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Saint Lucia

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I. Overview

1. The Government of Saint Lucia (GOSL) remains committed to strengthening human rights protection of its citizens and those within its borders. As a result, the Government has ratified and/or acceded to various human rights instruments in an effort to broaden its national human rights protection. Despite the commitment on the part of the Government to ensure the full realisation of human rights nationally, numerous challenges exist, which the Government has tasked itself with overcoming.

II. Methodology

2. The GOSL compiled this report in accordance with the general guidelines set for the Preparation of information under the Universal Periodic Review. The Department of External Affairs spearheaded the preparation of the report and consulted broadly with the various Ministries and Departments, as well as members of civil society.

III. Developments since previous Universal Periodic Review

Access to water

3. The Dennery North Water Supply Project was developed to address the water issues facing the community of Dennery North. The project sought to improve water quantity, and reliability to residents and consumers whilst enhancing the sustainability of the potable water system.

4. The project was undertaken in two phases. The first phase was concluded in February 2018. The second phase concluded in February 2020. The project was financed with assistance from the Government of Mexico, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB).

IV. Areas of national concern

COVID-19

5. At the onset, of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GOSL had to take immediate action to attend to the needs of the most vulnerable segment of its population.

6. Early on during the pandemic, the GOSL instituted a State-of- Emergency in order to mitigate the spread of the virus. During the State of Emergency, the Department of Consumer Affairs, was critical in ensuring that the food needs of marginalised groups, which were exacerbated during the pandemic, were attended to. The Department is responsible for the supply of bulk basic goods namely, wheat and white flour, brown and refined cane sugar, and parboiled rice.

7. Following this initial response, the GOSL identified the sectors which were made increasingly vulnerable due to the pandemic and developed appropriate responses. Some of these responses will be detailed throughout the report.

V. Responses to accepted recommendations

Ratification of international human rights treaties 88.1–88.29

8. In 2020, the GOSL ensured that the rights of those with disabilities were top priority through its ratification of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the accession to its Optional Protocol. The Government also acceded to the World Intellectual

Property Organisation (WIPO) Marrakesh Treaty which provides access to reading material to persons who are print disabled. These treaties serve as the framework by which the GOSL can continue to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with the avenues for national protection and advancement.

9. Though Saint Lucia has not ratified the United Nations Convention Against Torture (UNCAT), relevant government officials have however participated in seminars hosted by the Convention Against Torture (CTI) Group of Friends in 2016, 2018 and 2020. These seminars were conducted in order to ensure that relevant public officials acquired sufficient knowledge with the aim of ratification, implementation and reporting on the UNCAT. The GOSL intends to build on its participation in these seminars and continue, through its National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights, to facilitate national sensitisation regarding the eventual signature and ratification of the UNCAT.

10. The GOSL is also mindful of its acceptance of recommendations which called for the ratification of a number of other international human rights instruments to which it has yet acted upon. The Government however remains committed to following through on its commitments, while simultaneously being acutely aware of its challenges. Treaty ratification is but one step in human rights protection for dualist states like Saint Lucia. While recognizing that legislative implementation is necessary to ensure that the rights accorded in these treaties have the full force of law domestically, the fact remains that the human capacity constraints within the legal drafting section at the Attorney General Chambers still exists. This is a major hindrance in ensuring hasty domestic legislative implementation of these treaties. Therefore, the ratification of treaties must be based on the assessment of the national situation and context. With this realisation, the GOSL, through the National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights (NCCHR), has appealed to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Office in Barbados for technical assistance in this area. The Government wants to ensure that it continues to work on domestic implementation of the human rights treaties that it has already ratified. The Government further believes that public sensitisation is necessary to assist both the general public and public officers in developing an appreciation for treaties prior to their ratification. The GOSL, once more reaffirms its commitment to expanding the protection of the rights of persons within its borders through the ratification of additional treaties in the near future.

