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**Saint Kitts and Nevis**

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## **I. Methodology for preparation of information under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR)**

1. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was responsible for coordinating the broad consultation encouraged in paragraph 15(a) of the Annex to HRC Resolution 5/1 as well as for the production of the final report, prepared in accordance with the “General Guidelines for the Preparation of Information under the Universal Periodic Review” adopted by the Human Rights Council on 27 September 2007.

2. This report has been compiled from oral and written submissions from relevant stakeholders - the public sector, Non-governmental organizations and civil society in both St Kitts and Nevis, with whom consultations were held prior to and during the writing of the report.

## **II. Country background and normative and institutional framework**

3. St Kitts and Nevis, a twin island federation situated in the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean Sea, has a total land area of 261 square km (St Kitts 168 sq km; Nevis 93 sq km). The population of St Kitts and Nevis at end of 2009 was estimated at 51, 967 (St Kitts - 39,595 and Nevis - 12,372).

4. The Federation achieved its independence from the United Kingdom on 19 September 1983. The Constitution provides Nevis with a great degree of autonomy under a premier with the right to secede. The Honourable Joseph Parry of the Nevis Reformation Party (NRP) is the current premier.

5. As a member of the Commonwealth, the British Westminster political model forms the basis of the system of government with the Queen of England as the Head of State and a Governor General serving as her representative in St. Kitts. There are three branches of government: the executive, the legislature and the judiciary with a system of government based on universal adult suffrage and regularly held free and fair elections.

6. As a multiparty, federal parliamentary democracy, the party that wins the majority of the eight seats on St. Kitts or the majority of the 11 available seats in the federal government, forms the government for a five year term and may be re-elected. During general elections held on 25 January 2010, which regional and international observers concluded were credible and valid, the St Kitts Labour Party was victorious, gaining a total of six seats. Subsequently, the Honourable Dr Denzil Douglas was sworn in as Prime Minister for a fourth consecutive term. The People’s Action Movement (PAM) won two seats. The Concerned Citizens Movement (CCM) of Nevis occupies the seat of the Leader of the Opposition.

### **A. The constitution of St Kitts and Nevis**

7. Instituted in 1983, the Constitution is the supreme law of the land and asserts in the preamble, the entitlement of the citizens to the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, regardless of their race, place of origin, birth, political opinions, colour, creed or sex.

8. These rights, outlined in Chapter II, pertain to the protection of right to life, liberty, security of person, equality before the law and protection of the law; freedom of

conscience, expression and of assembly and association and protection for each person's personal privacy.

9. Further, Chapter II makes provision for persons who allege contravention of the provisions, to apply to the High Court for redress.

10. To enhance human rights in the area of work, the Constitution provides for the institution of the Police Service Commission, the Public Service Commission and the Public Service Board of Appeal, to oversee the functioning, recruitment, appointment, promotion and discipline of public servants.

## **B. The executive**

11. The executive authority of St Kitts and Nevis lies with Her Majesty. The Governor-General may, on behalf of her Majesty, exercise executive authority directly or through officers subordinate to him and appoints as Prime Minister, a Representative likely to command the support of the majority of the Representatives.

12. Additionally, the Governor-General may appoint from among members of the National Assembly, all other Ministers, acting on the advice of the Prime Minister. These Ministers, together with the Prime Minister comprise the Cabinet who has the responsibility of advising the National Assembly and the Governor-General.

## **C. The judiciary**

13. The judicial system of St Kitts and Nevis is rooted in English common law. The Court of the Federation is The Eastern Caribbean Supreme Court. Within its jurisdiction it applies English common law and statutory acts of the House of Assembly which is the Federations Parliament.

14. The St Kitts and Nevis Constitution and legislation made pursuant to it provide for a separation of powers between the (i) Legislature, (ii) the Executive (which includes the government) and (iii) the judiciary, thus creating strong foundation for an independent, impartial judiciary. The Courts among other things presides over alleged civil rights violations. Since its inception, the Court has demonstrated a healthy regard for and consistency in its decisions concerning the inviolability of fundamental rights.

15. A resident puisne judge of the High Court is assigned to each of the islands with jurisdiction over all superior court matters. The lowest court is the Magistrate's Court which is a court of summary jurisdiction dealing primarily, with petty criminal and civil cases. Appeals lie from both the High Court and the Magistrate's Court to the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States Court of Appeal. Final appeals for most matters are made to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the United Kingdom.

