

Table of Contents

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S POLICY	i
Preface.....	iii
Summary	1
Policy Rationale	2
1. <u>Definition of the Child</u>	2
2. <u>Children Are a Large Part of Society</u>	2
3. <u>Work-to-Date</u>	3
Policy Framework	5
1. <u>Vision And Mission</u>	5
2. <u>Principles And Values</u>	5
3. <u>Policy Goals And Objectives</u>	7
Policy Implementation	10
1. <u>Implementation Structure</u>	10
2. <u>Priority Groups</u>	11
3. <u>Key Partners</u>	11
Strategic Plan of Action	13
<u>Outcome 1: Protection</u>	13
<u>Outcome 2: Development</u>	14
<u>Outcome 3: Survival</u>	14
<u>Outcome 4: Participation</u>	15
<u>Outcome 5: Planning</u>	15
Acknowledgements.....	16
Bibliography	16
Annex 1: Issues and Challenges For Children in Solomon Islands.....	17
1 <u>Protection</u>	18
2 <u>Development</u>	19
3 <u>Survival</u>	21
4 <u>Participation</u>	23
Annex 2: First National Action Plan for Children.....	24
1. <u>Protection</u>	24
2. <u>Development</u>	26
3. <u>Survival</u>	28
4. <u>Participation</u>	30
5. <u>Planning</u>	31

Preface

Nearly half of our citizens are children; they are also asking for and expecting action for their development. We need to help them because they are our future.

Following the “World Summit for Children” in 1990, and experiences during the 1990s, the United Nations General Assembly held a Special Session on Children in 2002. That Special Session adopted a “World Fit for Children” action document that describes the promises made by governments of the world, including Solomon Islands, to improve the lives of children over the next 10-15 years. In approving that document, all governments agreed to develop national policies and plans of action applicable to themselves.

The Policy presented in this document is our response to those calls to work towards achieving the goals and targets laid out in the “World Fit for Children” action document. Even without that call, children’s issues are serious enough to need our attention and action. This is why Solomon Islands ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1995. Our obligations under the CRC will be easier to meet with this Policy.

This Policy also reflects the commitment and the willingness of the government and the people of Solomon Islands to provide every opportunity for any child in this nation to live a healthy life and develop his/her potentials to the fullest. This policy builds upon the strengths and contributions of all who have been or are working for our children’s development. This Policy begins by setting out accepted background information on the current situation of children in the country. The goals derived from that information guide us in moving forward together for our children’s positive development.

The government is committed to providing adequate resources and mechanisms for the advocacy, implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of this Policy. The CNURA government prepared this Policy. However, stakeholders throughout the nation were involved in its development. Thus, I now urge all of those stakeholders to join with us to protect, support and encourage children so that they can accept and take full responsibility in the overall development of this nation.

That old saying that, “the child is parent to the adult”, reminds us that tomorrow’s adults grow out of today’s children. The well-being of our children of today, and the children of future generations, will continue to be the central focus of this Nation’s development aspirations. Thus, as the Minister responsible for Children’s Affairs, I am honoured to present, on behalf of all children in Solomon Islands, this “National Children’s Policy.



Hon Johnson Koli, MP
Minister for Women, Youth, and Children Affairs

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S POLICY

Summary

This policy begins with a definition of what a child is in the Solomons. It then briefly describes the history behind the development of this policy.

From this, it moves on and lays out a vision and mission for this policy. From that, it presents the goals (the key strategic areas) and objectives for the policy.

Following this are two sections that describe how the policy will be implemented. The first section presents the organisational framework for implementing the policy, and a brief listing of the key partners in child development.

The paper finishes with acknowledgements and a bibliography. The first Annex to the paper provides a situation analysis that describes many of the situations in the Solomons that relate to children. The second Annex presents the first National Action Plan for Children; this plan will change annually as stakeholder plans are updated.

Policy Rationale

1. Definition of the Child

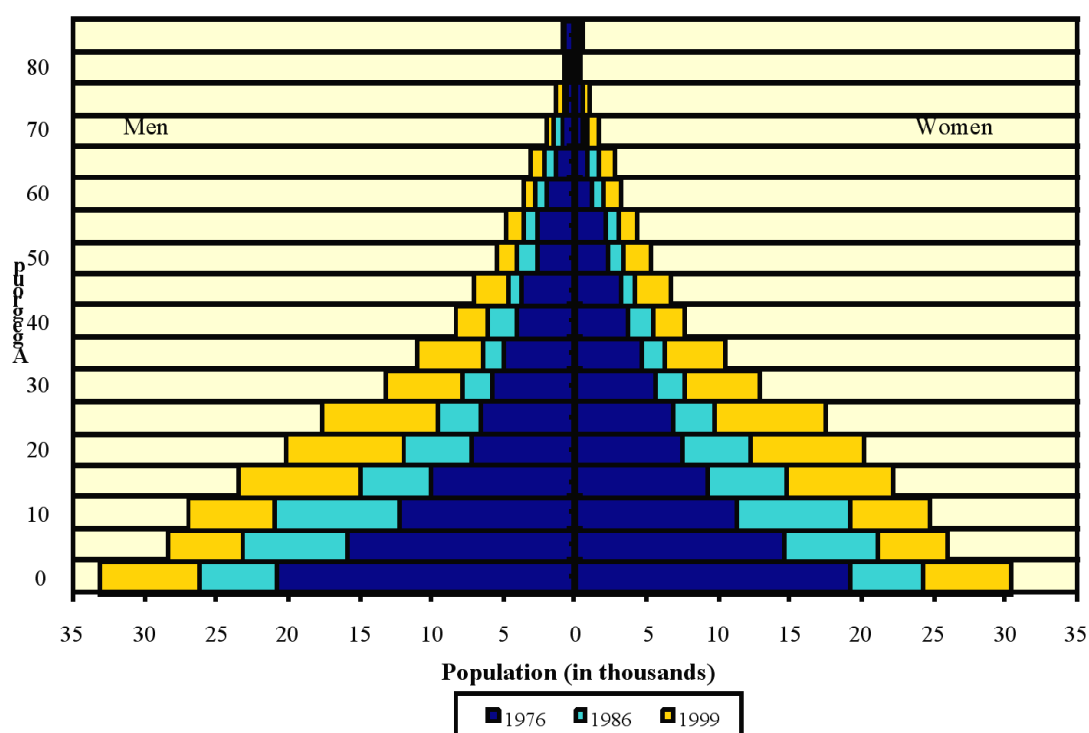
Each nation has the responsibility to define what they mean when they use the term ‘child’. This call is sensible, as it helps us to focus resources and we are in the best position to make this determination.

For the purposes of and in Solomon Islands, a child is defined as any human being below the age of eighteen years.¹

2. Children Are a Large Part of Society

Demographic data from the Census, and analyses of that data by the SPC, UN agencies, and others, tell us that almost half our population are children and that about 35 babies are born each day in Solomon Islands. This rapid rate of growth means that most of our population will be young for quite a while to come. The data confirms this: Our nation’s median age in 1999 was about 18.7 years. The median age has improved somewhat since the 1976 Census, when the median age was closer to 17.