National Implementation: 88.30–88.35, 88.53–88.58, 88.79–88.90, 88.91–88.97

CEDAW 88.31, 88.53–88.58

11. There is no specific mention of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in domestic law and a notable gap exists in the visibility of CEDAW in judgements, law enforcement and decision-making. However, the structure of the national mechanism for the advancement of women is being reviewed through the National Gender Equality Policy and Strategic Plan (NGEPSP) and the mainstreaming of gender is also included in Saint Lucia's National Development Plan. Furthermore, training exercises have been held for various public officers to help educate and sensitise them to the provisions of the Convention.

Gender Discrimination 88.53–88.58

12. The GOSL continues to work assiduously to eliminate gender discrimination in its society and most notably in the education sector. The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) 2015-2020, commits to increase the accessibility and affordability of education for all citizens as well as promote gender equality. There have been significant strides in realising this vision.

13. Equal educational opportunities are available at the primary and secondary levels to all individuals regardless of their gender. Girls are accorded the same rights to education as boys. According to the Department of Education's 2018 Statistical Digest, the net enrolment of males to females at the primary level was almost equal from 2006-2016. For

the 2017/2018 academic year, the percentage of girls increased from the ten-year trend of forty-nine percent (49%) to fifty percent (50%). At the secondary level, the percentage of girls enrolled was slightly higher than that of boys. Similar to the primary and secondary levels, gender parity exists at the tertiary level. The enrolment figures at these institutions however tend to be higher among females than males.

14. The enrolment by main divisions of the tertiary institutions on island shows that there is growth in subscription of females in non-traditional bodies of knowledge. Through the efforts of the Aspire Artemis Foundation (UN), efforts are in progress to create more access for female students in the area of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The outcomes of the Summer Institutes 2018/2019 for teachers of primary and secondary schools pointed to demonstrating a classroom practice, which shows how female students can be nurtured in accessing opportunities in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).

Domestic Violence 88.79–88.90

15. Gender-based violence (GBV) is considered to be one of the most persistent and under-reported crimes in Saint Lucia. The GOSL has adopted a multisectoral approach in combatting this scourge. In 2019, through the Essential Services Programme, the Division of Gender Relations in collaboration with the Women's Support Centre embarked on the establishment and training of individuals within various communities in Saint Lucia to provide support through information and other resources to victims and persons at risk of domestic violence. Saint Lucia has also benefited from the *Strengthening State Accountability Project* for ending gender-based violence in the Caribbean by UN Women and Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP). Through this project a data gathering tool was designed and adopted. The tool systematically collects data from the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, the Women's Support Centre the Saint Lucia Crisis Centre and the Family Court. Not all agencies are fully compliant with the systematic sharing of data and it was noted that there was limited capacity of the Division of Gender Relations to analyse and use the data gathered. Recent commitments from UN ECLAC to support data management in Saint Lucia is intended to improve the Division's capacity and that of the Gender Focal Points in relevant departments in that regard.

16. In 2016, Saint Lucia was supported by United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Multi-Country Office in Barbados in collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ThACCP). The ThACCP completed the National Plan/Partnership for Action to end gender-based violence in 2019 to produce a National Plan/Partnership of Action (NPA) to end gender-based violence in Saint Lucia. A national consultation on gender-based violence was convened in March 2019 to initiate the necessary processes to catalyze systemic change. A comparative review of existing legislation nationally, regionally and internationally with proposed legislation was completed in September 2019. The review was conducted through technical assistance from Sisters for Change through the Equality and Justice Alliance Initiative.

17. This new legislation is expected to be submitted to Cabinet in 2020 and will define domestic violence, provide recourse for all victims of domestic violence regardless of marital status, living arrangements, sex and other factors prohibiting access to justice in the existing legislation.