## **D. Legislation and international conventions to promote and protect human rights**

16. St. Kitts and Nevis espouses human rights practices enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments including the following core international human rights treaties, ratified to date: International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

17. St Kitts and Nevis is also Party to the following treaties which contain elements of promotion and protection of human rights - International Convention against Apartheid in Sports, Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages, Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

18. The Parliament of St Kitts and Nevis is responsible for making laws for peace, order and good government and may also alter any of the provisions of the Constitution in accordance with the procedures as stipulated therein. The Parliament may exercise its legislative power through bills passed by the National Assembly and approved by the Governor General. However, they may not become law until they have been gazetted.

19. The National Assembly is comprised of as many Representatives as constituencies and three or more Senators (but not exceeding two-thirds of the number of Representatives). The Leader of the Opposition advises the Governor General on the appointment of one-third of the Senators, while the Prime Minister advises on the other two-thirds.

20. The island of Nevis has its own legislature – the Nevis Island Legislature, which may make laws called Ordinances for the peace, order and good government of the island of Nevis.

21. The St Kitts and Nevis Parliament has enacted a number of laws that touch on and concern human rights including the following:

- (a) Geneva Conventions Act
- (b) Juvenile Act
- (c) Guardianship of Infants Act
- (d) Labour Act (pending Labour Code)
- (e) Labour Minimum Wage Act
- (f) Marriage Act
- (g) Hospitals and Poor Relief Act
- (h) Public Health Act
- (i) Trade Union Act
- (j) Protection of Employment Act
- (k) Domestic Violence Act
- (l) Employment of Children (Restriction) Act
- (m) Employment of Women, Young Persons & Children Act
- (n) Ombudsman Act
- (o) Prison Act

- (p) Trafficking in Persons (Prevention) Act
- (q) Infant Life (Preservation) Act
- (r) Offences Against the Person Act
- (s) Criminal Law Amendment Act
- (t) Married Women's Property Act
- (u) National Housing Act
- (v) Police Act

### **III. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground**

22. In addition to the Constitution and laws outlined in paragraph 21, the Government of St Kitts and Nevis has committed itself to creating an enabling environment for fostering the growth and preservation of human rights and the fulfillment of its obligations under international human rights instruments.

23. While St Kitts and Nevis is aware of its obligations to report to the human rights treaty bodies relating to those treaties to which it is a Party, human resource constraints continue to be a challenge to submission of reports in a timely fashion.

24. The Government of St Kitts and Nevis is committed to implementing international human rights obligations by enacting national legislation and welcomes assistance in the area of drafting relevant and appropriate legislation to this effect.

25. Although the Government has actively encouraged the formation of non-governmental organisations, there are currently no established local human rights groups in the country. However, a number of civil society organizations such as St. Kitts Nevis Association for Persons with Disabilities, Winning with Women, St Kitts and Nevis Youth Parliamentary Association, Community Achievers Project (CAP), Men Underpinning St Kitts (MUSK), the St Kitts and Nevis Trades and Labour Union, the Teachers Union, etcetera all promote and educate their respective membership about human rights.

26. The Government cooperates with humanitarian organizations generally and has had no investigations or visits by international human rights groups recently.

27. On 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006, the first reading of the Ombudsman Act, 2006 was presented in the National Assembly and subsequently passed on 8th September 2006. Under the Provisions of the Act, the Office of the Ombudsman is established for the purpose of protecting and enforcing the rights of citizens of St. Kitts and Nevis. The Ombudsman investigates any administrative action of an authority for the purpose of deciding whether there is evidence of maladministration on the part of the authority. He or she makes recommendations pursuant to an investigation and generally about ways of improving its administrative practices and procedures. The Ombudsman is protected from arbitrary removal from office. It maintains a high degree of independence and objectivity and ensures that all citizens are given an opportunity to have their grievances with the Government's services heard and resolved.

## **IV. Identification of achievements, best practices**

### **A. Social and economic rights**

28. The Government has over a number of years sought to improve its human and social development. It has provided social safety net services to the most vulnerable persons in society. Since the closure of the sugar industry in July 2005, priority has been given in this area to former workers of the sugar industry. The following areas have been focal points for the Government as part of its strategy for strengthening the fabric of the social net:

#### **1. Education**

29. The Government, through the Ministry of Education, provides all citizens and residents with a comprehensive course of lifelong education to enable them to develop and achieve their full potential and make a meaningful contribution to national development.

