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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS TO THE UNITED
NATIONS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS**

**MISSION PERMANENTE DE LA REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES
ET DES AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES**

No. 77/2013 (MMG/HR/28/1)

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and with reference to its Note (Ref: RRDD/DESIB/RTD) dated 26 December 2012 requesting information from Member States regarding Resolution A/HRC/RES/21/3 of the Human Rights Council, has the honour to submit hereunder the inputs of the Government of the Republic of Mauritius:

“Mauritius voted against the above Resolution. Nevertheless a number of traditional values, which have now been universalised through various human rights instruments/treaties/conventions, are taught, in particular, by the various religions practised in Mauritius (such as respect and love for truth, life, family, parents, women, education, wisdom, nature, compassion, honesty, peace, cooperation and solidarity for the needy, fairness towards others, including transgressors; thrift, industriousness, mental and physical health, self discipline, humility, modesty, etc) and translated under different appellations in the more recent instruments like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have been incorporated in various key documents produced by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources in collaboration with/after consulting other stakeholders for transmission in our schools (Annex A).

Some of the good practices adopted in promoting Human Rights and fundamental freedoms through a better understanding of the traditional values of humankind included;

- (i) concertation among representatives of various religions and cultures in Mauritius to reach a concensus on the common values to be promoted in Mauritius;*
- (ii) national consultation of all stakeholders prior to adoption, wide diffusion and implementation of the key documents mentioned above;*
- (iii) production and free issue of primary school textbooks incorporating these common values and fundamental rights and freedoms to all Educators and children of public and private aided schools, including those run by different religious groups;*
- (iv) inclusion in the time table of both public and private primary and secondary schools, of co and extra-curricular activities which help to ensure better*

understanding and adoption of such values and human rights by the school children;

- (v) inclusion in our school libraries of books promoting the above mentioned values/Human Rights; and*
- (v) options given to all primary and secondary school children to study their religions and heritage languages during school hours (Annex B).*

Furthermore, the Government of Mauritius has been actively promoting ancestral values and traditions that each component of the Mauritian society has brought along with it and which have been transmitted and preserved to this day, as part of the Mauritian cultural heritage. The cultural policy of the Government of Mauritius, through the Ministry of Arts and Culture, places in the forefront the wishes, needs and aspirations of all the components of the Mauritian Community while paying due care to our cultural and ancestral values.

In fact, the Government has been actively pursuing the following objectives:

- (i) Providing for the artistic and cultural needs of the country;*
- (ii) Preserving and promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;*
- (iii) Preserving tangible, intangible and documentary heritage; and*
- (iv) Preserving and promoting written and spoken languages (including ancestral languages).*

Celebration of national festivals

Since the year 1995, the Government, through the Ministry of Arts and Culture, has been celebrating the following festivals at national level:

- (i) Spring Festival;*
- (ii) Eid;*
- (iii) Ougadi;*
- (iv) Thaipooam Cavadee;*
- (v) Ganesh Chaturthi;*
- (vi) Divali; and*
- (vii) Christmas.*

The objective behind these celebrations is to promote the traditional values, intercultural dialogue, mutual cultural appreciation and sharing among the population through cultural activities/ programmes.

Considering the deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage, and with the view to giving recognition to the

distinctive nature of cultural activities, goods and services as vehicles of identity, values and meaning, the Government of Mauritius has ratified the following Conventions:

- (i) *Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ratification in 2004); and*
- (ii) *Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (ratification in 2006).*

The Ministry of Arts and Culture has set up various institutions to promote traditional values and to promote respect for the diversity of cultural expressions and raise awareness of its value at the local, national and international levels.

Preservation of tangible and intangible heritage

The National Heritage Trust Fund which was set up in 1997 has been actively promoting our tangible and intangible heritage. Following the ratification of the Convention on the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and in its endeavour to safeguard the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the National Heritage Fund (NHF) has initiated research to inventory and document its Intangible Cultural Heritage. The National Heritage Fund in collaboration with the University of Mauritius has already completed the first Inventory of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mauritius.

