

**Universal Periodic Review  
(12<sup>th</sup> session, 3-14 October 2011)**

**Contribution of UNESCO**

**TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

**I. Human rights treaties which fall within the competence of UNESCO and international instruments adopted by UNESCO**

1. Table:

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date of ratification, accession or succession</i>	<i>Declarations /reservations</i>	<i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i>	<i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i>
Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960	05/11/1992	<i>Reservations to this Convention shall not be permitted</i>		Right to education
Convention on Technical and Vocational Education. 1989	-			Right to education
Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage 1972	05/11/1992			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003	22/07/2010			Right to take part in cultural life
Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions 2005	26/07/2010			Right to take part in cultural life

## II. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

### 1. Right to education<sup>1</sup>

2. Constitutional framework: According to Article 4 of the Constitution of 1976 (as amended in 2000), “It is hereby recognised and declared that in Trinidad and Tobago there have existed and shall continue to exist without discrimination by reason of race, origin, colour, religion or sex, the following fundamental human rights and freedoms, namely: ... (f) the right of a parent or guardian to provide a school of his own choice for the education of his child or ward (...).”

3. Legislative framework: The law that still continues to guide the process of education in Trinidad and Tobago is the Education Act of 1966. The Act enshrines compulsory, free education for all children aged 6-12 in public schools. However, it does state that schools could also provide infant or nursery schools for children below 5 years of age. The Education Act makes it mandatory that all private schools be registered with the Ministry of Education and they are subject to periodic inspection and investigation. This Act is currently being revised to create a legislative environment which supports the entire restructuring process. Compulsory schooling for children aged 6-12 is supported by labour legislation, which prohibits the employment of children who are under 12 years of age, between 8:20 and 15:30. The Minister of Education is empowered by the Act to appoint school attendance officers to enforce attendance and bring delinquent parents to heel.

4. Policy Measures: According to the Vision 2020 draft National Strategic Plan, the Ministry of Education (MOE), in collaboration and consultation with other key Ministries and stakeholders, is charged with the responsibility of creating the innovative people defined as highly skilled, well-educated people aspiring to local culture of excellence that is driven by equal access to learning opportunities, who will, in turn serve as a solid foundation for a developed society and nation.

5. The Ministry has developed a Corporate Plan for the period 2008-2012 which identifies three strategic priorities – focus on the schools; change/reform the Ministry; and involve the community; which establish the framework within which educational goal setting, policy development, strategic planning, programme development and implementation, establishment and management of quality standards, and monitoring and evaluation are conducted by the Ministry’s central administration.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sources:*

- i) International Bureau of Education, Profile of the education system of Trinidad and Tobago, <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/fr/dans-le-monde/regions-de-lunesco/amerique-latine-et-caraibes/trinite-et-tobago.html> (accessed 15/02/2011)
- ii) National Report on the development of Education in Trinidad and Tobago, 48th Session of the ICE, [http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National\\_Reports/ICE\\_2008/trinidadtobago\\_NR08.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/National_Reports/ICE_2008/trinidadtobago_NR08.pdf) (accessed 15/02/2011)

6. The Ministry is in the process of developing a Policy on Inclusive Education which will address the provision of support and services to all learners regardless of their physical, intellectual, social or emotional conditions.

## **2. Right to take part in cultural life**

7. Institutional framework: Cultural Diversity is seen as a vital force for development conducive to the reduction and elimination of poverty and the achievement of sustainable development. In order to promote cultural diversity, the Ministry of Arts and Culture had been renamed the Ministry of Arts and Multiculturalism, thus reflecting the broad diversity of the people of Trinidad and Tobago.

8. Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints: Trinidad and Tobago has ratified the following three major UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture: the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (in 1983); the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (both in 2010).

9. Capacity-building and technical assistance provided and/or recommended by UNESCO: In 2009 a National Consultative Meeting on Copyright Protection and the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was organized in Trinidad and Tobago in order to introduce the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

10. Trinidad and Tobago participated in the Caribbean Sub-regional meeting on Cultural Diversity Programming Lens and Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Grenada in June 2010.

11. A number of activities are planned for 2011 in cooperation with the National Commission for UNESCO in the field of Cultural Diversity.

## **3. Freedom of opinion and expression**

12. Capacity-building and technical assistance provided and/or recommended by UNESCO: UNESCO has provided support for the following project in Trinidad and Tobago:

- i) Establishment of the Community Multimedia Centre (CMC) and operation of Radio Toco, which is CMC's flagship activity;
- ii) The Second Caribbean CMC Conference was held in Trinidad & Tobago in 2010 (the first one was in Suriname in 2005). In the framework of the Conference the Caribbean Community Multimedia Centres adopted the Toco Declaration and endorsed the UNESCO Brisbane Declaration on Freedom of Information, which

was a political contribution from that group of independent media to the promotion of human rights;

- iii) In 2007, in collaboration with the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM), UNESCO organized the Caribbean Network of Young Journalists (CNYJ), under which young journalists from 10 CARICOM countries were “paired” with leading and experienced journalists for a period of 12 months to improve their own professional skills and knowledge. An Election Handbook for Caribbean Journalists was also prepared to increase the capacity of young journalists to improve the coverage of elections.

### **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Right to education**

13. Trinidad and Tobago should be encouraged to ratify the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) and the UNESCO Convention on Technical and Vocational Education (1989).