30. Since 1967, education has been compulsory for children from age five to sixteen this has necessarily facilitated the provision of secondary education in both public and private institutions.

31. Two objectives of the Education System are to develop an understanding of the principle of gender equality and other forms of equality as well as to promote an understanding of, inter alia, the rights of citizens in St Kitts and Nevis as defined in the Constitution.

32. The Education Act of 2005 provides the legal framework for the development and implementation of education policies. One of its principal objectives is to make quality education accessible to all nationals of St Kitts and Nevis in institutions that foster the spiritual, cultural, moral, intellectual, physical, social and economic development of the individual and of the community.

33. With respect to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) St Kitts and Nevis is MDG Plus in Education offering universal education from pre-primary to secondary level.

34. The Early Childhood Education Unit is responsible for the management and delivery of early childhood services in St. Kitts and Nevis.

35. The more established post secondary education opportunities focus on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and enable school leavers to develop skills and competencies for the world of work in various occupational areas.

#### **2. Health**

36. The Ministry of Health is the primary organization responsible for safeguarding the health of the Federation's people through the utilization of available resources to eliminate barriers to equity in health care by applying the principles of fairness, respect, integrity and effectiveness. The Health policy aims to ensure that the population has adequate access to quality health care at a reasonable cost.

37. In order to facilitate access to healthcare, the Ministry of Health subsidizes healthcare at both the public health and institutional level. Virtually all essential services at the primary healthcare level are offered free of charge. At the institutional level, all services are free for persons under the age of 18 and over the age of 62. Persons who fall outside this age bracket pay a minimal fee for services such as prescriptions, diagnostics, and hospital stays.

38. Prenatal health care in St. Kitts and Nevis is available to all expectant mothers and children under the age of 18 years free of cost at all eleven (11) community health centres in St. Kitts and six (6) in Nevis.

#### *HIV/AIDS*

39. In 2007, the National AIDS Secretariat in the Ministry of Health established a Human Rights Desk as a country level mechanism to receive and respond to complaints related to human rights violations against the community of Persons Living with HIV (PLWHIV).

40. In November 2004, St Kitts and Nevis hosted the CARICOM/UK Champions for change Conference which provided a forum to promote dialogue and raise awareness on the issue of HIV/AIDS among key stakeholders from the Caribbean. The meeting included a session for Parliamentarians to assist them in acquiring the skills with which to advocate, propose and reform legislation as well as to monitor and mobilize available resources within their countries. Participants left the forum highly motivated and pledged to be 'champions for change' in the fight against stigma and discrimination in their own settings.

(a) In 2007, a comprehensive National Assessment of HIV/AIDS-Related Laws and Policies was conducted. The process involved broad national consultation and promoted intense local debate.

(b) Standardize all laboratory forms such that there is no distinction in the form based on the test that the individual is required to take.

(c) Amend the Public Health Act to include HIV/AIDS as a notifiable disease reportable via code to the designated Government Medical Official.

41. Under the project, countries were to receive technical assistance to develop model legislation and policies that countries could adapt to the local context. To date this has not been accomplished and the necessary legislative reform has not occurred.

42. St Kitts and Nevis welcomes any technical assistance that will realize some of the abovementioned recommendations.

43. Interventions targeted at "most at risk but hard to reach populations" such as men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers are necessary. The national expanded response to HIV/AIDS has built partnerships with regional HIV/AIDS organizations to reach men who have sex with men and commercial sex workers with prevention interventions. One successful intervention has been the Community Animator Programme that uses peer educators to teach risk reduction methods and distribute supplies.

44. While there has been some improvement, taboos regarding sex, sexuality and HIV are still prevalent and stigma and discrimination continue to be major barriers to accessing VCT, treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and seeking care and support for HIV infection.

### **3. Labour**

45. The Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis became a member of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1996 and is signatory to eight (8) fundamental conventions and one Priority convention relating to Labour Relations.

46. Protection of workers' rights is enshrined in the Constitution of St Kitts and Nevis in promoting freedom of assembly and association and prohibiting forced labour and discrimination based on race, gender etc.

