emphasised the urgency of measures to promote child survival and development, focusing on three sectors equally essential to this goal: education, health, care and housing. The Committee, therefore, encourages the government to multiply such measures and follow up on their implementation to ensure that they respond to the need to protect, promote and fulfil the right to life, Survival and development of Seychelles' children.

53. The National Development Strategy 2024-2028 covers national priorities for the whole of Seychelles, and this includes the best interests and rights of children. These include ensuring

inclusion in schools, and providing more opportunities for continuing professional development, promoting healthy living, and tackling obesity.

54. To ensure the survival and development of the children of Seychelles, several efforts have been undertaken such as the launching of the ‘Stop Obesity Campaign’ which focuses on a healthier lifestyle for the Seychellois people. In addition, there has been revision in housing policies that allows the Government to build more housing units for its citizens, Furthermore, the revision in the Housing Finance Company loan products allows individuals to take ownership of their home renovations, rather than having to rely on the Government.

D. Child participation

The Committee commends the State Party for establishing various assembly platforms for children, enabling them to participate in the public life and allowing them to have their voices heard. The Committee encourages the Republic of Seychelles to ensure that platforms such as the National Youth Assembly of Seychelles are not just existing structures and are not limited to mere consultations but also ensure that children are effectively given the opportunity to make their voices heard and heard and to take active part in decision-making on issues concerning them in line with their evolving capacities. The State party is encouraged to continue to ensure that such participation is transparent and meaningful.

55. The NCC organizes and hosts a series of activities that provide children with a platform to express their thoughts and opinions, as well as engage with key stakeholders. Children from all the secondary schools, State and Private, had the unique opportunity to engage in dialogue with the President of the Republic, the Minister of Education, the Chief Justice and Judges, lawyers, and other professionals working directly with children. A total of 176 children took part in these activities in 2024.

56. The Youth Festival is celebrated annually, providing space for children to demonstrate their talents and express themselves.

57. The Seychelles National Youth Assembly (SNYA) seeks to channel the concerns of youths to policy makers. The Committee on Youth and Media of the National Parliament has established ties with the SNYA so as to be able to better ensure that the concerns of children are integrated within their work.

V. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

A. Right to a name, nationality and identity

The Committee notes with satisfaction the various legislative measures taken by Republic of Seychelles to ensure that children of Seychelles enjoy their rights to a name, nationality and birth registration. However, the Committee encourages the State Party to ensure that the process for child registration is accessible to all children born on the territory. In this regard, the Committee draws the attention of the State Party to General Comment 6 (2) of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child that provides that ‘every child shall be registered immediately after birth’. The Committee urges the State Party to make this right effective, universal, free and accessible immediately upon the child’s birth.

Regarding children born to unknown parents or abandoned by their parents on the territory of the State party, the Committee recommends that the State Party take measures to ensure those children are recognised as citizens and not rendered stateless.

Based on the State Party report and the constructive discussions with the delegation, the Committee was able to identify several restriction for the adoption of children from Seychelles, especially regarding international adoption. While recognising the basis for some of these restrictions, the Committee recommends swift implementation guided by and, prioritising the best interest of the child. The Committee reminds the Republic of Seychelles that for the best interest of the child, domestic adoption should be prioritised. However, in the case of international adoption, the Committee recommends that the State put in place a robust system for monitoring purposes.

The Committee is equally concerned about the possibility of changing the name of the child in case of divorce without the child's consent. The Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that the views of the child are taken into account in this process and that his best interest is prioritised.

58. The Civil Status (Amendment) Act 2021, makes provision for all newborns to be examined by a doctor, nurse or midwife, who then notifies the civil status office of the births. As stated by the Act, notification of birth should be given within 3 days of the birth. The registration of a child shall be done within 30 days of the birth.
59. In the case of an abandoned child, if within 60 days, despite efforts, the identity of the child is not established, the Director responsible for children affairs in consultation with a medical practitioner shall provide the Civil Status office with an affidavit containing information gathered about the child, requesting that the child be registered.
60. Furthermore, the act creates a Register of Births occurring outside Seychelles for person whom at the time of the birth is a Citizen of Seychelles in accordance with the laws of Seychelles
61. The adoption procedures take place in absolute confidentiality for the sake of the parties involved. The law does not explicitly provide the adopted child with the legal right to establish links with his/her biological parents. Given the size of the country, to ensure stable families, following adoption, closed adoption is practiced. However, this does not prevent adoptive parents themselves from disclosing information about the biological parents and for the adoptive child to establish link after reaching the age of majority. During the year 2024, there were 11 adoptions recorded.

