**Annex**

**Additional Information**

1. **Protection to victims of child abuse, including sale and sexual exploitation**

The Community Child Watch Committees, which have been set up in risk areas, act as a surveillance mechanism to identify children, vulnerable to violence and mostly at risk and to report any suspected case related to children to the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family Welfare (MGEFW) for appropriate action. The project has been handed over to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund since January 2018 through a Ministerial decision and was officially launched on 17 April 2018. They operate with the collaboration of a pool of volunteers, social workers, Non-Governmental Organisations, community leaders and other key stakeholders; and focus on children who are vulnerable and exposed to risks and abuse.

During the lockdown period associated with the COVID-19, the 24/7 toll free (113 and 139) services was operational to report any cases of violence against women and girls. A pool of Family Welfare and Protection Officers of the MGEFW were deployed around the island to provide prompt assistance to women and girls in need of emergency accommodation from distressful situations. The CDU maintained its core child protection services and ensured that these services remained functional and available on a 24/7 basis, including home visits and psychological services by respective officers for urgent cases and there was constant monitoring of all children placed in shelters and residential care institutions, by phone.

Furthermore, following the circulation of indecent photos and videos on the social media application called ‘Telegram’, in April 2021, the Government has approved the setting up of a Technical Committee at the level of the MGEFW to study the phenomenon of Child/Revenge Pornography and thereon to come up with recommendations. The objectives of the Committee are as follows:

1. to promote research/studies for better informed policy recommendations;
2. to set up a System for the collection of data;
3. to devise Process Maps/Standard Operating Procedures for institutional interventions and assistance to victims;
4. to develop collaborative institutional protocols for interventions and support to victims;
5. to identify any gaps in existing legislations dealing with the subject matter;
6. to devise criteria and guidelines for safe residential placement of victims when required.
7. to identify places of safety;
8. to propose training guidelines to stakeholders; and
9. to devise effective communication strategies at national level.
10. **Sensitisation campaigns and counselling**

The Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association (MFPWA) and the Drop-in Centre are the main institutions in combatting and preventing pregnancies among teenagers. The main function of the Drop-in-Center is to provide psychological and medical support to victims of child sexual abuse, exploitation and teenage pregnancy.

The Drop-in-Centre provides for services such as: long-term counselling and therapy, monthly medical sessions, couple/contraceptive counselling, monthly visits to clients, echography and clinical services including gynecologist at the Mauritius Family Planning and Welfare Association’s clinic, laboratory tests (HIV, Pregnancy); information on sexual and reproductive health, amongst others. Moreover, if the minor and/or victim is pregnant and requires any information on her sexual and reproductive health, the latter is referred to the Drop-in-Centre of the MGEFW. Furthermore, all women of reproductive age, including adolescent girls have universal access to sexual and reproductive health services through family planning clinics in all of the 140 health service delivery points.

Counselling services and different modes of contraception are provided free of cost. National measures are being further pursued to combat non-communicable diseases and cancer. Continued efforts are also made to sensitise the population on the HIV/ AIDS. A rapid Testing Caravan carries out regular testing in the community throughout the island. With regards to girls at risk, residential care facilities have been put in place with psychosocial, educational and health support facilities amongst others.

Since November 2017, the three E’s Project entitled “Empowerment through Education and Entertainment” targeted girls and young women (aged between 13 – 29 years) in deprived regions where the knowledge of gender is limited and where gender stereotypes still persist. In fact, one of the constraining factors to gender mainstreaming in deprived areas is the cultural barrier that inhibits equal participation and fair treatment to girls and women, as revealed by a Participatory Needs Assessment that was conducted in 18 deprived areas where the project was implemented. The project aimed to empower young girls and women and comprised mainly of education sessions, leisure and sports activities and visits/exchange programmes. Issues relating to sexual and reproductive health, values, personal development, leadership, road safety and crime prevention and drug and substance abuse were addressed.

The National Children’s Council acts as executive arm of the MGEFW and conducts the National Parental Empowerment Programmes also known as Atelier Partage Parents to empower parents, duty bearers, betrothed couples in view of marriage with parenting skills and equip them with better coping mechanisms. Parents are also sensitized on harmful effects of child marriage and encouraged to promote a spirit of gender equality between girls and boys laying emphasis on articles of United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children, on the other hand, are sensitized on the Article 28; Right to Education of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The National Children’s Council also carries out regular talks/sensitization campaigns on child protection, child abuse, teenage pregnancy and related complications, sexually transmitted diseases, Commercial sexual exploitation of children, gender-based violence, Teen Dating Violence and other related issues in schools, colleges, women centers and Non-Governmental Organisations. This acts as a means to empower both genders on these social malpractices. Regular talks are also conducted to promote girl and women empowerment through awareness campaigns in children’s clubs and schools, Women Empowerment Centres, Social Welfare Centres amongst others.

On 08 August 2019, the MGEFW organized a working session with different Ministries, Departments and the Non-Governmental Organisations/Civil Societies/Development Partners on ‘Ending Early Child Marriage’.

A breakdown on the training conducted on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children during period 2020 to 2021 is as follows:

1. **Child Development Unit (CDU)**

In year 2020, the CDU carried-out 25 awareness campaigns, wherein Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) was at the core of the discussions, thereby reaching 947 persons (262 males and 685 females).

The CDU also organised a five days intensive training on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children entitled: “A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to Dealing with CSEC Victims” from 29 January to 04 February 2020. The objectives of the training were to:

1. define Human Trafficking and Prostitution and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and how they are related;
2. become cognisant of the legislations and legal frameworks (international and state-based) used in the fight against CSEC, child trafficking and child prostitution;
3. describe the dynamics involved that contribute to the victimisation of young people/child by sex traffickers;

In year 2021, the CDU also carried-out five awareness campaigns, wherein CSEC was also at the core of the discussion, thereby reaching: 45 males and 72 females (total: 117 persons).