18. In the last five years, the Government of Saint Lucia has developed strategies aimed at preventing violence against women and girls, in primary and secondary schools. The Health and Family Life Education and the *Good Touch Bad Touch* programmes continue at all public schools. *Youth A.R.T (Active Response Team)* is an initiative undertaken by the Division of Gender Relations in collaboration with select secondary schools. It promoted the concept of healthy relationships among students from 11 to 17 years in an effort to reverse the trend of dating violence.

19. As a second level of prevention, Family Court has introduced a Violence Intervention programme called *Partnership For Peace* which is a psycho-educational perpetrator programme particularly for men who are perpetrators of domestic violence. Furthermore, the Bordelais Correctional Facility has also engaged in a number of social

programmes for inmates including one programme aimed at uniting incarcerated fathers with their children through the organising of family days at the facility.

20. The COVID-19 pandemic has also created a need for psycho-social support as mental health crises and domestic violence of persons has been on the increase. Through the assistance of the Government of Canada and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), the GOSL has implemented the Enabling, Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean (EnGenDER) Project. The Project focuses on actions which address gender-based violence and gender vulnerabilities that became more pervasive as result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Project will be used to support the implementation of income supplemental initiatives which benefitted women in the informal sector, women farmers and women living with disabilities. Assistance also focused on the provision of psycho-social support training for essential workers to address gender-based violence.

CRC 88.32–88.35, 88.85, 88.97

21. The GOSL continues to ensure that children are protected within its borders and continually seeks to expand on this protection.

22. The Child Justice Act establishes a judicial process for children in conflict with the law and general protection of children, and the Child (Care, Protection and Adoption) Act were both passed in 2018. These pieces of legislation replace the Children and Young Persons Act of 1972. The Status of Children Bill has currently being drafted and preliminary consultation is set to take place in the first quarter of 2021. This Bill will address the legal distinction between children born in and outside marriage.

23. Since the establishment of Child Friendly Schools Initiative in 2007, the GOSL had commenced the process of ensuring that the operations of schools on island were in line with the provisions of the CRC. In 2019, the Cabinet of Ministers endorsed the initial suspension of corporal punishment in schools effective 1st May 2019 and the eventual abolishment which became effective a 1st May 2020 by way of Cabinet Conclusion No. 104 of 2019. The GOSL is however cognizant of the fact that this Executive Order is not aligned with Article 50 of the Education Act of 1999, which still outlines conditions for administering corporal punishment in schools. The Government is therefore committed to making the necessary changes to completely eliminate this discrepancy.

24. The GOSL recognises that tackling child abuse necessitates a collaborative effort. All reported cases of child abuse investigated by the Division of Human Services, the designated national agency for matters relating to children, is also reported to the police for investigation as per the *“Protocol for the Management of Child Abuse and Neglect”*, who have also received all necessary training as it relates to the Protocol. The Protocol has been circulated to all relevant agencies responsible for the protection of children. Public responsibility in addressing child abuse is also central to help curbing this problem. Section 13(1) of the Child Care Protection Act informs of mandatory reporting of suspected cases of child abuse. Public awareness is therefore necessary to add vigour to the fight against child abuse. A number of fora have been held with various stakeholders as part of the work plan of the Division of Human Services to bring awareness of child abuse. More specifically, the Division held a series of public awareness campaigns in recognition of Child Month 2020.

Non-discrimination: Gender and sexual orientation 88.64 (1st part)

25. The GOSL has demonstrated a willingness to engage openly with civil society organisations representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons, as is evident from these organisations participating in the Department of External Affairs’ national human rights consultations which took place from 2018–2020. The GOSL reaffirms its commitment to continue engaging such organisations and further commits to addressing unfair anti-discrimination regarding this community.

Access to justice 88.98–88.104

26. The GOSL acknowledges the inadequacies within its justice system such as a dearth of facilities and High Court judges. For example, currently only two (2) judges are assigned the criminal division of the High Court, whereas it has been estimated that a total of five (5) judges have been recommended to deal with the number of cases lodged with the High Court.