B. Freedom of expression

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for the efforts undertaken to guarantee freedom of expression for children. However, the committee notes that according to the State Party report, the consensus among children is that in many cases, in their family life, their views and opinions are not sufficiently respected or recognised. According to the report, it is due to cultural beliefs and perceptions that freedom of expression, like many other rights, is often seen as an affront to adult authority or traditional approaches to child rearing. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the Republic of Seychelles take measures to sensitise families and communities on the importance of children's views, especially on issues that concern them.

The Committee also commends the Republic of Seychelles for establishing different platforms that enable children to express their views freely. The Committee encourages the State to ensure as much as possible that those platforms are accessible to all categories of children, including children with specific needs.

62. Sections 2A and 3 of the Children Act requires the promotion of the best interests of the child and consideration of their wishes and feelings. Representation of children by guardian ad litem in cases involving children and their rights will enable the child's voice to be heard more clearly in proceedings. In drafting the Family Tribunal Rules, in the adoption procedure, it shall be stressed that the children's views ought to be taken into consideration.
63. The NCC has provided children with various platforms to express their views, including activities such as the annual live press conference with the President of the Republic, a dialogue with the Minister of Education, and a Hot Seating session with the Chief Justice. Additionally, Safeguarding and Rights and Responsibilities sessions are conducted, on an annual basis, in all state Primary 6 and Secondary 1 classes, offering students a space to discuss issues affecting them. Parent sessions held in 2024 emphasized the importance of communication and giving children the opportunity to express themselves. Participants in these sessions have reported how much they have greatly benefited from these interactions and engagement sessions.

C. Freedom of thoughts, Conscience and Religion

The Committee is concerned that children below 18 cannot fully exercise their freedom of religion as this right is conditioned by the consent of the child's parent or guardian concerning religious instruction or observance in any school or institution, which the child may attend or hold. The Committee recommends that taking into account the evolving capacity of the child, this restriction is reconsidered. The Committee also recommends that the principle of best interest of the child is given due consideration in the implementation of this measure. In addition, the Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles ensure that no form of pressure is exercised on children with regard to the choice of their religion. The Committee further recommends the State Party to continue sensitizing parents and caregivers on the right of children to freedom of religion, thought, and conscience.

64. In recent years, religious education in schools has been a space for religious freedom and beliefs. The parents guides the schools on the religious practice of each child. In the spirit of inclusion student of any denomination may participate in school assembly's prayer. Additionally other sacred text is allowed in school along with the bible. Religious education can be seen as important for children as it helps them gain a better understanding of the different views and beliefs whilst at the same time teaching them to respect individuals with different beliefs.

D. Right to privacy

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for the constitutional guarantees of the Right to privacy. The Committee would, however; like to recommend that the state take specific legislative measures that are child rights based oriented in order to fill the gaps between the laws and the practice. More specifically, the Committee is concerned about the issue of the unauthorized portrayal of a protected child living in children's homes in the media. The Committee encourages the State Party to adopt policies and put in place strategies to address this issue. This can be done through training journalists and media practitioners about the necessity to consider the sensitivities related to children's rights issues in general, and protecting children in this case while processing information.

65. A media policy was developed in 2017, to address the portrayal of children in the media with special emphasis on those living in care homes. It emphasizes on the right to privacy and provides specific guidelines to media professional on how to carry out their work with due consideration for the best interest of the child. Sensitizations were conducted with stakeholders which contributed to the implementation of the policy. The application of the policy continues to be actively implemented and closely monitored.

VI. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE

A. Parental responsibility and family support

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for the various policies that have been put in place to ensure that parents fulfil their responsibilities, as well as to support the family unit. The Committee recommends that more actions are taken in this regard, especially in a context

where the family unit in Seychelles has experienced a radical change, which has had various consequences on the way to approach parenthood.