Presently, the NHF is finalizing the nomination dossier for the inscription of Segga Tipik and Bhojpuri Folk Song and Music on the UNESCO Representative list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Islamic, Tamil, Telugu and Marathi Cultural Centres as well as the Nelson Mandela Centre for African Culture which operate under the aegis of the Ministry of Arts and Culture are actively engaged in the promotion and preservation of their respective art and culture. In fact, they organise lectures, seminars, workshops, exhibitions and other activities which lead to a better understanding of their respective art and culture.

World Heritage Sites

The Aapravasi Ghat (related to indentured labourers) and Le Morne Cultural Landscape (related to slavery) have been inscribed on the World Heritage List with the view to protecting living traditional cultures. The two sites embody an exceptional spiritual relationship of people with nature and are associated with powerful beliefs as well as artistic and traditional customs. The Le Morne Heritage Trust Fund and the Aapravasi Ghat Trust Fund are promoting the world heritage sites and creating public awareness of the history of slavery and indentured labour, respectively.

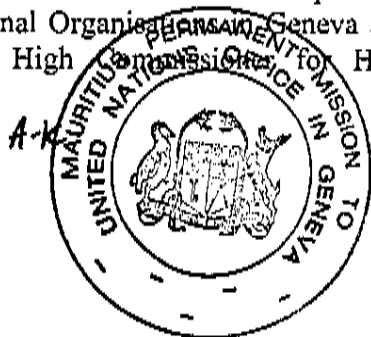
Promotion of languages

All the languages in use in Mauritius are part of our national cultural heritage and the Mauritian Government has been pursuing its efforts to promote all ancestral languages in order to preserve the cultural identity of all the cultural components of Mauritius. The Creole, Chinese, Arabic, Urdu, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, English, Hindi, Bhojpuri and Sanskrit Speaking Unions organise literary and cultural activities to promote and encourage the linguistic development among all people having an interest in the specific language, with emphasis on the cultural, artistic, economic and social perspectives of the language. Another

objective of these speaking unions is to promote intercultural and interlinguistic understanding and harmony through exchange and participation in joint projects.

The different ethnic groups coexisting in Mauritius uphold their traditional values through the celebration of different festivals, some of which are even declared public holidays in Mauritius. The growth of the Mauritian Nation springs from its cultural diversity brought by the forefathers coming from different continents. Fostering traditional values helps to preserve the Mauritian cultural identity and provides the basis for cultural development in the country, thereby contributing to the protection and furtherance of human rights and fundamental freedoms”.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Mauritius to the United Nations Office and other International Organisations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, 12 April 2013

**Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
1211 Geneva**

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ANNEX A

Traditional Values taught in religions practised in Mauritius and other countries of the world and corresponding Human Rights promoted

(i) **Honesty/Integrity/ Respect/love for God above all other persons or objects/properties**

Bible, 8th, 9th, 10th Commandments: You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor; You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor

Bible: 2nd Commandment Exodus 20: 3-4 Quran: 4 : 29-30, 83 : 1-6

TIROUKKOURAL: Chapters 28 – 30, 32

UDHR: Article 17; ACHPR: Articles 14, 21

(ii) **Religious tolerance**

(Quran : 2: 256 – " Let there be no compulsion in religion" and 10:99 -"If it had been your Lord's will, all of the people on Earth would have believed")

UDHR: Article 18, CRC : Articles 14, 20)

(iii) **Education /knowledge/wisdom for all, including women**

Bible: Luke – 10:38-42, Proverbs 23:12; 17:16, 8:10-12, 1: 8-9

Al Tirmidhi, Hadith 74: "The seeking of knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim"

TIROUKKOURAL de Tirouvallouvar (1er siècle avant JC) as CODE MORAL

UNIVERSEL traduit du tamoul par Mootocomaren Sangeelee

Chapitre 43 sur LA SAGESSE

UDHR: Article 26; ACHPR: Article 17

(iv) **Respect for life, even of animals**

Bible: 6th Commandment

Quran: 5: 32, 6: 151)

TIROUKKOURAL: Chapters 26,33

UDHR: Article 3 ; ACHPR : Article 4

(v) **Respect and love for parents, family and family life :**

Bible: 5th and 6th Commandments : "Honour your father and mother, You shall not covet your neighbour's wife."