The ‘bulge’ moving up the chart below (from the 1999 Census) confirms the increasing median age. Yet the chart also shows, almost all of the growth in the nation’s population is composed of children. Our population growth rate each week is more than seven classrooms full of children, or the equivalent of an average primary school—implying a need for more than 50 schools (or their equivalent)—and teachers, water supplies/toilets, clinics, etc.—every year.



¹ While this definition accords to the CRC, it has been consensused within Solomon Islands.

Additional descriptions related to our nation’s children are presented in the first Annex to this Policy: “Issues and Challenges For Children in Solomon Islands”.

3. Work-to-Date

We live in a twenty-first century world where industrial and technological advances present the global community—and each of the many and varied communities around the world—with far greater challenges than ever before. The effects of global warming and climate change and unsustainable and inequitable economic development give rise to environmental degradation, resource depletion, food insecurity, social and economic conflicts, and growing poverty.

Many of the world’s communities affected by these circumstances do not have the means ‘to see and/or seize’ available services and opportunities to deal successfully with them. Alongside this, many communities are not able to fully understand their circumstances because needed information and analysis are too often beyond their grasp.

These are evolving issues and challenges that our own nation is not immune to. As a nation with at least 5,000 village communities, it is our responsibility to find a balance between the competing values of economic development—and the obligations of government, communities, and parents—*so that all forms of development ensure the survival, protection, development, and participation—the rights—of children*. This is vital because nearly half of the people of Solomon Islands are children.

As a nation, we made a commitment in 1995 to be a State Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). This commitment to our fellow nations is that we will work to ensure that international legal standards for the protection and well-being of our children are always attended to. This commitment gives us a framework for cohesive and coherent action by the many stakeholders in child development.

Our commitment to the CRC did not come ‘out of the blue’. Despite the unique challenges of our nation’s dispersed geography, and other constraints on the country’s social and economic development, successive governments have, with support from development partners, given priority to the protection, survival, and development of our nation’s children. Moreover, NGOs (including churches), communities and parents across the nation have worked over the years to improve the welfare of our children, as a matter of importance and high priority, especially in the areas of education and health.

At the “World Summit for Children” in 1990, leaders from around the world jointly committed to an urgent and universal appeal to give every child a better future by the year 2000. Following that commitment, the Solomon Islands government established the National Advisory Committee on Children (NACC) in 1992 to advise Cabinet on issues relating to children. In 2002, Solomon Islands assented, at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, to a document entitled “A World Fit for Children”. That document contains the promises made by governments to improve the lives of children for the next 10-15 years.

With the creation of the NACC, the stakeholders began working together to improve our policies and programs for children. The NACC has prepared and submitted the nation’s first report to the UNCRC, and coordinated the inputs to this policy.

For Solomon Islands, the experiences of the past three decades have confirmed the following key lessons:

- Change is possible, and children’s rights are an effective rallying point for change;
- The policy must address both the immediate factors affecting or excluding groups of children, and the wider and deeper causes of inadequate protection and rights violations;
- Targeted interventions that achieve rapid success need to be pursued alongside large-scale reforms and projects whose achievements may not benefit today’s very needy generations; all must be done with due attention to sustainability and inclusive processes;
- Multi-sectoral programs focusing on early childhood, and support to families (especially those families and children in unusually difficult circumstances) merit special support because they provide lasting benefits for children’s growth, development and protection—and for breaking the inter-generational continuation of many situations; and
- Efforts should build on children’s own resilience and strength.

This *National Children’s Policy and Plan of Action* has been developed from those experiences, the lessons learned, and the contemporary challenges that children in Solomon Islands face now and are expected to face into the future. This process began with a review of the 2007 draft Policy and Plan of Action by all the stakeholders. That review took into account new policy developments in the social services sector as well as the observations made by the United Nations Committee On The Rights Of The Child (UNCRC).² This process was wrapped up at the same time that a UNICEF and AusAID funded child protection study³ was completed.

² The UNCRC observed that Solomon Islands needs to raise the minimum age for criminal responsibility to internationally accepted standards and that juvenile justice protection needs to be accorded to all children up to the age of 18. The UNCRC’s observations were based upon Solomon Islands’ May 2003 initial report under CRC, which described the measures our nation had adopted to give effect to the rights recognized in the CRC and it described the progress the nation had made since 1995 on the implementation of those rights.

³ UNICEF, *Protect Me With Love and Care, A Baseline Report for the Solomon Islands, 2008*. Printed November 2009 and published in 2010.

Policy Framework

This policy is the principle instrument for government to address the issues and challenges affecting the rights of any child to enjoy a healthy, secure and happy life, and to ensure that opportunities are provided equally for every child to grow to her/his potential. In so doing, the government and people of Solomon Islands reaffirm their commitment to investing in children as the foundation for nation building. Through the accompanying National Plan of Action, this policy provides an integrated, all-sectors, framework for developing programs and activities for the protection, development, survival, and participation of children in nation building.

1. Vision And Mission

Our Vision

Continually investing in our children, we enjoy a peaceful and rewarding present, and a future that can sustain the welfare and wellbeing of future generations.

Our Vision statement describes "the future we want to see, from the perspective of child development". Children represent the purity of the present, and are the future of our families, our communities, churches, and the nation.

Our Mission—Our Policy Goal

Protect and develop the interests and rights of our children regardless of age, gender, religion, ethnicity or cultural background.
Ensure that these rights are acknowledged and promoted, and that children grow into responsible citizens.

Our Mission statement tells us what we must do to help our vision become a reality. The Mission for this policy is simple, but is not easy, but we feel that it can be accomplished.

2. Principles And Values

The Solomon Islands National Children's Policy is guided by the principles of *Equality, Healthy Environment, Protection of the Law and Support For Children 'In Harm's Way'*⁴, and the values associated with these principles:

Equality:

1. That priority *will be accorded to classes or groups of children who are disadvantaged by circumstances* to access the same opportunities that all children have a right to, through special programs aimed at alleviating those difficulties.
2. *That there is equal provision of opportunities for all children; that every child has a right to free quality basic education, preventative and curative health care, safe water and sanitation without discrimination.*

⁴ Going 'in harm's way' means going outside of a known/secure situation and into an environment with significant risk.

