III. Main areas of concerns and recommendations

A. General measures of implementation (arts. 4, 42 and 44, para. 6 of the Convention)

Training

1. The Committee is concerned that the general level of awareness and working knowledge on the Convention is inadequate among professionals working with or for children.

21. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure that all professional groups working for and with children, in particular law enforcement officials, social workers and personnel working in childcare institutions, are adequately and systematically trained. In this regard, the Committee recommends that human rights education be included in the official curriculum at all levels of education and in training activities.

D. Violence against children (articles 19, 37 (a) and 39 of the Convention)

32. Corporal punishment

The Committee welcomes the State party’s Child Care and Development Services Act 2011 which prohibits corporal punishment in institutional residences. However, the Committee regrets that notwithstanding its previous recommendation...
(CRC/C/15/Add.224, para. 32) to expressly prohibit corporal punishment by law in the family and schools, corporal punishment remains lawful and prevalent in these contexts.

33. The Committee recommends that the State party take all appropriate measures to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment in all settings, particularly in the domestic and school contexts. Furthermore, it recommends that the State party strengthen and expand awareness-raising and education programmes and campaigns, in order to promote positive and alternative forms of discipline and respect for children’s rights, with the involvement of children, while raising awareness about the adverse consequences of corporal punishment on children.

Abuse and neglect

34. The Committee welcomes the introduction of the “Stamp It Out” campaign and other campaigns against the abuse of children. The Committee also notes as positive the provision of day care facilities for children free of charge. However, the Committee is concerned that child abuse continues to occur frequently and that there continue to be young children left alone without proper adult supervision.

35. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation (CRC/C/15/Add.224, para. 38, 2004) to the State party to strengthen awareness-raising and education programmes including campaigns with the involvement of children in order to prevent and combat child abuse. Furthermore, the Committee recommends that the State party take all measures to ensure that no young children are left unaccompanied at home, including by considering extending the availability, scope and accessibility of free day care to children.

E. Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 18 (paras. 1-2), 9-11, 19-21, 25, 27 (para. 4) and 39 of the Convention)

Family environment

39. The Committee shares the concern of the State party on the serious social problems and negative implications for child rights resulting from the widespread phenomenon of absentee or transient
fathers and welcomes the State party’s programmes for single parents and parenting skills aimed at facilitating positive family environments for children. However, the Committee is concerned that given the deeply rooted social and cultural factors influencing fathers to neglect their parental responsibilities or do so only on a limited basis, the State party provides no information on studies that would help better understand the situation in order to plan appropriate policies and programmes. Furthermore, the Committee is concerned that the social support and assistance provided to children in these situations as well as to children left behind by migrant parents is inadequate.

40. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Undertake or support studies and research aimed at understanding the root causes, nature and extent of the widespread phenomenon of absentee and transient parents and the consequences on child rights, inter alia, by collaborating with Caribbean-based academic centres and projects dealing with the subject, and ensure that results are reflected in relevant public policies and programmes;

(b) Support public awareness-raising programmes and campaigns aimed at men and boys to exercise responsible parenthood;

(c) Continue to strengthen its support to families in situations of vulnerability, in particular single-parent families through systematic, long-term policies and programmes to ensure access to social services and sustainable income opportunities; and,

(d) Undertake measures to ensure effective recovery of child maintenance pursuant to article 27 of the Convention and consider ratifying the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Decisions Relating to Maintenance Obligations, the Convention on the Law Applicable to Maintenance Obligations, and the Convention on Jurisdiction, Applicable Law, Recognition, Enforcement and Co-operation in respect of Parental Responsibility and Measures for the
Protection of Children.

Children deprived of a family environment

41. The Committee welcomes the enactment of the Minimum Operational Standards and Regulations for Children’s Homes (2008). However, the Committee is concerned that:

(a) There are increasing numbers of children, particularly those from single-parent families, being placed in institutional care;
(b) There are no safeguards and procedures for ensuring that institutional care is genuinely used as a measure of last resort;
(c) The alternative family and community-based options for children deprived of a family environment or children with special protection needs are inadequate in scope and quality;
(d) There are insufficient efforts being made to reunite children in institutional care with their biological families, resulting in many of these children remaining in institutions until the age of 18 years; and
(e) The Visiting Committees monitoring the institutions do not adequately ensure the quality of care provided and the protection of children from violence and abuse at such facilities.

42. Recalling the Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children annexed to the United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/142 of 20 December 2009, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Support and facilitate family-based care for children wherever possible, particularly for children in single parent families;
(b) Ensure adequate safeguards and clear needs-based and best interests of the child criteria for determining whether a child should be placed in institutional care;
(c) Improve the availability and quality of alternative family- and community-based options for children deprived of a family environment or children with special protection needs;
(d) Facilitate contact between the child and her/his biological family to encourage and support reunification when it is in the best interests of the child; and

(e) Ensure that the Childcare Protection Agency and Visiting Committees are provided with adequate human, technical and financial resources to conduct thorough and periodic review of placements of children with foster parents or in institutions; and monitor the quality of care therein, including by providing accessible channels for reporting, monitoring and remedying maltreatment of children.

Adoption

43. The Committee notes as positive the enactment of the Adoption of Children Act 2009 which empowers the Adoption Board, in collaboration with the Child Care and Protection Agency, to strengthen safeguards for adopted children and those who may be eligible for adoption. However, while being aware that the current rates of domestic and intercountry adoptions are low, the Committee is nonetheless concerned that the safeguards for children who are adopted intercountry are inadequate.

42. The Committee recommends that the State party consider acceding to the 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption.

<p>| OPC to CRC | 30 Jul 2010 a |
| OPAC to CRC | 11 Aug 2010 a |
| ICCPR | 15 Feb 1977 |
| ICESCR | 15 Feb 1977 |
| CEDAW | 17 Jul 1980 |</p>
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