27. Given the preceding challenges identified, the Government has therefore implemented a number of actions with the aim of improving the island's criminal justice procedures. In 2017, the National Forensic Laboratory was reopened as the laboratory is critical to the efficient investigative efforts of the Judiciary. The Government of Saint Lucia has also prioritized the reduction in the backlog of cases before the Criminal Court, making it a key performance indicator under the "Citizen Security" component of the country's Performance Management Dashboard, which was adopted in 2018. One of the perennial causes of the long periods of remand is the difficulty which Government faces in filling the positions of magistrates embedded in its judicial structure. This in turn has long been suspected to be the result of the high opportunity cost faced by legal professionals in moving from private practice to the public sector. To assist in providing a greater incentive to qualified individuals to do so, the Government in August of 2019 instituted a tax exemption on the salary of magistrates. Since that measure, the up-take rate has increased and all but one of the vacancies which lingered on in 2015, have been filled. The Government has committed itself to filling in the remaining vacancy for magistrate no later than midyear 2021.

28. Progress has been made on the CARICOM Implementing Agency for Crime and Security or IMPACS report. A Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) was appointed in October of 2016, after the critical post went vacant for almost 9 months, following the retirement of the office holder in December 2015. The report was received by the Prime Minister and presented to the Office of the DPP in 2015 and has since been reviewed. In 2017 a team of officers from the Saint Lucia Police Force was appointed to conduct investigations and all those who were accused in the matter were arrested and interrogated. All files under review by the aforementioned investigating team have been actively investigated and some of these files have been submitted to the DPP. The remaining files are expected to be in the remit of the DPP by the end of November 2020.

29. Despite the achievements to date, there have been some lingering constraints that continue to stymie the operations and delivery of the Crown Prosecution Unit on the matter under review, as well as others. These are primarily centred on human resource inadequacies and gaps in the availability of forensic data pertinent to the matter in subject. The DPP has given the undertaking that recommendations on each matter in the case of interest, will be given to the Commissioner of Police by the end of this year, 2020.

Poverty and social security 88.105–88.107, 88.109–88.110

30. Greater consideration has been given to the poverty situation in Saint Lucia by the Government since the 2015 Universal Periodic Review. As a consequence, Saint Lucia has introduced a myriad of initiatives to ameliorate its poverty situation.

31. The Government of Saint Lucia has continued the work of the Reform of the Public Assistance Program (PAP)- the island's largest Cash Transfer Programme. The tool now accounts for all members of the household as opposed to the previous tool which only captured information for the beneficiary of the Programme. The assistance provided to these impoverished households is inclusive of, but not limited to, monthly cash transfers, assistance with the replacement of spectacles/glasses, help with the cost of funeral services and waivers on medical care.

32. With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of Saint Lucia and other donor agencies have successfully implemented several social protection initiatives targeted primarily at the poor and vulnerable and also the emerging "new poor".

Social protection initiatives

33. Saint Lucia has felt the crushing economic blow which was ushered in by the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of the GOSL COVID-19 response strategy, an Economic Recovery Plan (ERP) was devised in order to stimulate the economy through the protection of livelihoods. The Plan also focused on the social wellbeing of the population and sought to expand the PAP by 1000 households (2600 to 3600). This goal was achieved through assistance from the India – UN Fund, World Food Programme, Joint SDG Fund and other development partners. Arrangements have been finalised with UNICEF for the distribution of 500 care packages/ hygiene kits to PAP households with children. The ERP represents another social assistance intervention to assist poor and vulnerable households/families.

34. Furthermore, the Ministry of Equity facilitated the provision of an increase in the value of cash transfers to beneficiaries under the foster care, child disabilities and persons living with HIV programmes. The beneficiaries received an increase of \$100 over a period of 3–6 months.

35. The Government introduced an income support programme which involved the provision of \$500 per month (for 3 months) as income support to non-contributors of the National Insurance Corporation who became unemployed as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

36. The Ministry of Equity also partnered with the Saint Lucia Hotel and Tourism Association and the Office of the Prime Minister to assist with the distribution of thousands of hot meals and food packages to poor and vulnerable households which is ongoing for the duration of this year.