66. In the Children (Amendment) Act, 2025 Section 6 (3) is amended by reducing the standard of proof from the criminal standard to that of a civil standard, making it easier to enforce maintenance orders. Section 6(2) will now empower the Tribunal to determine the prescribed maintenance sum to be paid by a parent in respect of each child. Enhances the Tribunal's powers pursuant to the Tribunal's exclusive jurisdiction under the Act to determine maintenance of a child. The repeal of Section 19(5) of the Children Act will strengthen enforcement of maintenance orders by allowing civil imprisonment for non-compliance.
67. NCC has engaged parents through a variety of tailored parenting programmes. Currently, NCC offers specialized courses including 'Conscious Parenting, Parenting Toddlers and Pre-schoolers, Parenting Pre-teens and Teenagers, Basic Parenting, and Fathers' Engagement. These diverse modules are designed to address the varying needs of different family structures and needs. NCC therapeutic intervention involves therapists working with both the child and his/her parents or carers. NCC has been lobbying Social Services to review its policy around alternative care for children removed or separated from their parents.
68. The Family Department is developing a Parenting Policy. The Seychelles National Parenting Policy Framework will harness all synergies and ensure there is one framework within which all government agencies and other partners share one vision to support and empower families with the skills required to parent their children, to fulfil their obligations towards one another for a harmonised and prosperous society.
69. The parenting education programme, introduced in 2013 is still going strong and is carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The sessions are conducted before and after birth. Participants are provided with psychosocial support during their pregnancies and they get the chance to learn about different topics such as stress, breastfeeding, budgeting and child development amongst others. During the year 2024, a total of 121 antenatal classes and 100 post-delivery classes were conducted across various regions on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue.

70. The programme aims to empower parents with appropriate knowledge and skills needed to impact positive outcomes for children and parents, provide support to parents to help alleviate challenges, prepare parents to cope with post-delivery challenges, promote and emphasize on the importance of effective family roles, healthy routines and family activities, promote effective maternal/paternal and infant well-being and bridge the gaps by offering safety nets and social networking.
71. Despite state efforts to encourage family preservation, the number of family breakdown is still significant. In 2024, the Family Tribunal referred 429 cases to Social services relating to custody, access and maintenance.

B. Alternative care

The Committed notes with appreciation the efforts undertaken to ensure an adequate alternative care for children deprived of family environment. However, the Committee notes from the State Party Report that there are still issues around the alternative care provided to those children. Therefore, the Committee recommends that the existing policies are revised to include the best interests of the child in providing alternative care services.

The Committee further recommends that the Republic of Seychelles take necessary measures to ensure effective monitoring and assessment for the placement of children. Additionally, the State should take measures to expand the foster care system for children who cannot stay with their families, with a view to reducing the institutionalisation of children. Along the same line, the State is encouraged to allocate enough technical, human, and financial resources to alternative care centers and other child protection services.

72. The main role of Social Services Division is to empower children and families to be able to take care of its members. When deemed necessary and as given the power by the Children Act, the Director of Social Services may intervene in instances where children may require protection. Alternative placement for children is always explored with existing family members first and placement in institutions as a last resort.

73. Currently Seychelles has one state owned residential home for children and the Catholic Church offers other children home facilities. Children are admitted to the institutions through a Family Tribunal Order and under a care plan. Children are assigned with a social worker who conducts visits and maintain communication with the management of the institutions. Where it is in the best interest of the child, parental contact is encouraged.
74. At the time of compiling this report there were a total of **60 children in care homes** with the President's Village holding the highest number of children in care.
75. The Children Act 1982 makes provision for foster care , which is regulated by the Social Services Division. Potential foster parents have to undergo a vetting process to ensure they are fit to be foster parents. To assist foster parents to take care of a child they receive an allowance per child. This foster care benefit, was revised and came into effect in 2025. At the time of finalizing this report there were a total number of 10 registered foster parents. The Social Services Division continues to advocate for more individuals to come forward to register as foster parents.
76. Social workers carries out visits regularly to children in alternative care, continuously discuss, and review the reintegration plan of children with their biological families to realize reintegration when and where possible.
77. In some instances, despite efforts by Social Services to reintegrate children within their families this may not always happen and upon reaching the age of adulthood there are gaps in finding alternative accommodation. Social Services continues to lobby for a halfway home to improve the transition from care to out of care integration.