3. *Interventions made for children must focus on the root causes of the issues facing children and their effects. We recognise and accept the need to study, develop, and fund programs that will address emerging problems that threaten the dignity and respect our children deserve.*
4. *That in all national development plans the survival, protection, development, and participation of children will take high priority in resource allocations.*
5. *Achieving gender equality in education and health services is the responsibility of parents, extended families, communities, and all service providers (government and private) in the country, with equal opportunities provided in skills training and employment for secondary school push-outs.*

Healthy Environment:

6. *Ensure there is respect for the natural environment and that only through sustainable development can our children be assured of their future well-being and survival.*
7. *Create, promote and foster sound environmental and hygienic practices to protect children and their families from exposure to disease outbreaks and educate and encourage communities to adhere to sound and safe practices. This includes education on population issues, family planning, and the threats and implications of HIV/AIDS and other STIs.*
8. *Children must be taught to take pride in and respect both their culture and the cultural diversity of this country. A new culture is emerging that is a mix of values from outside and from within our nation. Young people are the most vulnerable to the acculturation of outside values. It is important therefore to encourage children to participate in understanding and sustaining the traditions and cultural norms that help them to maintain their self-esteem and integrity.*
9. *Human resource development is essential to achieving the goals outlined in this policy.*

Children Protected Under the Law:

10. *Every child in Solomon Island is entitled to the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual enshrined in our Constitution.*
11. *Every child shall enjoy all the rights in the “Convention on the Rights of the Child”, and benefit from the commitment made by the government to implement the Convention. We also value the interconnection of CEDAW⁵, ICESCR⁶, and other Human Rights Conventions⁷.*
12. *We value the cultural (including religious) values that are essential in the upbringing of the child in accordance with the CRC, our Constitution, the laws of Solomon Islands and this policy.*

⁵ CEDAW refers to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

⁶ ICESCR refers to the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

⁷ “Other Human Rights Conventions” would include the optional protocols to the Conventions mentioned as well as other Conventions (e.g., ILO Conventions).

Support Children in Harm's Way:

13. *Recognize and support the family's primary role in child-raising and child-development.* The survival and well being of the infant child and the health and discipline of the child comes first and is a shared responsibility of the parents, communities, and the government. While primary responsibility for the *child* rests with parents, government has primary responsibility for all *children*.
14. *The principle of best interests of the child is paramount* when designing and delivering legislation, policies, services and development programs, as well as in community based activities where the child lives.
15. *In preventing and combating violence, exploitation, and abuse of children, the most vulnerable group will be given special attention.* This will involve all stakeholders and a range of collective approaches. In addition, welfare services must be strengthened and adequately resourced.
16. *Protect the dignity of the child by creating an enabling environment to protect the child from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation;* and to treat or support those children who become victims.
17. *Community participation, including the use of community-based resources and experiences are essential.* To engage communities in this task, government can and will provide information to communities on appropriate tools and techniques on issues affecting children.

3. Policy Goals And Objectives

The goals of this Policy fall into five 'key strategic areas' (KSAs). These areas are: *Protection, Development, Survival, Participation and Planning*. Each KSA is described below and complemented by the objectives that will lead us to the successful implementation of this Policy.

Protection

Goal

We will adhere to, develop and implement laws, Conventions, policies, and related, for children's development and safety from all forms of abuse.

Objectives

1. Legislation compatible with the CRC will be put in place to protect children under the age of 18 from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. The minimum age for criminal responsibility will adhere to internationally accepted standards, and juvenile justice protection will be accorded to all children up to the age of 18. The eligible age for marriage without parental and/or judicial consent will be raised from 15 years to 18 years, and the minimum age for employment will be raised from 12 years to 18 years.
3. An independent and effective national mechanism will be established to monitor the implementation of the CRC, to investigate and deal with complaints from or regarding children, and to provide remedies for violations under the Convention.

4. By 2015 all births will be registered.

Development

Goal

We will develop mechanisms to improve the equality of access for our nation's children, without discrimination.

Objectives

1. Review matrimonial property laws and social security to ensure that particular groups of children with special needs such as those born out of wedlock, neglected, displaced, or deserted, are assisted and their status protected.
2. Ensure that by 2015 all children in Solomon Islands (girls and boys alike) are able to complete a full course of free primary education.
3. Expand and improve the coverage and quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE).
4. Young girls have equal access to enrolment at TVET and NFE centres. Strengthen existing non-formal education (NFE) and/or training institutions and develop new ones as appropriate to meet emerging needs⁸.
5. The government will assist right holders (children) and duty bearers (parents or guardians) who have disabilities so that they are able to access services.
6. Children with disabilities in all communities will be encouraged to integrate into the regular education system.

Survival

Goal

We will develop and strengthen mechanisms that help our children survive and develop.

Objectives

1. For a safe and healthy start in life, all children have the right to basic health care, including improved sanitation in both rural and urban areas. All health-care facilities address the needs of adolescent mothers. Strategies to deal with adolescent health issues are formulated or updated, as appropriate.
2. By 2015 Solomon Islands will have achieved the following UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Reduce child mortality and Improve maternal health.
3. Solomon Islands will develop a poverty-avoidance and -reduction strategy, and design measures through which children and their families may improve their lives.

⁸ This implies that we must develop new or increase existing capacity by about 3% each year just to (barely) keep apace with population growth.

Participation

Goal

We will develop and strengthen mechanisms that help our children to participate in our nation's development efforts.

Objectives

1. We will develop and strengthen systems at different levels to encourage children to express their views and opinions on development issues that are of interest to them as catalysts in nation building. This would include MWYCA's annual consultation with children, encouraging child clubs at school and communities, etc.
2. Children will be encouraged to participate in, for examples, creative arts, sports, recreation, and cultural activities, as these activities help them to learn toleration.
3. We will pursue other meaningful programs for children that will help them to contribute to nation building.

Planning

Goal

We will develop and support planning and coordination systems that maximise the effectiveness of our nation's limited resources for our children's development.

Objectives

1. This policy recognizes the important roles that all Ministries, NGOs, enterprises and individuals provide to protect children and/or to develop children.
2. Advocacy, planning and monitoring of policies, programs, and activities are essential to advancing the rights and interests of the child in nation building.
3. All development planning processes will apply the best interests of the child principle. Key to this is the collection and compilation of data related to (or disaggregated for) children and the analysis and sharing of that data to stakeholders.