Exodus – 20:12, 17; John 4: 20

Quran: 46:15, 17

TIROUKKOURAL: Chapter 53

UDHR : Article 16, CRC : Articles 9, 10, 18

Trait d'Union 6 Volume1, page 64 : Connaitre tes droits et tes responsabilités

- (vi) **Health** (Leviticus : 13)
Yoga
UDHR: Article 25; ACHPR: Article 16; CRC: Article 24

- (vii) **Fairness/Kindness towards others/Justice**
Bible: Exodus 20:10; James 2:1
Quran: 4: 58, 135, 60:8,
TIROUKKOURAL: Chapter 25
UDHR: Article24
ACHPR: Articles 28, 29
Trait d'union 6, Volume 1, page 52: les droits de l'enfant

- (viii) **Peace/Non-violence/Forgiveness**
Matthew: 5:9; 18: 21-22
Quran: 8:61; 5:28
TIROUKKOURAL : Chapter 32
ACHPR : Article 23

- (ix) **Cooperation and solidarity**
UDHR : Article 22
ACHPR : Articles 27, 29
My English Book Standard V Part II, page 204: Different, Yet United ;
pages 206-8 : Helping a Friend
Self Knowledge Self discipline and Perfection
TIROUKKOURAL: Chapter 31, 44 – 46, 99

- (x) **Honesty/Integrity**

Bible, 8th, 9th, 10th Commandments: You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor; You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor
TIROUKKOURAL: Chapters 28 – 30, 32

- (x) **Respect for women, their capacities, their rights and needs**

Bible: Proverbs 31:10-31, Luke 10: 38-42

ANNEX B

Some Key documents of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources

1. Empowering the NATION'S Children TOWARDS A QUALITY CURRICULUM STRATEGY FOR REFORM September 2006.

This emphasizes strengthening **national solidarity**, maintaining **moral integrity** and sense of caring in young Mauritians for all other members of society, encouraging voluntary social work, tolerance and other Value-based behaviours and attitudes, reinforcing gender equity.

Subjects proposed at preprimary and primary levels include values while subjects proposed at secondary level include "Anti-Corruption Values", "Intercultural Understanding", "Human Rights", "Humanitarian Law"

2. National Curriculum Framework (Primary)

This contains a whole chapter 8 on VALUES EDUCATION (pages 98-101) with the aim of making the child develop empathy, good relationships with others, be aware of his/her responsibilities, appreciate and respect the natural environment, etc. Values education is transmitted in the various subjects, for example:

Page 72 specifies in the chapter 5 **ASIAN LANGUAGES & ARABIC** that "This major competency covers pupils' understanding that language has an important effect on the ways they view themselves and the world. They would understand that language is general. Yet, when used in a specific context, it can influence people's beliefs, attitudes and values. Therefore, this skill aims at achieving the following specific learning outcomes:

- Pupils will develop respect for other people's values, attitudes and beliefs
- They will realize that various texts reflect various opinions and beliefs
- They will recognize how texts and various readings of the same text generate certain attitudes and marginalize others
- Pupils understand that texts and their various readings can affect their world view
- Pupils will express themselves in a way to foster multi-cultural harmony and coherence

They will use a common national language that expresses the needs of their country in Arabic.”

Page 96 specifies in the chapter 7 **HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION (HPE)** “The guidelines below should help educators in selecting appropriate activities for HPE:

Involve peers mentoring.

Are culturally, ethnically and gender sensitive.

Use cooperative and team-building strategies, with emphasis on cooperation rather than competition.

3. National Curriculum Framework (Secondary)

Page 17, section 1.4 specify that the Overarching Learning Outcomes for the students include

7. Students develop awareness of their cultural, geographic, historical and economic contexts and acquire the knowledge, skills and values for social integration and a culture of peace.