C. Reform, family reintegration and social rehabilitation

The Committee is concerned about the fact that once a parent is incarcerated in Seychelles, their children face considerable difficulty maintaining regular or meaningful contact, and that they are allowed only one visit per month, lasting between half an hour and an hour. The Committee stresses that this situation negatively affects the child's right to parental care and has consequences on their development. The Committee, therefore, recommends that the State Party take necessary actions to ensure a non-custodial sentence will always be first considered when

sentencing parents. In this regard, the Committee recommends the State Party refer to the guidance provided in the Committee's General Comment No1 on article 30 of the Charter.

78. In the Children (Amendment) Act, 2025, the Tribunal has retained the discretion to avoid imprisonment of a parent if it is not in the child's best interests, unless it finds that a fine alone would be inadequate or inappropriate. This ensures that, in the best interests of the child, non-custodial sentencing is prioritized by the Family Tribunal when dealing with parents who shirk their parental responsibilities.
79. NCC provides a child-friendly space in the form of a playroom for incarcerated and other parents who need supervised access or visits. NCC has developed a module specifically designed to support incarcerated parents in maintaining positive engagement with their children during their period in prison.
80. Prison services has implemented several measures to enhance the parental relationship between incarcerated parents and their children
 - Fortnightly Visits: Parents participating in rehabilitation programmes are granted the privilege of having visits every two weeks, providing more opportunities for interaction with their children.
 - Home Visits: Home visits are offered, allowing parents to maintain family bonds in a familiar environment.
 - Holiday Visits: Children will have the opportunity for regular visits during school holidays, ensuring time together when children are free from educational commitments.
 - Special Weekend Visits: During weekends, special visits are facilitated, allowing families to spend meaningful time together.
 - Communication Options: Inmates are allowed phone calls and international WhatsApp calls for foreign inmates, ensuring that distance does not hinder communication with families
 - Financial Support through Work Programmes: Inmates participating in work programmes receive a monthly allowance, which can be used to support their children financially, contributing to their well-being.
 - Safeguarding training: 34 Prison Officers including those working with the Young Offenders placed at the Youth Offending Facility, have followed tailor-made Safeguarding programmes designed by NCC entitled 'Creating a safe and supportive environment for Young Offenders' and 'Keeping our Children safe'.

These measures aim to provide a supportive environment for preserving the parent-child relationship, recognizing the vital importance of parental contact for the child's development.

VII. DISABILITY, HEALTH AND WELFARE

A. Children with disabilities

The State party report indicates that children with disabilities in Seychelles still face direct and indirect discrimination and continue to be marginalized from most mainstream activities because of barriers that prevent them from enjoying the same opportunities as other children. While recalling the principles of non-discrimination and equal access to basic services, the Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles take all necessary measures to substantially address this deficiency and ensure that children with disability have meaningful access to day-care facilities as well as to schools.

Furthermore, the reports indicate that some general services for children, including leisure and recreational facilities, still do not cater for children with disabilities. It also points to the inaccessibility of public facilities to disabled persons, including children. On this basis, the Committee recommends the State to take measures to ensure that recreational facilities are disability-friendly and, most importantly, that public facilities are accessible to persons with disability, including children.

81. The Early Childhood Development Act (2023), the National Standards on Childminding Regulations (2016), and the National Standards for Child Care Centres Regulations (2024) include specific provisions and priorities aimed at enhancing inclusion and accessibility for children with disabilities. These regulations focus particularly on home-based and centre-based child care services, aligning with the recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Additionally, the Seychelles Framework for ECCE (2023) outlines key priorities through a multi-sectoral approach, emphasizing inclusion to ensure equitable access to programs and services. It also highlights the importance of providing targeted support for children and families most in need.