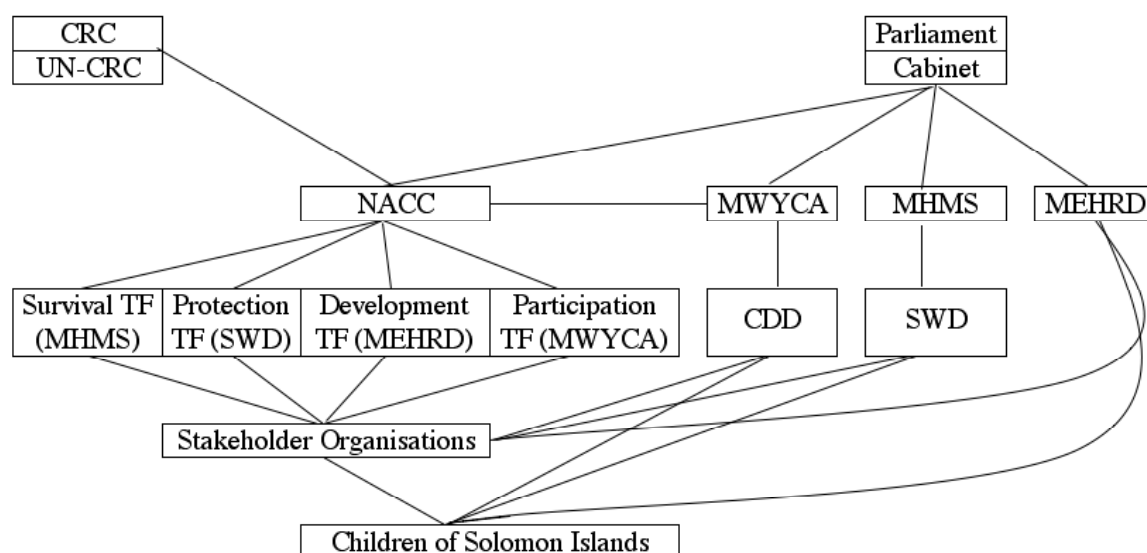
Policy Implementation

1. Implementation Structure

This policy provides the framework for implementation of the policy goals and objectives on the basis of an integrated and collaborative approach by all stakeholders, and other groups committed to empowerment of children. The implementation mechanisms already in place provide for a collaborative approach to service delivery for the welfare and livelihood of children and include the following:

- MWYCA is the lead Ministry to coordinate the efforts and initiatives of the government for implementing the policy and to maintain regular consultation with other government Ministries, in particular MHMS and MEHRD, and other key stakeholders.
- The Children’s Division of MWYCA is the focal point for all child-related issues and programs, coordinates tasks across Ministries NGOs and Provinces. The Division works in close partnership with UN Agencies and NGOs whose mandates focus on children.
- The National Advisory Committee on Children (NACC) is mandated to advise Cabinet on issues affecting children, to coordinate the implementation of the CRC, to develop advocacy materials to promote the interests and rights of the child for dissemination to the national and provincial governments, NGO’s (including churches), development partners, institutions and communities.
- The NACC’s Taskforces on Survival, Protection, Development, and Participation are goal-driven and focus on deliverables. The composition of the four task forces will be determined based on the cross cutting nature of the issues that fall within the four pillars of the CRC.

Chart Showing Current Structure for Implementing National Children’s Policy



It is important that the human resources in key service-providing Ministries and NGOs (including churches) are equipped with the skills and resources needed to implement this

policy. This will ensure that monitoring and evaluation of the policy goals and objectives translated in the Plan of Action are carried out effectively.

Monitoring & Evaluation

As with any government policy, it is essential that a review be carried out. Reviews of this policy will focus on meeting the changing needs and aspirations of children and of stakeholders concerned with children's welfare and their development, and will be carried out every other year. To facilitate such reviews, the NACC will ensure that a monitoring and evaluation process that assesses the effects on children of all programs and activities in the "National Plan of Action for Children" (the NPAC is presented in the next chapter).

2. Priority Groups

This policy is intended for all the children in Solomon Islands, with a particular focus on children who by circumstance are marginalized, discriminated, disadvantaged, and/or require special attention from the State and all stakeholders.

Abused and Exploited Children

Children who are already suffering are an urgent priority. This includes young boys and girls who are sexually exploited and abused and need to be protected, children under the age of 18 who are in some form of employment and are poorly paid and/or are working in poor conditions or for long hours, children who are physically, mentally, and emotionally abused by parents, guardians and/or relatives and children affected by violence or neglect (physical and/or emotional) at home, workplace, school or in the community.

Disadvantaged Groups

This group refers to those children whose parents and guardians cannot afford to send all or some of their children to school and who otherwise would be able to enroll, as well as children who are neglected and ill-treated by their families, children with disabilities, homeless children (whether due to breakdown of the nuclear family structure in both rural and urban communities, or orphans) and out-of-school children.

Children In Conflict With the Law

Young offenders are those under the age of 18 who commit offences. This policy supports those who deal with the juvenile delinquents, and who raise awareness to deter young people from getting into anti-social behavior, and the strengthening of deterrence mechanisms. This includes substance abusers (whether alcohol or other drug).

3. Key Partners

The National Advisory Committee for Children (NACC)

The National Advisory Committee for Children advises government on issues affecting children, advocates for the rights and interests of the child and coordinates and monitors the implementation of the CRC and this policy. During the development of this Policy, a review of NACC was done in order to update the NACC's tasks and responsibilities. The NACC has four task forces: *child survival, development, protection and participation*.

NACC membership includes key stakeholders and is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of MWYCA. Task Force members are drawn from the NACC and other interest groups.

Government Ministries

In addition to advocacy, awareness-raising, planning and policy development, MWYCA's activities and services for children include training for staff and stakeholders (with a special focus on CRC requirements and procedures) and grants for Children's Events (e.g., International Children's Day), Children's Media, Teacher Training (about child needs), ECE Centres and Religious Children's Ministry.

In addition to providing general and mental health services for children, MHMS includes the Social Welfare Division (SWD). SWD's mission is to provide social welfare services to areas in society that are not covered by the traditional social service net that existed within the Solomon Islands traditional society.

MEHRD is mandated to ensure the development of Solomon Islands human resources. It facilitates education programs, curriculum development and teacher training and other training relevant to the labor and social needs of the country.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs—Including Churches)

A number of NGOs in Solomon Islands have committed themselves to in providing education and health services, and are active in promoting, enhancing or providing other services for children. The main organizations are Save the Children's Fund (SCA) and the nation's churches (including their affiliated women's, youth, sport and education groups). Other key NGOs: The SI Red Cross Society (SIRCS), Disabled People Rehabilitation Association (DPRRA) and Solomon Islands Planned Parenthood Association (SIPPA).

Development Partners

Our Development Partners are like NGOs in many ways. Our key development partner for child development in the Solomons is UNICEF, with notable contributions also coming from other UN bodies (UNDP, WHO, UNFPA), International Finance Institutions (World Bank), SPC, NZAID and AusAID.

Strategic Plan of Action

Presented here is a strategic plan of action for implementing this policy. Annexed to this policy is a more detailed “First National Plan of Action for Children” (Annex 2) that was compiled from recent stakeholder plans. Such detailed planning will change at least annually as stakeholders’ work plans and budgets—and random events—require.

Policy Goal

The goal of this policy is to protect and develop the interests and rights of our children regardless of age, gender, religion, ethnicity or cultural background; and to ensure that these rights are acknowledged and promoted, and that children grow into responsible citizens.