47. In St Kitts and Nevis there is a long and outstanding tradition of Trade



Unionism and adherence to and respect for the principles of freedom of association and collective bargaining. The St Kitts-Nevis Trades and Labour Union has been in the vanguard of Trade Unionism in St Kitts Nevis, having registered in 1940 and still active to date. Other worker/employer Associations have also been established, including the Teachers' Union, operating in the Federation under the Trade Union Act 1940.

48. Further, the Labour Act, the Protection of Employment Act are part of the legislative framework that buttresses the provisions on the right to decent work and to collective bargaining.

49. Minimum wage legislation has been enacted to facilitate an improved standard of living for households.

50. Discrimination of any kind is prohibited. Remuneration is commensurate to qualification and is adhered to across gender lines.

#### **4. Gender affairs**

##### *(a) Women*

51. St Kitts and Nevis is Party to the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women "Convention of Belem do Para", Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Civil Rights to Women and the Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women.

52. Approximately one hundred women and young persons from various political parties in St Kitts and non-affiliated women have been trained in areas such as community mobilization, campaign finance, international instruments for the advancement of women, the Constitution of St. Kitts and Nevis, protocol and grooming for public life and other topics that would equip them for political office or to support the campaign of other women.

53. Currently there are three support groups of women articulating the need for equality in political decision making, one in Nevis and two in St. Kitts.

54. The Department of Gender Affairs has established an office and training centre which offers instruction in income-generating skills, entrepreneurship and life skills training for low income women on an on going basis.

55. In September, 1997, the Federal Cabinet established a policy decision which highlighted the right of teenage mothers to education in the nation's schools. Many young people have chosen to return to school and complete their secondary education and in some instances tertiary level education.

##### *(b) Children*

56. The Department of Probation and Child Protection Services is one of the government's primary agencies responsible for ensuring that the rights of children are regarded, especially with respect to those in need of care and protection, those in conflict with the law, adoption and foster care and related issues.

57. The Domestic Violence Act of 2000 addresses Care and Protection of children. This Act seeks to bring protection to persons who have experienced physical or psychological suffering, who have been molested or harassed in the context of the home, and who need protection from further harm. The law recognizes the fragility of children who are a part of these households, and speaks specifically to their protection in terms of providing inter alia for granting of injunction and protection orders.

58. The Counselling Department within the Ministry of Social And Community Development and Gender Affairs provides invaluable support working in close collaboration with the Department of Probation and Child care to provide counselling intervention for children who have suffered from abuse as well as their parents and guardians, so that healthy reunification of the family is possible.

59. The Department also works in tandem with the Early Childhood Development Unit and the community as well as nurses based at the hospital to establish early identification of children at risk of being abused.

60. In situations where a child, especially a young child or a baby must be placed urgently, the Paediatric wing of the main hospital in St. Kitts has been used as a place of safety. The Children's Home is a last resort option for placement of children at risk. The Home receives a subvention from government but is managed by a Board.

## **5. Persons with disabilities**

61. The Government of St Kitts and Nevis is committed to safeguarding the rights of the disabled in its society by implementing as far as it is possible mechanisms that cater to their needs.

62. In the area of education, the Government constructed The *Special Education Unit*, an educational facility that caters to the needs of children with a variety of challenges. A branch of the Unit is located in each island where educational services are provided to developmentally challenged children at all levels.

63. The curriculum is designed to assist students in acquiring foundational skills in seven main areas of personal development. These are: Social and Emotional Development; Language and Literacy; Mathematical Development; Science and Technological Development; Physical Education; Creative and Aesthetic Development; Moral and Religious Education.

64. A Dyslexia Policy was introduced at the Primary School level in September 2009 to, inter alia, address the needs of children who are experiencing reading/ learning problems and who show symptoms of dyslexia.

65. The Government recognizes that not only do the disabled children have a right to an education, but also the right to participate competitively in sports not only locally but around the world as special athletes. St Kitts and Nevis hosted the Special Olympics Caribbean Business Meeting in April 2009 and signed a Special Olympics International Partnership Agreement. The Government supports the participation of children with special needs in Special Olympics.

66. Ades Place is a centre that trains adults with severe disabilities and engages them in projects such as handicraft, laundry and food preparation.

