

## THEMATIC REPORTS

### *Mechanisms of the Commission on Human Rights*

#### **Violence against women, Special Rapporteur on:** (E/CN.4/1997/47, Section IV)

In the section dealing with trafficking in women and forced prostitution, the report notes information received indicating that club owners in Suriname pay women US\$ 500 for every Brazilian recruit. The report further notes that Suriname is one of only a small number of places where work permits are issued to migrant prostitutes so that they can legally enter the country to work temporarily as prostitutes. The application process is handled by the local immigration and police and is free of charge to the women applying, but the existence of exploitative middlemen has been documented.

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## TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

**Date of admission to UN:** 18 September 1962.

### TREATIES AND REPORTS TO TREATY BODIES

**Land and People:** Trinidad and Tobago has not submitted a core document for use by the treaty bodies.

#### **Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

Acceded: 8 December 1978.

Trinidad and Tobago's second periodic report was due 30 June 1993.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Paragraphs (1) (d) and (2) of article 8.

#### **Civil and Political Rights**

Acceded: 21 December 1978.

Trinidad and Tobago's second and third periodic reports were due 20 March 1990 and 1995 respectively.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Paragraph 2 of article 4; paragraphs 2 (b) and 3 of article 10; paragraph 2 of article 12; paragraph 5 of article 14; paragraph 6 of article 14; paragraph 1 of article 15; article 21; and article 26.

**Optional Protocol:** Acceded: 14 November 1980.

#### **Racial Discrimination**

Signed: 9 June 1967; ratified: 4 October 1973

Trinidad and Tobago's 11<sup>th</sup> and 12 periodic reports were due 3 November 1994 and 1996 respectively.

#### **Discrimination against Women**

Signed: 27 June 1985; ratified: 12 January 1990.

Trinidad and Tobago's initial and second periodic reports were due 11 February 1991 and 1995 respectively.

*Reservations and Declarations:* Paragraph 1 of article 29.

#### **Rights of the Child**

Signed: 30 September 1990; ratified: 5 December 1991.

Trinidad and Tobago's second periodic report is due 3 January 1999.

Trinidad and Tobago's initial report (CRC/C/11/Add. 10) was considered by the Committee at its October 1997 session. The report prepared by the government includes information on: general measures for implementation; the definition of the

child; the general principles of non-discrimination, the best interest of the child, right to life, survival and development and respect for the views of the child; civil rights and freedoms; family environment and alternative care; basic health and welfare; education, leisure and cultural activities; and, special protection measures. This information covers articles 1 through 41 of the Convention.

The Committee's concluding observations (CRC/C/15/Add.82) welcomed: the proposal to incorporate the National Plan of Action on Children (NPA) into the general development framework of the country; the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to implement the NPA; establishment of the National Family Services Division within the Ministry of Consumer Affairs and Social Services to monitor children at risk; the low levels of child mortality and under-five mortality rates; and, the positive indicators in the field of education.

In terms of factors and difficulties hindering implementation of the Convention, the Committee noted severe economic constraints, partly as a result of structural adjustment programmes, social difficulties and poverty, an economic recession, and an acute increase in unemployment.

The principal subjects of concern identified by the Committee were: the fact that the Convention is not an integral part of national legislation and the insufficiency of measures to harmonize national laws with the Convention; the fact that a number of legal provisions contrary to the CRC are still in force, including in the areas of administration of juvenile justice, minimum age of access to employment and minimum age for marriage; lack of a comprehensive approach to implementation of the CRC; the lack of specific mechanisms to register and address complaints from children concerning violations of their rights under the law; the fact that insufficient attention has been paid to the training of all professional groups working with or for children, such as judges, lawyers, magistrates, law enforcement personnel, police officers, army officers, health professionals, teachers, social workers and personnel in child-care and detention institutions; the fact that no adequate efforts exist to protect children from exposure to harmful information, including violence, especially on television; the insufficient awareness and information on ill-treatment and abuse of children, including sexual abuse, both within and outside the family and the lack of appropriate mechanisms to prevent and combat them; the lack of special structures for child victims of such abuse; the use of corporal punishment within the family, at school and in care institutions; the absence of a law that clearly prohibits the use of both mental and physical torture or other cruel treatment or punishment against children; the lack of qualified staff working in care institutions and the persistence of reported cases of abuse; the high maternal mortality rate; the spread of HIV/AIDS and its impact on children; the insufficiency of measures to prevent early pregnancy; the shortage of trained teachers and the high pupil-to-teacher ratio; the new phenomena of homelessness and children living and/or working on the streets; the increase in the economic exploitation of children, particularly those who work as street vendors; the low minimum age of access to employment, set at 12; the low minimum age of criminal responsibility; and, a number of problems in the administration of juvenile justice and conditions in detention facilities.