Key Policy Result Areas

The priority policy outcomes sought over the next five years (2010-2015) are:

- **Adhere to, develop and implement laws, Conventions, policies, and related, for children’s development and safety from all forms of abuse.**
- **Develop mechanisms to improve the equality of access for our nation’s children, without discrimination.**
- **Develop and strengthen mechanisms that help our children survive and develop.**
- **Develop and strengthen mechanisms that help our children to participate in our nation’s development efforts.**
- **Develop and support planning and coordination systems that maximise the effectiveness of our nation’s limited resources for our children’s development.**

Outcome 1: Protection

Action 1:

1. Legislation compatible with the CRC will be put in place to protect children under the age of 18 from all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation.
2. The minimum age for criminal responsibility will adhere to internationally accepted standards, and juvenile justice protection will be accorded to all children up to the age of 18.
3. An independent and effective national mechanism will be established to monitor the implementation of the CRC, to investigate and deal with complaints from or regarding children, and to provide remedies for violations under the Convention.
4. By 2015 all births will be registered.

Performance Outputs:

- Child Rights Act and Child Protection Act are in effect.
- The eligible age for marriage without parental and/or judicial consent will be raised from 15 years to 18 years, and the minimum age for employment will be raised from 12 years to 18 years.
- Children’s Ombudsman, Child Rights Commission or other body monitors, informs, advocates and coordinates actions for children, including child protection.

- From 2016, all births in Solomon Islands are registered.

Outcome 2: Development

Action 2:

1. Review matrimonial property laws and social security to ensure that particular groups of children with special needs such as those born out of wedlock, neglected, displaced, or deserted, are assisted and their status protected.
2. Ensure that by 2015 all children in Solomon Islands (girls and boys alike) are able to complete a full course of free primary education.
3. Expand and improve the coverage and quality of Early Childhood Education (ECE).
4. Young girls have equal access to enrolment at TVET and NFE centres. Strengthen existing non-formal education (NFE) and/or training institutions and develop new ones as appropriate to meet emerging needs⁹.
5. The government will assist right holders (children) and duty bearers (parents or guardians) who have disabilities, and their communities so that they are able to access services.
6. Children with disabilities in all communities will be encouraged to integrate into the regular education system.

Performance Outputs:

- Updates to Marriage and Divorce and Inheritance legislation enacted.
- All children are able to complete a full course of free primary education.
- Early Childhood Education available to over 50% of our nation's children.
- TVET/NFE programs are stronger and girls are at least 20% of enrollees on average.
- All disabled children in rural areas are able to access services for people with disabilities.
- All disabled children who are capable to do so, attend the regular education system.

Outcome 3: Survival

Action 3:

1. For a safe and healthy start in life, all children have the right to basic health care, including improved sanitation in both rural and urban areas. All health-care facilities address the needs of adolescent mothers. Strategies to deal with adolescent health issues are formulated or updated, as appropriate.
2. By 2015 Solomon Islands will have achieved the following UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Reduce child mortality and Improve maternal health.
3. Solomon Islands will develop a poverty-avoidance and -reduction strategy, and design measures through which children and their families may improve their lives.

Performance Outputs:

- Adolescent reproductive health services available through all health care facilities.

⁹ This implies that we must develop new or increase existing capacity by about 3% each year just to (barely) keep apace with population growth.

- Child mortality reductions and maternal health improvements meet MDG targets.
- Solomon Islands poverty policy approved by Cabinet and ready for implementation.

Outcome 4: Participation

Action 4

1. Develop and strengthen systems at different levels to encourage children to express their views and opinions on development issues that are of interest to them as catalysts in nation building.
2. Children will be encouraged to participate in, for examples, creative arts, sports, recreation, and cultural activities, as these activities help them to learn toleration.
3. Pursue other meaningful programs for children that will help them to contribute to nation building.

Performance Outputs:

- MWYCA holds annual children's forum and encourages child clubs at schools and communities.
- Child arts, sports and cultural activities expand in all provinces.
- Children are able to participate in most school management committees.

Outcome 5: Planning

Action 5

1. This policy recognizes the important roles that all Ministries, NGOs, enterprises and individuals provide to protect children and/or to develop children.
2. Advocacy, planning and monitoring of policies, programs, and activities are essential to advancing the rights and interests of the child in nation building.
3. All development planning processes will apply the best interests of the child principle. Key to this is the collection and compilation of data related to (or disaggregated for) children and the analysis and sharing of that data to stakeholders.

Performance Outputs:

- All partners (and most stakeholders) contribute to NACC meetings and activities. Partners' plans and programs reflect and complement this policy, and provincial advisory committees on children (PACCs) beginning to operate.
- Child advocacy and information efforts identify data and program gaps, the reasons for those gaps and ways to fill those gaps.
- Guidelines for all government-funded activities to use that describe 'the best interests of the child' and how these can be met.

Acknowledgements

The Ministry would like to thank the National Advisory Committee for Children (NACC) and those who prepared the several earlier drafts of the National Children's Policy and the Plan of Action. A special mention goes to all the stakeholders (including children!) for their valuable contributions in the series of Consultative Workshops held to review the draft Policy and Plan of Action and to Dr. Charles Kick for helping organize all the work into this document.

Special appreciation goes to UNICEF for financing the review and to the Permanent Secretary of MWYCA for her encouragement and leadership of, suggestions and support to all persons involved. The Directors and staff of the Children's Development Division and the Research Policy Planning and Information Division provided vital guidance & support for the process and inputs to the text. And, finally, this paper depended upon the work of the Maroul Consultancy Service which reviewed the 2007 draft policy and plan of action.

Bibliography

- Parliament Of Solomon Islands, *The National Constitution of Solomon Islands*, 1978.
- Government Of Solomon Islands, Coalition for National Unity and Rural Advancement Government Policy Statements 2008, Honiara, Solomon Islands.
- Government Of Solomon Islands, Ministry Of Education And Human Resources Development (MEHRD), *Education Investment and Reform Program*, 11, 2007-2009.
- Government Of Solomon Islands, MEHRD, *National Education Plan (NEAP)*, 2007-2009.
- Government Of Solomon Islands, MEHRD Planning, Coordination and Research Unit; PAF, Data, 2005-2007.
- Government Of Solomon Islands, MEHRD, *Annual Report 2007*.
- Government Of Solomon Islands, MHMS, *Child Health Country Profile*.
- United Nations, Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations: Solomon Islands*, 2003.
- United Nations Convention On The Rights Of The Child, 1989.
- United Nations, "A World Fit for Children" action plan document, 2002.

Annex 1: Issues and Challenges For Children in Solomon Islands

The formation of the National Advisory Committee on Children (NACC) in 1992 to advise Cabinet on children's issues and Solomon Islands accession to the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1995, demonstrate the seriousness to which the government and people accept the responsibility to promote and protect the rights of each child. Government's commitment to work with the global community to address issues of common concern affecting the lives of children world over is premised on the belief that through collective efforts countries can share their knowledge, expertise, and resources to help those in need.