## **6. Youth**

67. The Department of Youth coordinates activities and programmes geared toward the youth. There are various fora in St. Kitts and Nevis that support the notion of freedom of expression of young people in the Federation. Several youth programmes aired on radio and television are geared specifically towards engaging youth to articulate their views on issues that affect them.

68. "Totally for Kids" is a radio programme, co-hosted by children for children up to the age of thirteen. It is aired on Saturday mornings and engages children and the entire community on issues of national concern from the perspective of children.

69. “Youth Express From the Steps” is a television programme formatted for young people to have candid and direct discussions about all matters affecting youth. Youth Parliamentarians have an opportunity to mimic parliamentary procedures when the mock Youth Parliament is held. The children debate bills and other matters much in the same way that it is done in the actual parliament.

70. The government’s annual national consultation on the economy invites young people in the process of identifying problems and challenges and being heavily involved in crafting feasible solutions.

71. Other activities vary, ranging from Organized Youth Rallies and Debates to Youth Panel Discussions and Youth Group Town Hall Meetings.

## **7. The elderly**

72. Data for 2004 show that of the 2,820 (5.8 per cent) persons who were 65 plus, approximately 40.2 per cent were 75 and over and 5.6 per cent were over 85 years of age. Life expectancy in St. Kitts and Nevis is relatively high for both males and females. Although the elderly do not feature prominently in the poverty statistics, research indicates that the severity of poverty experienced by older persons is likely to be great given their limited income.

73. The Government has introduced through various ministries, a number of programmes and projects in the interest of the elderly:

- The Federation has been able to implement various aspects of its social protection programme for older persons through the provision of social insurance and social assistance programmes, including free access for seniors to health care and medication for chronic non-communicable and communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS.
- Social Security Act - Through this scheme, older persons can access benefits for retirement, temporary illness, employment related injuries, medical and funeral expenses. Social Security funds a non-contributory pension and invalid assistance programme. The Social Development Assistance Act (1999) makes it possible for indigent older persons to receive assistance for medical care, eye care and housing repair.
- A Draft Policy on the Care of Older Persons outlines the minimum standard of care which the elderly are to receive in institutions.
- Older persons in two (2) communities have been able to participate in the Golden Years Club since 2006. There are about 90 members in regular standing. This club provides the opportunity for older persons to participate in recreational activities in their communities during the day.
- A number of retirees now sit on boards of key organizations and contribute to the decision making processes of Organizations.
- Home Help Service is offered to elderly persons who are indigent, poor or disabled and who cannot care for themselves on their own or with the assistance of family.
- Funds for micro-enterprise have been made available through the Development Bank of St. Kitts and Nevis for former sugar workers, as well as other individuals, including the elderly, to access credit at substantially low rates of interest.

## **8. Housing and shelter**

74. The Government is committed to providing adequate and affordable housing that will improve the quality and standard of life of its people and has invested in the provision of low cost housing to the poor and lower middle income families through the construction of hundreds of houses built. In short, the broad housing and shelter policy aims to promote equity, access and affordability.

75. Shortage of accommodation and overcrowding still persists in some households.

76. The Government has partnered with the private sector through the provision of land to developers to build affordable homes for middle income families. The Government has also reviewed the Civil Service Mortgage Scheme administered by a lending agency to facilitate access to more affordable loans.

## **B. Good Governance**

77. The Government intends to continue to consult with NGOs and civil society in general to create a more unified and holistic approach to the human rights on the ground. Government of St Kitts and Nevis continues to promote good governance through a number of programmes:

78. "Face to Face" allows the Prime Minister and all his Ministers to sit in a Town Hall setting and field questions from persons present or via the telephone or internet.

79. In October 2008, a one-hour programme, "Ask the Prime Minister" premiered on local radio stations. The Federation's leader, Prime Minister Hon. Dr. Denzil L. Douglas fields questions on the programme from the general public on a variety of issues.

80. Post Cabinet Briefings which are produced and aired on local media and posted on the Prime Minister's website as a video, provide updated information to the general public.

81. Other programmes initiated include the Prime Minister's Monthly Press Conference, Live Television coverage of the National Assembly meetings, the National Consultation on the Economy, the establishment of the Communications Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister (CUOPM), the establishment of the Prime Minister's Website and the consultation with stakeholders on draft legislation before passage in the Parliament.