82. Childcare service providers registered with the IECD are actively implementing these standards. Their facilities are regularly inspected to ensure compliance, promoting inclusive care and education for children with disabilities. Children's early learning readiness for preschool is assessed annually. Those identified as not yet ready are referred to the Early Childhood Intervention Centre for further testing, diagnosis, and intervention by preschool staff. While data from the Early Learning Readiness Assessment supports these referrals, there remains a lack of comprehensive data on children with disabilities within the ECCE sector and their access to specialized assistance. To address this gap, disaggregated data should be collected and analyzed to inform policy and planning efforts. Additionally, the development of a national database is recommended to better track the needs of children with disabilities and monitor service responses.
83. As part of IECD's ongoing capacity-building initiatives for registered child care service providers, professional development training modules on disability awareness, inclusive practices, and supporting children with special needs are regularly offered. These training sessions, conducted in collaboration with education and health sector professionals, provide practical guidance to early years practitioners. There is also an urgent need to expand training efforts to prepare more child care and preschool personnel to work effectively with children with disabilities in mainstream settings. Furthermore, career guidance sessions should be introduced for secondary students aspiring to enter the specialized fields of inclusivity and special needs education.
84. Recently, IECD launched a project to organize camps for children with learning difficulties. Trained speech pathologists in Seychelles have been mobilized to assist with these initiatives. They will conduct assessments of participating children and provide guidance to parents on techniques for supporting their children's development. This initiative aims to reduce long waiting times for specialized services and ensure timely support for children with learning challenges. It is in its planning stage and will commence in 2026.
85. The Ministry of Education conducted an audit in one primary and one secondary school to assess accessibility and suitability for all learners. Serious consideration is given in the

planning of new school buildings for easy access for children with disabilities, for example, the new crèche in Anse Royale Primary is equipped with ramps and they also have one toilet that is accessible to wheel-chair users. Additionally to facilitate learners with physical disabilities some school managers have been keeping classes with learners with mobility issues on the ground floor.

86. To enhance the capacity of physical education teachers in this area, they have undergone capacity-building sessions on adaptive physical education and sports.
87. Given the various effort geared towards inclusion, there has been the transfer of 4 learners from a special school to mainstream schools—2 with visual impairment and 2 with autism spectrum disorder.
88. Most schools have a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to provide support to children with different education needs in order for them to access the school programme.
89. More efforts have been put towards improving access for mobility challenged individuals such as designated parking for people living with a disability and the inclusion of ramps in buildings. The Elderly and Disable Division in the Family Department along with other stakeholders continues advocating for the disabled for a more inclusive and accessible society.

B. Health and health services

The Committee notes with appreciation that there are constitutional guarantees for the Right to health in Seychelles, as well as legislative measures and policies put in place to ensure that health care services, including sexual and reproductive health, are accessible to all including children. However, despite these guarantees, the Committee notes an increase in teenage pregnancies. This can significantly be attributed to the fact that there is a gap between the minimum legal age for sexual consent (15 years) and access to sexual health services without parental consent (18 years). The Committee, therefore, recommends that this measure is reviewed to enable full access to sexual and reproductive health care services to children with the minimum age of sexual consent

The Committee encourages the State Party to take concrete action. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the State Party consider to:

- a. Deliberate developing programmes on the inclusion and teaching of sexual and reproductive health and rights in schools.*
- b. Engage in mass sensitisation and dissemination of information on the right to health as contained in the Constitution and ratified instruments.*
- c. Deal with the problem of teenage pregnancies by addressing root causes and other societal problems like gender inequalities and poverty - to prevent or minimise the manipulation of children in relationships.*

90. National Commission for Child Protection adopted three Strategic priority areas for the period 2024-2026. One of which is adolescent sexual reproductive health matters to address the concern of teenage pregnancy. The Social Affairs Department and the Health Care agency is taking the lead on this specific priority, with the involvement of other stakeholders on a multi sectoral committee.
91. The aim of the multi sectoral committee is to promote a collaborative approach for working on programmes for teenage parents, advocate for a strategic and coordinated approach to make services available for teenage mothers, contribute towards prevention programmes to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy in Seychelles, strengthen inter-sectoral collaboration in promoting adolescent sexual reproductive health and develop a three-year Action Plan with outlined goals, time frame and expected outcomes for clear implementation. The committee consist of members from Social Affairs Department, Family Department, National Council for Children, Education Services, Ministry of Health (Represented by Youth Health Center) Employment Department, Seychelles Police, SNYC and Civil Society represented by Les Li Viv.
92. The Skills Development Programme, provides training opportunities for youth aged 15-17 years, school drop outs or those not admitted to Professional Centres after completion of their secondary education. In addition, the reskilling programme was introduced in 2021 and aims to provide the necessary skills to the unemployed in order to enter the labor market. The

Employment Department provides avenues to support the vulnerable, including teenage mothers, to become productive citizens.