While there is universal responsibility in pursuing the welfare of children, increased attention from skilled and dedicated people, mandated and resourced to work for and with children is needed. The first call however, falls squarely on the parents, guardians and the communities to provide the best they can from the beginning. This commitment is absolutely important, given that the population is largely young, dependent and rural according to the last census (1999) with more than 75% under thirty years old. Of these, approximately 48% are under fifteen years old and 18% are under five years old. It is also estimated that by 2010, there will be more than 80,000 children under five years and 130,000 women in their reproductive years. Although there a drop in the annual birth rate has been reported (the rate has dropped from 35% to 28%), it can be expected that a high population growth rate will continue for some years to come, as the rate of family planning acceptance, although increasing, is only at around 12% of women of child bearing age.

Children in Solomon Islands face serious issues that demand attention. Basic survival needs are not universally met, children are not being guaranteed their right to education and the legislative environment is not yet fully protective. Very low or non-existent birth registration also leaves many children vulnerable to abuse and exploitation and this is a reality in the lives of many. The task of ensuring that children's protection, survival, development, and participation rights are met is the responsibility of government at national, provincial, and local levels. This is not just for the benefit of children, but also for the future of the nation.

The policy and plan of action is premised on the globally accepted pillars of child protection, development, survival and participation. These are the issues that directly affect or exclude groups of children, and other causes for gaps in the protection of children and the abuse of their rights.

Planning

Monitoring and reviewing programs and policies is essential to ensure actions taken for children are appropriate and effective. It also assists in breaking the cycle of ad hoc programming that can overlook, or under fund essential programs and activities. The need for effective monitoring and review programs is emphasized by the CRC as well as by government policies and procedures. To achieve that, planning must include information and advocacy so that the various stakeholders can understand what each other is doing or not doing and adjust their responses accordingly.

1 Protection

Legal and Policy Structure

Solomon Islands' Constitution guarantees civil rights and freedom to all citizens, including children. Various laws of the country also protect specific rights and interests of the child. However, the laws are not consistent in terms of the definition of a child, and the age of a child varies under the laws and policies for health care, marriage, imprisonment and legal protection.

Relevant laws need to be aligned with the principles of the CRC. The legal and regulatory system of Solomon Islands, which includes all of the mechanisms for the creation, interpretation and enforcement of customary law, and community practices, does not effectively guarantee the protection of children facing abusive situations. While the Penal Code is in the process of being reviewed, other relevant laws need to be brought in line with the principles of the CRC. In some instances, customary practices prevent efforts to protect and support children, while on the other hand traditional practices provide a consistent and warm home for children at risk in a manner not available to countries that have lost their connection to communal care and protection. Due to the rapid social changes experienced in the recent years, however, children are more and more often left vulnerable to maltreatment and inadequate protection from exploitation. This is more evident in the city of Honiara where circumstances prompt too many young people (boys in particular) to turn to the streets.

Situations of child abuse and economic exploitation are real in Solomon Islands and actions need to be taken to protect children from being subjected to those conditions. More children under 15 are reportedly working in very poor conditions and for long hours. Many parents and families require children to work in order to overcome extreme poverty.¹⁰ The prevalence of child labour also prevents many children from attending school. Children of both sexes are exposed to prostitution due to economic difficulties and a lack of police intervention in this field as well as an absence of an institution dedicated to the rehabilitation of child victims, and the need to collect data on the number of child victims.¹¹ There is no facility for juvenile offenders to be detained separately from adult criminals while awaiting formal charges. The findings of a study undertaken by SPC on Gender based Violence, as well as the Baseline Study on Children Protection in Solomon Islands, affirm these situations.

Child Protection and Family Services

Children may find themselves in especially difficult circumstances and in need of more focused protection for a variety of reasons. The case of children being displaced with their families and young boys under the age of 18 recruited by militias during the recent past armed conflict, is an experience that the State has learned from, and need to ensure that special protective measures are put in place should a similar situation arise in the future. Measures need to be taken as well to deal with reported incidences of corporal punishment at home, school or in the workplace. There is merit in nourishing the "One-

¹⁰ Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child –Solomon Islands initial report 2002.

¹¹ Herbert, Tania, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Solomon Islands*, Church of Melanesia-Christian Care Centre. Honiara. 2007.

Talk” system as a safety net for children with difficulties, and alternative care system for formal adoption and foster child needs to be established.

Solomon Islands is however, blessed by the many faith-based organizations, programs and individuals that strive to address the needs of all children, including those with disabilities, those displaced by natural and man-made disasters, and those facing turbulence in their home life or community.

Given the scenario, actions need to be taken now to prevent children from further exposure to unacceptable levels of risk in their every day lives. The protection of children calls for even greater efforts by all stakeholders to address the environment in which our children find themselves and ensure that it supports the needs of children. If we fail to protect children in the present, the future of the entire nation will be jeopardized. This is the challenge. It is therefore, a priority for the government and all stakeholders to recognize and take full responsibility over the need to impose protective measures by way of legislation. Parents and communities, however, have a primary role in providing the protection that children need as they grow up in their respective homes, and the environment that the community provides. The referral system in dealing with juvenile delinquents between Social Welfare and the Police need to be strengthened.

2 Development

Formal Education

Education is a human right, proven to be a key factor for developing a child’s full potential and for reducing poverty; it also promotes democracy and tolerance. As these fundamental goals support the long-standing development goals of Solomon Islands, it is clear that education must remain a priority in our recurrent and development Budgets.

Although it has been a long-term goal of successive governments and education authorities, to work towards improving the rate of enrollment for all boys and girls to complete a full course of primary schooling throughout the country, as well as to narrow the enrollment gap between boys and girls, primary education is neither free nor compulsory. The fact that education is not free only marginalizes children whose parents, by circumstances cannot afford to send all their children to school. Parents on the one hand are not obliged to send all or some of their children to school for the simple reason that primary education is not compulsory.

The cost of providing free primary education for all eligible children has been considered prohibitive, yet significant inroads have been made over the years in terms of accessibility due to the expansion of primary schools generally. Enrollment in primary schools increased from 100,199 to 103,175 between 2005 and 2007. Males continue to outnumber females in each class in all provinces (and Honiara) in the same period. In 2007, 71% of the 144,734 students enrolled in school are in primary schools, 13% are in junior secondary schools, 95% are in early childhood education, and 6% are in senior secondary schools. Of those in primary, 4% do not attend school regularly. Only a very small proportion of children with disabilities attend school with 2% in Primary and 1% in

Secondary. The dropout rate increases at higher levels as compared to Primary with limited employment opportunities¹².

While enrollments in primary and secondary education have increased progressively over recent years, barriers remain that must be addressed. The 1999 Census found that around 106,000 young people (~25% of the population) were in primary and secondary school age group of 5-14 year olds. Of these, over thirty thousand were not attending school, including more than fifteen thousand girls who by now (9 years later) may have faced, or will one day face, the challenge of being primary caregivers to a new generation.

The number of ECE centers operating each year fluctuates widely. Although the number of students is growing in every level of education, classroom, student ratios are improving compared to 2005 for Primary, Community High Schools and National Secondary Schools. This reflects the good progress on the repair, rehabilitation and construction of classrooms. Desk/student ratio is also improving for primary schools. Child-friendly schools that encourage participatory learning for children at the ECE and Primary level education are to be supported and integrated into the school curriculum.