## **V. Challenges and constraints**

### **A. Ratification of core international human rights treaties**

82. Although St Kitts and Nevis regrets that it is not party to more human rights treaties, this is not reflective of the commitment of the government to promote and protect the rights of its citizens, but a consequence of its limited resource base and a reluctance to ratify instruments without having adequate arrangements in place to foster meaningful implementation. Notwithstanding this, the Federation will redouble its efforts to engage in a more meaningful way regarding these international initiatives.

### **B. Prison**

83. The Government continues to seek avenues for improving the current overcrowding of the State Prison. Cooperation with an international entity continues with respect to the construction of a new prison or rehabilitation centre. The design is already prepared and

the Government has already allocated land. Currently, there is no separation of juvenile offenders from adults. However the construction of a home for youth at risk which is near completion will in large measure, address this matter/development. It is to be noted also that the passing of the Alternative Sentencing Act is impacting the Government's efforts to reduce recidivism and promote rehabilitation as part of the prison reform programme. Under this Act, the option of incarceration is waved and is replaced by supervised community work.

### **C. Domestic violence**

84. St. Kitts and Nevis is a signatory to a number of United Nation conventions and declarations, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 1979, the United Nations Declaration for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993, The Beijing Platform for Action, 1995, the Millennium Declaration (2000), and the U. N. Security Council Regulation 1325, (2000), on Women Peace and Security, (2000).

85. The Domestic Violence Act prohibits violence that results in or is likely to result in (i) Physical harm, (ii) Sexual suffering, or (iii) Psychological suffering. It also sets out as offences: Threats of violence, coercion, arbitrary deprivation of liberty, molestation, and any conduct of an offensive or harassing nature and which amounts to psychological abuse, intimidation or persecution.

86. The Department of Gender Affairs is that arm of the State which has been given the mandate to work toward eliminating domestic violence. Despite its diligence in sensitizing the public through training of frontline officers such as police, counselors and nurses etc, the opening of a Legal Aid Clinic, other mechanisms to provide material and moral support for victims, domestic violence continues unabated.

### **D. Persons with disabilities**

87. During the national consultation, there was a call for the Government to ratify the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a demonstration of its commitment to persons with disabilities and a call for the revision of building codes to meet international standards as well as for the introduction of national legislation to safeguard the rights of persons with disabilities.

### **E. HIV/AIDS**

88. Even with the creation of the Human Rights Desk at the Ministry of Health and staffed full time by one person and promoted via mass media and among health care providers, it has been underutilized. Affected persons have been reluctant to do self referrals, fearing stigma and discrimination even in a health setting. Consideration is being given to relocating the desk to the Legal Aid Clinic where a focal point may be available to provide advice with respect to the legal redress for persons with complaints.

89. Although national policies denounce compulsory testing for general employment purposes it is still required for enrolment in the armed forces.

90. There has been little progress with respect to the creation of supportive environments that protect the human rights of persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

## **F. Rastafarianism**

91. The representatives of two Rastafarian groups raised concerns during the consultation that from their perspective their religion is not respected by others and that their rights as Rastafarians have been violated based on discrimination. They opined that members of their movement are stigmatized and marginalized. The Government must continue to partner with NGOs to deliver public education programmes to ensure that no one is discriminated against on the basis of their race, religion, gender, etcetera.

## **VI. Key national priorities, initiatives and commitments**

### **A. Education**

92. The Government is keen to address quality concerns in the education system as well as making the system more relevant for these times. The Ministry of Education launched a White Paper on Education Development and Policy 2009-2019 under the caption, “Raising the Standard, Maximising Resources, Aligning with Best Practices – Promoting Success for All”. This document highlights the national priorities and strategies to deliver quality education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

93. The vision postulated by the White Paper is to ensure that all students have access to quality education in the context of “Education for All.

94. The White Paper introduces, inter alia the following initiatives that cater to the needs of all stakeholders in the education system:

- Parenting Education - it will be mandatory for parents to attend parental education seminars and training programmes when required, to assist parents who may not have the requisite skills to properly guide and direct their children in this post-modern, high tech 21st century world.
- A Teacher Education Advisory Committee will be established and commissioned to advise the tertiary institution on national teacher education/ training needs and to make recommendations for teacher professional development courses or programmes.
- The National Skills Training Programme (NSTP) will be restructured to move away from a totally government entity to become a broad-based/ semi-autonomous statutory entity that addresses all of the training needs of the country.
- Teacher Performance Appraisal Policy - will assess the capability and effectiveness of the teacher to deliver, and to provide a formal means of communicating information to the teacher concerning his or her work-related strengths and weaknesses, and to document teacher performance.
- An organized National After-school Programme which aims to improve the physical activity levels of primary school aged children.
- National Peer Mentoring/ Mediation Programme to achieve the following objectives: to reduce incidences of antisocial behavior in youth; to empower youth to become positive role models, to strengthen the relationships between students of the upper classes with those of the lower classes.
- Student Education Learning Fund (SELF) - SELF continues to be an exemplary program, providing opportunities for all students.