93. In 2025, 17 NCC staff members were trained in Comprehensive Sexual Education (CSE) programme delivered by the Family Section of the Ministry of Health. Training has also been conducted with 52 social workers. These training aim to provide individuals working with children with skills to provide support to young people and their parent in dealing with sexuality and relationship matters.
94. In early 2025, the Ministry of Health along with its partners launched the Youth Education for Success (YES) campaign which aims to empower adolescents as well as their parents by discussing topics such as sexual and reproductive health, staying safe and violence prevention. These are done through interactive workshops, exhibition and through media contents. A total of 130 parents participated in the monthly sessions conducted. The project further included exhibitions at the Youth Health Centres, where adolescents were continuously sensitized on reproductive health. Additionally, a WhatsApp channel has been established at the Youth Health Centre to enhance awareness of CSE concepts and to provide regular updates on the YES campaign to young people.
95. NCC supported Elles Foundation, an NGO, to implement their Stay-and-Play programme that targets teenage mothers. The programme provides a supportive environment for the teenage mothers and their children, where they are supported and empowered through educational talks and other sessions addressing issues such as key parenting, health and social issues. Given the need of many teenage parents, several private individuals and private companies donates essential food and supplies to alleviate the financial burden of the young mothers.
96. In 2022, the Government launched a free breakfast programme in all state schools, along with free lunch provisions. This initiative was part of the efforts to deal with health challenges amongst children especially in terms of nutrition and obesity.

In relation to HIV/AIDS, the Committee notes with satisfaction the efforts undertaken by the Republic of Seychelles to eradicate HIV, especially for children, through the actions to prevent the mother to child transmission. The Committee encourages the State Party to intensify these actions and to multiply its efforts to raise awareness on HIV/AIDS with no complacency, including by providing HIV/AIDS prevention education in schools

97. To support efforts in preventing mother to child transmission an integrated testing and treatment guideline was introduced in 2024. In 2023, of the 18 known cases of HIV positive pregnancies, no cases of mother to child of HIV was documented.
98. In November 2023, Seychelles hosted the 19th Colloque of Indian Ocean on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Addiction under the theme ' HIV at the hub of integrated and accessible care'. Over 200 participants from regional countries and territories were in attendance for the 3 days colloque.
99. As stated by the National Health Strategic Plan 2022-2026, the country is committed to achieving the global goal to end HIV/AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. To attain this more effort is needed in implementing effective biomedical prevention interventions and better HIV treatment and care outcomes.
100. The National Strategic plan for HIV/AIDS is expected to be reviewed in 2026. The previous Strategic plan was for the period 2019-2023.

VIII. EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

A. Education

The Committee identifies some issues that must be addressed to enable a practical realisation of the right to education for all children in Seychelles. One crucial issue is that there is a shortage of highly educated Seychellois teachers due to difficult working conditions and limited career prospects for them. This subsequently affects the quality of education that the children receive. In

this regard, the Committee recommends that the State Party improves funding to the education sector for the retention of teachers to inform the quality of Education.

The State Party Report also identifies concerns about the protection and safety of the school environment, particularly the prevalence of aggressive behaviour among students and assault of teachers by relatives of students. The Committee is concerned about the security and the safety of children and their teachers, as this will create an environment not conducive to realising the Right of children to Education. The Committee recommends that the State Party take measures to rectify the situation and promptly reinforce school security.