8. Students interact with others from diverse cultures, develop pride in our nation and recognize that everyone has to feel valued and safe”

Chapter 11 Integrating Cross Cutting Issues in the curriculum (pages 173-178) includes one page 175 on Peace Education which specifies “The concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘peace education’ will be addressed across the curriculum, in a number of subject areas, namely Social Studies-History, Geography and Sociology as well as Languages, Literature, Economics”

4. Education & Human Resources Strategy Plan 2008-2020 includes as one of the **MISSION** of the Ministry “To ensure learning opportunities accessible to all, provide learners with values and skills to further their personal growth, enhance their critical and exploratory thinking and encourage them to innovate and to adapt to changes in an increasingly globalised environment” and as **EDUCATION SECTOR OBJECTIVES** “To sustain equitable access to quality education, ensuring that all learners attain high levels of achievement in Literacy, Numeracy, Information and Communications Technology and such essential Life Skills as sound human values, healthy lifestyle and so forth as the basis for lifelong learning and good citizenship”

5. The SCHOOL MANAGEMENT MANUAL FOR RECTORS OF STATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS, published by the Ministry in 2009 and made available on Ministry’s website ministry-education.gov.mu, specifies that Morning Assembly should be held almost every day and attended by both staff and students and that “School Assembly will start with the National Anthem and may be followed by a short prayer that is universal in concept and is acceptable to all

faiths". As you are aware, our National Anthem glorifies our motherland's beauty, fragrance as well as living in unity, peace, justice and liberty. There is no glorification of violence or dominance over others. The Ecole des Valeurs Humaines et Commission Catéchèse has also, with the agreement of Mgr Maurice E.Piat, October 2004, published an anthology of prayers, stories and quotations from various religions, **50 PRIERES ET 36 VITAMINES**, for use in private secondary schools. It was at its 4th Edition in 2011.

- 6. Primary School Textbooks** transmitting values as per the **National Curriculum Framework (Primary)** –some examples in **Annex B1**

ANNEX B1

For example the **Health Education Pupil's Workbook for Standard IV** pupils teaches "**Care and concern for people with disabilities**" (pages 22-27) and about including and supporting left out/disabled pupils instead of mocking or bullying them (pp69-76).

My English Book Standard IV Part I,p51:Pictures and text of Sam holding his old grandfather's hand and remembering his grandfather taking care of him when he was 2 years old and pushing him in his pram and Sam helping his grand father to drink soup.

My English Book Standard IV Part II,p164:Picture and text "A kind lady helped the blind man to cross the busy road"; p205: Picture + text of school boy carrying an old lady's big and heavy bag with one hand and with the other holding her arm and helping her to cross the road.

Examples breaking gender stereotypes may be seen in the following textbooks:

My English Book III Part I, p11:Picture and text: Jessen brings a basket full of clothes. Dad hangs the clothes on the line

Science Standard III, p120:In the Kitchen: Picture of Father using water for cooking food, mother washing dishes and Mala watering her flower plants

My English Book Standard IV Part I

p3 A Special Sunday Breakfast: picture and text on the David family: "Mrs. David is preparing a maize **pudding**. Mr. David is making tea while grandmother is tossing some pancakes. Jenny, Sheena and Yan are **setting the table**. Grandfather is warming some chapattis in the pan."

P4: Pictures + text "Father is making tea."

"Yan and Jenny are setting the table"

P10: Picture + text "Minah and her father are going to the market"

P14: Picture + text "Rahul sweeps his room **himself** every Sunday"

P15: Picture + text "Father prepares breakfast"

My English Book Standard IV Part II, p156: **Occupations** "My father is a postman My mother is a policewoman. She directs **traffic** and helps children to cross the road. She also helps to catch thieves. Sometimes she works at night Both my mother and father are nurses. They look after sick people in the hospital. They give them medicine and help them take their bath and their food."

My English Book Standard V Part I, pp53-54,56: Pictures and text "Kevin got a baby sister last week. After a few days, Kevin can hold the baby confidently. ... In the afternoons, he goes home quickly so as to be with Amy. Kevin returned to play with Amy"

My English Book Standard V Part II, p107: Work is worship: includes Picture of a man and girl repairing a car