Access to food 88.108

37. The Government of Saint Lucia recognises the economic disparities which exist between children within the educational system, and the impact which this can have on their educational attainment. Consequently, the Government has developed a Draft School Feeding Policy (2020-2030), with support from the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (UNFAO). The aim of the policy is to ensure that every school child will be provided with nutritionally balanced meals during the school day. The programme will target students at the primary through secondary school level. The Programme is intended to act as a catalyst for (i) improved collaboration among entities which focus on agriculture, education and nutrition and (ii) farmer participation which will ensure that farmers benefit from improved access to markets to improve their incomes and standard of living. The Policy has been circulated to all relevant ministries for comments. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the receipt of responses and ultimately the submission of the Report to Cabinet. It is therefore anticipated that the Policy will be before Cabinet by the end of 2020.

38. Saint Lucia is one of the four participating Caribbean countries of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security which is aimed at addressing the needs and vulnerabilities of local communities. The focus for the Caribbean is “*Building Climate Resilience for Human Security through Promoting Gender Equality in Key Economic Sectors and Women’s Empowerment in the Caribbean Countries*”. The fund supports Saint Lucia’s project which focuses on the strengthening the agriculture and fisheries sector with gender equality and women empowerment at the centre.

Health care 88.111

39. The Department of Health & Wellness recently launched the new national child health record and revised maternal, child and adolescent health manual aimed at improving maternal and child health in Saint Lucia.

40. The new national child health record will serve as a tool to monitor a child’s growth, development and use of health services from birth to five years.

Education 88.115–88.117

41. The provision of quality education remains a priority for the GOSL. The Education Quality Improvement Project EQUIP began in 2018 with the mandate to make more equitable and inclusive learning opportunities for all. The project places a special focus on children with special needs and has sought to ensure that the necessary frameworks have been put in place to facilitate the provision of quality education nationally. To achieve this, the project has undertaken the following:

- Revision of the Education Act to focus on the needs for Special Needs Education (SEN);
- Revision of the national curriculum to be more inclusive of the needs for SEN;
- Formulation of the Policy document for SEN; and
- Sponsoring of both in-service and degree training for SEN Teachers.

42. The provision of quality education is however meaningless without facilitating access to it. The EQUIP project, through financing from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB), addressed the issue of access in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which magnified inequities within Saint Lucia’s education system. Through the project, 130 special needs learners across the island were provided with technological devices to enable them to actively and effectively participate in online learning. The GOSL intends to continue to bridge this digital divide as the Minister of Education has indicated that the provision of digital devices will be expanded to all students within the education system.

43. The Ministry of Education’s school feeding programmes, school transport subsidy and book bursary, which have been in place prior to the pandemic, serve to positively impact school enrollment and attendance. In the wake of the pandemic, the Ministry of Education continued to ensure that the more vulnerable students continued to have access to a quality education with the provision of meals and transportation when classes for students of Grade 6 and Form 5 resumed.

Persons with disabilities 88.118–88.119

44. The Government has commenced discussions through its National Coordinating Committee to develop a formal national implementation plan for the Marrakesh and Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) treaties which were ratified in 2020. These discussions have been held in conjunction with the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities, as the Council is represented on the Committee.

45. In the absence of the national implementation plan for the CRPD and Marrakesh Treaties, the Government has already commenced with the establishment of policies, projects and programmes which speak to the protection of persons with disabilities. The GOSL is aware of that the dearth of reliable data remains one of the major hurdles for policy makers, legislators and other stakeholders in their work to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Consequently, the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice, Local Government and Empowerment through funding by the Caribbean Development Bank, has commenced a national disability assessment in 2019. The project is being conducted in partnership with the Central Statistics Office which is responsible for conducting a household disability survey. The aim of the project is to gather baseline data on the status of persons with disabilities nationwide which will assist in identifying and developing more targeted strategies to effectively address the lives of those living with disabilities in Saint Lucia.