101. As part of the efforts to attract more teachers, there was a revision of the Teacher's Scheme of Service (TSS). Most of the teachers in crèche, primary and secondary schools have at least a certificate or higher level of education. The pool of teachers consist of both Seychellois and expatriate teachers. Given the shortage of Seychellois teachers, there is a need to source out teachers internationally to meet the needs in education. In 2023, there were 474 students who enrolled in the Seychelles Institute of Teacher Education to further their education, most of which were in service teachers.
102. The Ministry of Education is implementing standards for teachers to reward performance financially and non-financially. The Teacher Management and Development Policy and the Professional Teachers Competency Framework make provision for teachers to advance both horizontally and vertically.
103. For the safety of children and teachers on the school compound, all schools are equipped with security firm services on twenty-four hour basis, however more training and stricter monitoring is required to ensure efficiency. In addition, banning orders are being applied against aggressors in line with the Education Act, 2004.

B. Leisure, recreational and cultural activities

The Committee commends the State Party for the various leisure and cultural activities made available in the Republic of Seychelles. However, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that these activities are accessible to all children, including children with disabilities and children from low-income families, to make the enjoyment of the rights to leisure and recreational activities effective and free from discrimination.

104. The revision of the Seychelles Cultural Policy aims to cover any gaps left in the cultural sector specifically in regards to providing access to cultural information and activities to the youth. In addition, the National Arts and Crafts Council offers Small Grant and school holiday programmes. There are also Cultural activities and events throughout the year carried out by the various agencies under the purview of the Culture institute.
105. In recent years there has been various activities provided by various groups that provides children opportunities to participate in various activities such as dancing and sport either after school or during the holidays. In addition, various holiday programmes are conducted during the school holidays, providing a place for parents to keep their children during the holiday whilst they enjoy the different activities offered in the programmes and develop certain skills.
106. The Department of Local Government is responsible for conducting various social and leisure activities at District as well as national level. They are also responsible for the upkeep of some facilities that plays a crucial role in the development and enjoyment of the youth of Seychelles such as the playing fields, multipurpose courts and community centers. The National Sports Council may provide direction for sports related activities in order to maximize community participation.

IX. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

A. Prevention of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment

The Committee notes with appreciation the State Party's efforts to ensure that children are free from all sorts of torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatments, including corporal punishment. The Committee notes that measures have been taken to prohibit corporal punishment

in schools. The Committee encourages the Republic of Seychelles to keep following up on the implementation of this measure. Moreover, the State Party is urged to take measures to prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, including in families and homes.

The State party is invited to closely follow the procedure that the Department of Social Affairs and the Attorney General's office started to remove all references to corporal punishment from the Children's Act in order to move towards zero corporal punishment in all settings.

107. The Children (Amendment) Act, 2020 abolishes corporal punishment against children in all settings in Seychelles. A person can be liable to a fine of SCR 25,000 or to imprisonment or both if such offence is committed. The act also repeals subsection 7 from section 70, which recognized “the right of a parent, guardian, teacher or other person having the lawful control or charge of a child to administer proper punishment to him if that punishment does not contravene subsection (1).”
108. In terms of the number of child abuse cases reported at the Child Protection Unit, the number remains alarming. During the last 4 years 337 cases was reported in 2021, 397 cases in the year 2022, 413 cases in 2023 and 413 cases in the year 2024. During the last 2 years the number of reported new cases remained unchanged.
109. The Division continues to empower children to protect themselves and protect abused children and those who are at risk of harm through clear intervention plans. As part of the investigating process and intervention plan, the unit works in close partnership with other child protection partners
110. NCC has developed and delivered safeguarding CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions for various professionals working with children. In 2024, a total of 177 individuals were trained. In addition, safeguarding sessions were conducted in all Primary 6 classes across state schools, reaching 1,198 students and equipping them with essential knowledge on how to keep themselves safe. Session covers all forms of abuse.
111. In 2010, Seychelles ratified the optional protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict and submitted its first report addressing obligations under this optional

protocol in 2021. In that same year Seychelles ratified the Optional Protocol on the Communications procedure, reinforcing its commitment to children's rights.

B. Children in conflict with the law

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for the measures taken to ensure that children in conflict with the law are protected and their rights respected as much as possible. The Committee reiterates its recommendation on ensuring the effective participation of children during the court proceeding and taking into account their best interests. The Committee furthermore reiterates its recommendation on raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility as well as the improvement of prison facilities. The Committee furthermore recommends that the Republic of Seychelles strengthens the measures of separating children from adult detainees and improves the treatment received by children in prison.