In 2005-2007, findings revealed that in secondary education more teachers are relatively qualified than in primary education. Just over 50% of the primary schools are equipped with a library, while data on CHS, PSS, and NSS need to be checked.¹³

From the initial country report written in 2000 and submitted by the government to the UN “Committee on the Rights of the Child” in 2003, concerns were raised that some 20-25% of school-age children are not in primary school and an estimated 30% dropout before completing primary school. Wide disparities exist between and amongst the islands in terms of the quality of education and its coverage, and enrollment of girls remain very low.

As a State Party to the CRC, government is obliged to ensure that education is oriented towards the aims of Article 29 (1) of the CRC, and to improve and provide quality education in line with international agreements in particular the two UN Millennium Development Goals for Education. Implementation of new policy directions in the education sector is a challenge for the government and education authorities alike.

Non-Formal and Technical-Vocational Education

The technical and vocational education (TVE) sector provides skills training opportunities for individuals who have dropped out of the formal academic system or have completed their junior and or senior secondary education without the skills needed for employment or for self-employment. The services provided by the non-formal education (NFE) and TVE sector is important for the economy. The various skills training programs offered by Rural Training Centres and Vocational Training Centres and Technical Institutions needs continuous financial support from the government.

Although student enrollments increase annually, males dominate entry to NFE/TVE; young females are yet to benefit significantly from the courses offered. This unequal access needs to be examined so that long-term plans are put in place for young girls to

¹² MERHD Planning, Coordination and Research Unit PAF – Data 2005-2007.

¹³ MEHRD Planning, Coordination and Research Unit PAF – Data 2005-2007.

have equal access to skills training opportunities. The demand for new vocational training centers is high and most centers need development and redevelopment to reach required levels of practical skill training and diversified programs.¹⁴

Physical Education, Recreation, and Cultural Activities

Physical education must be strengthened at all levels. For those children who are not in schools, it is important that they be given the opportunity to participate by allowing them to access facilities and coaching as well. Sporting facilities and equipments are lacking in most schools; this handicaps children from developing their individual potential and talents as early as possible—and perhaps forever. Continuing physical education after secondary school would help both dropouts and those who have never been to school to be engaged in physical activities, whether as recreation or as informal and amateur sports.

Honiara is the only urban centre with a range of sporting facilities that children can use and enjoy as leisure, yet these facilities are less now than they were at Independence. Rural areas however, are also endowed with natural features that provide outdoor recreation for children living in those settings.

The ability to appreciate one's own culture and the diversity of cultures that Solomon Islands is blessed with, is lowered by not promoting cultural studies and activities, such as by way of regular inter-primary and inter-secondary school cultural festivities. This is the most important period for children to learn one another's culture and traditions.

3 Survival

Health

The decrease in the infant mortality rate to 236 per 1000 live births, with child mortality rate at 287 per 1000 live births according to latest data reflects major improvements in healthcare during the past two decades, with neonatal mortality rate around 24 per 1000 live births.¹⁵ The major causes of infant mortality are perinatal complications and injuries, acute respiratory infections, diarrhoea, malaria and meningitis. Neonatal mortality is caused by prematurity, low birth weight, sepsis, and birth asphyxia. Post-neonatal mortality rate per 1000 live births is yet to be known. The most common causes of death in children under-five years are malaria, pneumonia, and diarrhoeal diseases. Data needs to be made available for variations in infant mortality per live births in both urban and rural areas and according to regions.

The mortality and morbidity statistics unfortunately hide a larger problem with infant and child nutrition, which is implicated as one factor in childhood deaths as well. The lack of accurate data on this, need to be addressed by the responsible authority. Breast feeding patterns have been high, yet growth faltering commences at 4-5 months and continues thereafter, presumably connected with poor weaning practices. Most health staff and families have a poor understanding of both the benefits of breastfeeding and the skills for weaning. Many mothers do not have access to the information needed and the high illiteracy rate among adults still is, a constraining factor.

¹⁴ MEHRD *Annual Report 2007*

¹⁵ Child Health Country Profile: Solomon Islands.

Incidences of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) are reported to be on the increase and the most vulnerable are the young people including adolescents. Adolescent health issues such as teenage pregnancy, alcohol and substance abuse are prevalent and it is the primary responsibility of parents and guardians to be more vigilant over the health of their children.

In 2007, a major campaign was launched to encourage exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. Exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months shows 65% coverage according to latest data from UNICEF. Coverage on breastfeeding from 6-11 months is not known. Preventive intervention using insecticide treated bed-nets coverage to reduce the incidences of malaria as a common cause of death needs to be established. From 1997-2005 clean deliveries (skilled delivery at birth) achieved 85% coverage but more training needs to be done as the population grows. Measles vaccine program is reported to have achieved 70% coverage. More effort is needed however, for all preventive and treatment interventions to improve their coverage to 100%.

The percentage of population with access to an improved water source in the urban areas is 94% as compared to only 18% in the rural areas according to data collected by UNICEF in 2004. The majority of the children population live in rural communities and are therefore, most vulnerable to outbreak of diseases caused by contamination of water sources.

Maternal mortality also followed a pattern of improvement, although still high by regional standards. Overall close to 85% of women give birth at a health facility attended to by a healthcare professional in 2000 Maternal deaths however, can be prevented if all women can access a health facility and train more Midwives. As the population grows, the greater the demand is on health services. This is one challenge that the country must prepare for.

Environment

The environment that surrounds a child during development includes the sustainability of our natural resources. If we do not protect our natural resources we will fail to protect the present generation in the long term. The most important initiative of ensuring sustainability is to encourage children to take responsibility for the environment themselves and to be involved in its preservation. Children need to be told of the causes of global warming and climate change so that as future adults they will be more caring and selective in deciding what form of economic development is not harmful to the environment that supports them. Teaching children how to respect and preserve the natural environment will benefit generations for years to come and will secure the prosperity of the nation.

Solomon Islands is vulnerable to natural disasters which have the potential to disrupt progress unless effort is made to prepare communities, in especially the 2007 tsunami that unexpectedly struck the Western region and shocked the country. Disasters can interrupt schooling, create stress within families and communities, and disrupt healthcare services, all of which leaves children increasingly vulnerable. Supporting communities to support their children is the key to minimizing the effects of disasters.

On an equally serious environmental issue, there is not a sewage treatment plant in Solomon Islands and roughly 80% of rural areas in all provinces lack any toilet facilities.

Solid waste disposal and management is sporadic throughout the country, leaving many families exposed to uncollected rubbish or to the fumes of burning toxins to which the children are again most vulnerable, hence, the need for aggressive campaigns and actions to be taken.¹⁶

4 Participation

Children have the right to be given the opportunity to say what is best for them when parents and adults are making decisions that affect them. Their right to express themselves and to participate in all matters affecting them must be respected. It is important to develop their knowledge of their surroundings, and teach them to understand their responsibility towards their parents, the communities and civic affairs.