46. The Government of Saint Lucia, through the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations and Sustainable Development has embarked on a pilot project ‘*Providing Reading Support for Students with Print Disabilities at the Lady Gordon Opportunity Centre*’ which directly supports the implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty. The project will use the services of Benetech, a company which harnesses the power of software and data to effect positive social change, to provide reading support for students with print disabilities at the Lady Gordon Opportunity Centre, thereby levelling the playing field for students with print and other learning disabilities.

47. The project further aims for the accessibility of books that includes a Bookshare library portal, conversion of relevant sections/modules of the Department of Education national curriculum into accessible formats, and training for Ministry staff and school educators.

National human rights institutions and human rights monitoring mechanism 88.42, 88.52

48. The Government of Saint Lucia has recognised and acknowledged the need for a more coordinated and systematic approach to monitoring and reporting on human rights. While the establishment of a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) is the ideal mechanism by which this can be achieved, the Government has expressed in the past its limitations in establishing such a mechanism. In the absence of an NHRI, the Government recognises that the formation of a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow Up (NMRF) as best suited for its context at this time.

49. In February 2019, the Government of Saint Lucia established the National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights which serves as its NMRF with a mandate to monitor and report on the national human rights situation. The Committee comprises both government and non-government membership, and is Chaired by the Department of External Affairs and Co-Chaired by the Attorney General Chambers. The Committee's Secretariat is based at the Department of External Affairs. The Committee has been very responsive to its mandate and have met several times since its establishment, working to develop Saint Lucia's human rights framework through the development of a work plan and communication plan. One of the goals of the Committee is to demystify and build capacity for human rights nationally, and has thus taken part in a series of capacity building exercises with the United Nations and the Inter-American Human Rights System. The Committee has recently embarked on the development of a syllabus for the inclusion of human rights in the Public Service Training Catalogue with the aim of building a cadre of public servants knowledgeable about human rights and the recognition of human rights as a national development issue.

50. The GOSL participated in training in the OAS-SIMORE online human rights monitoring tool, as it recognises the ability of the tool to support the Government in monitoring some of its human rights recommendations given that the tool provides a centralised repository for all of Saint Lucia's human rights recommendations within the Organisation of American States (OAS) system. The Government has since requested permission from the OAS access to the platform.

51. The GOSL takes pride in achieving this milestone in the development of its national human rights framework, however challenges still remain. Most notably, the Secretariat is resource deficient, as it operates without a budget and is staffed by one person whose duties expand beyond the Secretariat. The GOSL recognises that appropriate and adequate resources must be provided to the Secretariat to ensure that the Committee is able to fulfil its mandate effectively.

Human rights protection (Parliamentary Commissioner) 88.43–88.44

52. Unfortunately, the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner continues to be under resourced. The GOSL however continues to make certain that the Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner continues to partake in human rights dialogue and training via inclusion in the National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights.

Special procedures 88.47

53. The Government of Saint Lucia remains open to extending an invitation to Special Procedures in the near future.

Technical assistance 88.48–88.50

54. Since 2018 the GOSL, through the Department of External Affairs, has engaged the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for Barbados and the East Caribbean, requesting technical assistance to promote human rights nationally.

55. The technical assistance took the form of workshops which help sensitise public servants as well as civil society about the International Human Rights System and the role that these constituents played within that System. Technical assistance was also requested for the inaugural meeting of the National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights, with the aim of helping Committee members better understand their mandate. The most recent engagement with the OHCHR office in Barbados took place in 2020, where the OHCHR provided technical assistance to the Government of Saint Lucia in the preparation of its Universal Periodic Review and CRC reports.

56. Human rights capacity training for public servants has also been facilitated by the Inter-American System of Human Rights in 2020 and will continue throughout the first half of 2021.