112. In February 2024, the Youth Offender Facility (YOF) was opened. The facility is located on Praslin, one of the inner islands of Seychelles and is specifically intended for minors in conflict with the law. This facility is designed to provide youth offenders with the appropriate care and support that meets their specific needs. At present, there are five minors in custody, comprising of three girls and two boys.
113. Additionally, to ensure the well-being of these children, all officers working in the facility have been thoroughly screened by Social Services. This process guarantees that staff are equipped to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the youth in our care.
114. Furthermore, there is also a juvenile unit at the Perseverance Prison Remand Detention Facility (PPDRF), reinforcing the commitment in addressing the needs of young individuals in the justice system. Prison Services remains dedicated to continuously improve the conditions and treatment of children in custody, as part of safeguarding their rights and development.

C. Sexual exploitation and abuse

The Committee commends the Republic of Seychelles for the action undertaken to address the issue of sexual abuse. The Committee encourages the State to intensify effort in order to stop the rising

number of cases of sexual exploitation in Seychelles, including online sexual exploitation and sexual exploitation of children in tourism. The State Party may refer to the ACERWC's General Comment No seven on article 27 of the charter.

115. As part of the measures taken to tackle the issue of sexual abuse, the Sexual Offences Bill has been developed. However, further work is needed before its enactment.
116. Of alarming concern in the number of reported cases of sexual abuse. On average during the past 4 years, the Unit recorded 127 confirmed cases of sexual abuse per year and 76 cases on average per year of alleged sexual abuse.
117. NCC has developed modules on online safety and cyberbullying. In 2024, a total of 1,063 students, primarily from Primary 5 and Secondary 4, participated in these training sessions. Additionally, 102 adults took part in similar sessions aimed at raising awareness and promoting safe online practices.
118. In January 2025, NCC introduced risk categorization for the cases dealt with by the therapists. Of the 55 new cases dealt with between January and March 2025, 18 cases were graded as high risk, 19 as Medium and 18 as low risk using a set of agreed criteria.
119. The Social Affairs Department, National Council for Children and the Ministry of Education continue to provide safeguarding programmes to educate children on risk factors that can lead to sexual abuse and economic exploitation.
120. Elles Foundation, an NGO, has also carried out a range of workshops in the secondary schools focusing on Relationships and Sexuality and the concept of 'Consent'.

D. Other forms of abuse and exploitation; include street begging

The Government of Seychelles recognises that a small group of children are involved in begging. The report mentions that this is often linked to the drug issue. The Committee recommends that the Republic of Seychelles look closely into the phenomenon and find the root causes and solutions while the case is still early.

121. As part of the work of a Social worker, once a case of child abuse is reported to Social Services, the necessary investigation will be conducted in order to establish the case and ensure the proper follow up action is taken in any case of child abuse and these include neglect cases involving begging. During the period of reporting there was no case of children begging reported to Social Services.
122. A toll free three-digit helpline was introduced in 2021, and since then there has been an increase in reporting of children related matters on the helpline, from 273 calls received in 2021 to 501 in 2022. The increasing trend in calls received on the helpline can be observed in the following years as well with 837 calls in 2023 and 1367 in 2024.
123. Referrals through the Risk Assessment Framework continues as part of the daily activity of child protection service providers. This facilitates the access to services of abuse children. Steady referral continues to be recorded

X. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD

The Committee encourages the State Party to include the responsibilities of the child in its legislative framework and ensure that the responsibility of the child does not result in the violation of children's rights enshrined in the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. The Committee further calls upon the State Party to raise awareness among children, parents, and caregivers regarding children's responsibilities towards their family, society, and the State and to ensure that children are given responsibilities taking into account their age, maturity and ability in accordance with its General Comment on article 31 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

124. A total of 1,221 Secondary 1 students (12- 13 Year olds) completed sessions on their rights and responsibilities organized by NCC. The sessions, conducted in all state secondary schools, focused on strengthening the students' understanding of how their rights are connected to and balanced by the responsibilities they hold in exercising those rights.

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