## B. Health

95. The Ministry developed a National Health Plan 2008-2012 focusing on the following key priority areas:

- Chronic Non-Communicable Disease– aimed at reducing morbidity and mortality associated with Chronic Non-communicable diseases. (St Kitts and Nevis is drafting a United Nations Resolution on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
- Nutrition and Physical Activity -to improve the nutrition and physical status of the population.
- Family Health – to enhance programmes for immunization, child and adolescent health, dental/oral health, men’s health, geriatric care and physically disabled, reproductive health, women’s health and family planning.
- Health Systems Development- to incorporate aspects relating to institutional strengthening, health information and research, strengthening of laboratories, health disaster coordination and maintenance and technology assessment.
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse – aimed at promoting and maintaining the mental health of the population by providing optimum counselling, treatment and care for clients in a safe and secure environment.
- HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections - involves prevention, treatment and care and support, advocacy, surveillance epidemiology and research, program coordination and management.
- Health and Environment – relates to the provision of programmes including premises inspection, drain cleaning, food safety, prevent the spread of human and animal borne diseases through import/export, Port Health Surveillance, Solid Waste Management, Vector Control, Water quality monitoring and sewage and waste water.
- Human Resource Development - includes human resource management Information system, staffing, training and development, performance and productivity and occupational health and safety.

## C. Safety and security

96. National security is at the forefront of the Government’s strategic agenda to safeguard the safety and security of citizens and visitors alike. The incidences of gun related crime perpetrated by pockets of youth in certain communities, continue to be a prime concern of the Government. The mandate of the Ministry of National Security is executed through its agencies and is to address Government’s safety and security agenda, which include creating the enabling environment for political, economic and social stability and overall sustainable development.

97. The National Crime Commission Act, passed in 2004 established a Commission to conduct investigations and inquiries into criminal activity within the Federation with special emphasis on Drugs and narcotics, fraud; money laundering, Organised crime and other serious offences. The Commission has been officially constituted and is operational. The Act also aims to facilitate greater cooperation between law enforcement agencies in combating crime.

98. The Government has also established an Anti-gun Unit within the police force to assist with the dismantling of gangs.

99. Both trafficking in Persons and dangerous drugs are extraditable offences.
100. The canine K-9 Unit has been strengthened and the Criminal Investigation Unit has been expanded to enhance service to more communities.
101. Advances in technology have been utilized to improve general efficiency of the police and to facilitate proper registration and tracking of criminal activities.
102. Comprehensive reviews of the legislation and the penal system are ongoing.

#### **D. Information and Communications Technology (ICT)**

103. The National Information and Communications (ICT) Strategic Plan 2006 called for the creation of an ICT Unit within the Government. This has been established and provides greater access to technology, training and communications for all members of the community. For the 2010-2011 school year, fifth form students at all secondary schools in the Federation will be receiving laptops as a new initiative of the government to create and promote access for the youth to ICT tools. This is a pilot programme that will be extended to all high school children in the future. The ICT for Education, Diversification and Competitiveness (ICT4EDC) Project co-funded by the European Union and the Government of St Kitts and Nevis has been designed to foster the development of a vibrant and sustainable IT sector through an increased adoption of ICTs by the strategic sectors, a developed ICT services industry, empowerment of social groups, communities and individuals and support for an ICT driven public sector reform.

### **VII. Expectations of the State**

104. The Federation of St Kitts and Nevis has a rich resource in its people. To this end, the Government continues to seek assistance for capacity building, especially in the area of human rights training and education, and collating statistical data into one principal unit and analyzing it and reporting on it. St Kitts and Nevis would also welcome technical assistance geared toward ratification of more international conventions and treaties and the subsequent implementation at the national level of the obligations and commitments under same.

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