In 2020 till 19 October 2021, CDU Officers undertook 20 radio programmes and attended to five TV programmes, thereby focusing on the issue of Child Sexual Abuse including CSEC.

1. **Drop-in-Centre**

The Drop-in-Center undertook 33 sensitisation campaigns on CSEC, thereby reaching 1551 persons in 2020. In 2021, the Drop-in-Centre carried-out 19 sensitisation campaigns, thereby reaching 379 persons, i.e. 119 males and 260 females.

1. **Community Child Protection Programme (CCPP)**

Through the CCPP, all communities especially those seen as being as high-risk regions are sensitised on various salient issues (esp. ‘CSEC’) and thereby developing a child rights’ consciousness in respect of children and their need for survival, growth, development and participation in the most child friendly conducive environment. They are also sensitised on the need to refrain marriage below 18 years of age.

1. **National Children’s Council (NCC)**

On the preventive level, awareness campaigns to address ‘CSEC’ are regularly being carried-out with children through the ‘School Child Protection Clubs’ and ‘Children’s Clubs.’ In year 2020, the NCC targeted 61 primary schools and 46 secondary schools through the School Child Protection Clubs, to carry-out its varied campaigns, wherein ‘CSEC’ was also at the core of discussions. 3,636 primary school children were reached (i.e. 1,846 females and 1,790 males) and 2,807 secondary school students were reached (i.e. 1,287 females and 1,520 males).

In year 2021, the NCC targeted 10 primary schools and 46 secondary schools through the School Child Protection Clubs, to carry-out its varied campaigns, wherein ‘CSEC’ was also at the core of discussions. 735 primary school children were reached (i.e. 351 females and 384 males).

1. **Children’s Club**

For the Children’s Club, a total of 4,270 children were reached in year 2020 and 841 children were reached in 2021.

Parents were also reached out and informed on the matter through the ‘Atelier Partage Parents’. In year 2020, a total of 72 parents and 15 children were reached and in 2021, 90 parents and 04 children were reached.

1. **Care, Recovery and Rehabilitation of sexual abuse victims**
2. Shelters

The National Children’s Council has under its management the Cap Malheureux Relay Centre (also known as L’Oiseau du Paradis). The Relay Shelter is officially in operation since 09th December 2020 when it started housing residents. The shelter operates on a 24/7 basis and child caregivers attend to the needs of those residents.

The residents are provided with psycho-social support on a regular basis from officers of the MGEFW whereby follow ups are carried out once weekly by a Psychologist from the MGEFW and as and when required.

The residents are also empowered through the support services offered by the Enforcement Officers of the MGEFW to integrate the mainstream and become empowered citizens of the society.

The Rehabilitation Section caters for a Rehabilitation Programme for Children Victims of violence who are placed in Shelters. As a measure of last resort, children with utterly non-stable families are placed in Shelters and are provided with more permanent residential care facilities following the issue of Committal Orders. These institutions are Governmental and Non-Governmental Organisations which work in collaboration with the MGEFW.

1. Back-to-Home Programme

The Back-to-Home Programme has been initiated since October 2018, in order to facilitate the reintegration of minors into their family settings. The main objective of the Back-to-Home Programme is to provide children in Shelters with the opportunity to live and evolve among their kins and relatives, through appropriate rehabilitation of the minor, the parents and relatives.

In cases where it is noted that residents of those institutions are not able to get reinserted into their biological environment owing to reasons like, incest where the child is in immediate danger or also where parents are found to be in prisons, or prostitution, drug addictions or abandonment, then option for Foster Care system is explored.

The Back-to-Home Programme is being implemented in close collaboration with a multidisciplinary team comprising Social Workers, Psychologists, Psychiatric Nurse and Officers of Brigades Pour La Protection des Mineurs for post-discharge follow-up.

1. Re-bonding Section

The Rebonding Section was set up in September 2020 and it comprises a team of 7 Officers who ensure that children in shelters are obtaining regular supervised visits with their biological parents and relatives. The visits are effected with the purpose to encourage bonding and maintain family ties between parents and children and eventually leading to their reinsertion in their familial environment.

The parental visit is a preliminary essential step towards the reintegration process which enables to create an affinity between the parents/relatives and minors, thereby facilitating their reinsertion within their family setting.

Parents willing to take the responsibility of their wards sign a consent form or can make their motion to their respective court and thereafter the case is referred to the Back-to-Home Section for expedition.

Children whose relatives/parents, who post enquiry reveal that they are not in a position to take back their wards are also provided supervised parental visits so as not to sever the ties between parents and minors.

The Parental Visit are organised by the MGEFW to enable and encourage biological parents to visit their children, so as to promote proper bonding and prepare both parties for re-insertion in the family.

1. Foster Care Programme

The Foster Care System has been legally initiated as a Programme under the Child Protection Act and Section 23 (a) of the Child Protection (Foster Care) Regulations 2002 and amended in 2005. The main objective of the Foster Care Programme is to provide opportunities to the child to evolve in a substitute family environment. The main role of the Foster Parents is to provide financial, emotional, social and spiritual supports to the child.

1. Child Mentoring Programme

The Programme through its trained Child Mentors provides assistance to children aged 10 to 16 years in need of emotional and social reconstruction. Since the inception of the programme 182 of Child mentees have been placed under the Child Mentoring Programme, as at 31 March 2020. The Child Protection (Amendment) Act 2008 makes provision for the Child Mentoring Scheme which was initiated as the Child Mentoring Programme in 2009.