57. The Division of Gender Relations has also sought the assistance of the OHCHR Office in Barbados. In 2019, the OHCHR provided assistance in facilitating a CEDAW Sensitisation workshop with a wide cross section of Saint Lucia's Law Enforcement and Social Support Agencies to discuss Saint Lucia's compliance with the Convention.

58. The Division of Gender Relations has also requested technical assistance agencies outside of the UN, such as Sisters for Change which is a European Union funded international NGO which is a member of the Equality and Justice Alliance. Sisters For through its Commonwealth legislative reform initiative, provided support and technical assistance to participating countries. The organisation has provided technical assistance and support to the Division of Gender Relations in a review of its laws in relation to CEDAW, in addition to drafting of its CEDAW report.

Engage civil society 88.51

59. The GOSL has engaged with civil society during the various consultations on the UPR, CEDAW and CRC. Furthermore, civil society is continually engaged and consulted via its membership in the NCCHR.

Child labour 88.92

60. The GOSL notes a 2017 ILO report which indicates that "the worst form of child labour mostly reported are those associated with the "gang culture." The Government therefore realises that its efforts to combat the worst forms of child labour within its borders must be augmented. The Government informs that greater emphasis is now being placed on educating and informing employers and employees to improve its inspection mechanism to identify cases of child labour. The Department of Labour has begun seeking training opportunities for labour inspectors in the area of child labour inspection and identification.

61. The Government however notes its challenges in translating regional and international good practices and lessons learned into sound strategies and policies to combat child labour in the national context. The GOSL therefore seeks engagement with its development partners to support efforts at combatting instances of child labour in Saint Lucia.

Climate change, the environment and children 88.120–88.121

62. The topic of climate change has been on the national agenda of Saint Lucia given Saint Lucia's vulnerability as a Small Island Developing State. As a result, the Government has sought to develop both regional and national responses to the inevitable threat climate change poses. On the regional level, Saint Lucia is currently working with the OECS on a Human Mobility Project which addresses the impacts of climate change, population migration and urgent relocation caused by natural disasters. The Human Mobility in the Context of Climate Change Strategic Plan (2020-2023) was completed in April 2020 for which a regional OECS technical working group to spearhead implementation has been formed.

63. On the national level the GOSL has realised success in the development policies and strategies and the enactment of mechanisms to ensure that climate change is deeply rooted in its development agenda. Some of these successes include a National Adaptation Plan

which was established in 2018 and sectoral adaptation plans focusing on as fisheries, agriculture, water and resilient ecosystems that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change. The development of such a plan will ensure the protection of livelihoods and further ensure Saint Lucia's food security given the precarious effects of climate change.

64. The Government revised its Climate Change Adaption Policy in 2015 to ensure compatibility with the ever evolving effects and impact of climate change. The policy was crafted via multistakeholder consultations, which included women and youth groups. The policy calls for ownership and participation at all levels of the community which will assist immensely in the conduct of vulnerability assessments and adaptation and implementation interventions.

65. The GOSL is acutely aware of the ability of climate change to exacerbate our risks to disasters. Furthermore, this risk is further exacerbated for vulnerable populations. Hence, the National Emergency Management Organisation (NEMO) has sought the inclusion of persons with disabilities in disaster risk reduction. In 2019, a number of consultations and training exercises were conducted by NEMO in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), The Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO) and Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA). These sessions involved training in sign language, management of visually impaired persons and other disabilities with emergency first responders.

66. Climate Change has also forced governments to seek and develop alternative sources of sustainable energy. The Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy and Labour, through its Renewable Energy/Public Utilities Division remains dedicated to facilitating the participation of the citizenry of Saint Lucia, including youth, in the dialogue on energy consumption and efficiency. As part of the observances for 2020 Energy Awareness Month, the Division embarked on a host of public awareness campaigns targeting the general public and youth. Youth participation in the national dialogue was facilitated through an essay competition open to primary and secondary school students and an animated series for pre-schoolers and kindergarteners.