Currently there is no mechanism for children's participation and so their views are not systematically sought and taken into consideration when decisions are made at all levels of decision making. The establishment of a Children's Committee maybe the best way forward to ensure that children are given the opportunity to express their views

If they are not allowed to participate in a responsible way as they grow into adolescents, we will not only lose their valuable contribution, but also deny them the right to learn. The challenge for parents, guardians and those in authority to influence what needs to be advanced for the benefit of children is to listen and take into account the opinions and best interests of the child.

¹⁶ World Bank, *Reducing the Risk of Disasters and Climate Variability in the Pacific Islands-Solomon Islands Country Assessment*, 2010.

Annex 2: First National Action Plan for Children

This National Action Plan for Children (NAPC) is a framework to help the various stakeholders to plan and undertake activities that will help the nation to achieve the goals laid out in the Policy. The NAPC is organised around the five KSA (Key Strategic Areas) presented in the Policy: Protection, Development, Survival, Participation and Planning. This plan will be updated annually as Ministry and other stakeholders update their own plans.

1. Protection

Indicative Planning Framework for Child Protection

Strategies	Activities	Who is Responsible?	When?	Indicators
Strengthen government's commitment to CRC	Ratify CRC Optional Protocols	MWYCA, A-G's Chambers, Foreign Affairs, Office of PM	June 2010	Treaties and Protocols ratified
Review, reform existing laws to comply with CRC	Criminal, marriage and divorce law reviewed, recommendations for reform made to gov't.	LRC	2015	Criminal law implements CRC. Marriage/divorce law implements CRC
	Employment law reviewed, recommendations for reform made to gov't.	MWYCA, Labour, ILO	2015	Employment law consistent with/implements CRC
	Social security, adoption, inheritance laws reviewed, recommendations for reform made to gov't.	MWYCA, A-G's Chambers	2015	Social security, adoption, inheritance laws implement CRC and other Conventions.
	Laws reviewed, recommendations for reform made to government	MWYCA, MHMS	2015	Child Protection Act and Child Rights Act implement CRC.
Child protection law consistent with and/or implements CRC	Draft policy, seek cabinet approval, draft bill, submit to cabinet	MWYCA, NACC, A-G's Chambers	2015	Child Rights Act and Child Protection Act in place.
Establish independent mechanism to monitor the implementation of the CRC, advocate on child rights, and ensure that NACC performs its role.	Conduct detailed study of the powers, functions, costs and responsibilities of an independent mechanism to monitor Child Rights in SI and submit it to Cabinet.	MWYCA, MPNS, MJLA, MEHRD, And A-G's Chambers, Ombudsman, All stakeholders.	2015	Appropriate amendments made to relevant laws. "Child Rights Commission" or some-such established.
	Integrate legal literacy in schools and other institutions curricula so that children understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens.	SWD, MHMS, MEHRD, and NGOs	2015	Multi - sectoral programs developed. "Code of Conduct" for all gov't-funded activities approved
	Coordinate public awareness programs on issues and laws governing the rights of the child, with NGOs and the media	NACC, NGOs, government Ministries and the media.	2015	Detailed proposal on the establishment of the office of an independent monitor considered.

Encourage and support communities to build on their existing strengths to create a protective environment for children.	Ensure social welfare services are made available in all Provinces.	SWD	On-going	Public awareness programs held in provinces and communities are more engaged in national efforts. Services are available to provinces and cases dealt with recorded.
	Strengthen SWD's ability to coordinate activities supporting children and families in especially difficult circumstances.	SWD and SIPP	2009-2013	Percentage of cases reported to police that have a Social Welfare report. Referral protocols established and enforced.
	Promote registration of all births.	MHMS & MHA (Registrar-Gen'l), with MEHRD	2015	100% of births registered.
Provide accessible, affordable and consistent recreational, educational, and vocational activities at community level, with equal opportunities for girls.	Establish year-round sporting leagues for children according to age categories.	MWYCA and NACC.	2015	Recreational and sporting activities established
	Work on cultural and recreational activities and clubs for children and young people.	MWYCA and NACC.	2011	Cultural arts programs introduced.
Priority emergency relief and humanitarian aid for children displaced by disasters.	Include education on disaster preparedness in School curricula.	NDMO and MEHRD	2009 and on-going	Schools using disaster preparedness lessons in curriculum
	Ensure provincial officials understand the different effects on children of disasters and factor this into decision making and planning	NDMO	2010	Officials receive appropriate training, information and support to ensure responses are child appropriate
Ensure children receive appropriate support when in contact with the law and the courts are child friendly	Establish child friendly procedures for child custody and abuse and neglect cases so that proceedings are in the best interest of the child	MHRMS, SWD, MOJ, and SIPP	2009 and on-going	Appropriate systems are in place and specially trained staffs are on hand to support children involved in cases
	Improve responses to children in conflict with the law by building on the Beijing rules, the Riyadh guidelines and the Vienna guidelines	MOJ and SIPP	2012	Guidelines for children in conflict with the law and are progressively applied to proceedings
	Expand the ability of the justice system to include traditional methods and customary proceedings for the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and healing of victims	MOJ, SWD, and Community leaders	2012	Number of children diverted from the justice system
Professional capacity of those working with children to be strengthened	Training to be designed for Social Welfare workers, health workers, teachers, church leaders, and others working with children	NACC	2009 - 2010	Training programs in place, and conducted regularly and application of principles by workers

	Coordinate the integration of children with disabilities into mainstream education	MWYCA, MHMS, MEHRD, NGOs	2009	Integration of children with disabilities in mainstream education
	Advocate for greater access to scholarships, professional training and qualifications in specialist areas related to children	MWYCA and MEHRD	2009 - 2011	Specialist courses attended

2 Development

Indicative Planning Framework for Child Development

Strategies	Activities	Who is Responsible?	When?	Indicators
Primary education free and compulsory for all boys and girls by 2015	Promote an integrated approach to primary education for all children including those with disabilities and special needs	MEHRD, all Education Authorities and MWYC	2009 - 2015	All primary school age children are enrolled Children with disabilities or special needs enroll in mainstream or special needs education increases
Early Childhood Education facilities to be expanded in Provinces and more teachers trained	Support and strengthen community pre-schools, Kindergartens so they can be available to all	MEHRD, Education Authorities, and Communities	2009 and on going	90% of pre -school age children enrolled and number of facilities increased
All Education authorities must ensure that there is equal access to quality education for all children by 2009	Conduct research and address the reasons contributing to the push out rate for girls	MEHRD and MWYC	2009	Push - out reasons addressed
	Increase awareness program on the importance of education for girls	MEHRD and MWYC	2009 and ongoing	Increase in girl's enrollment and retention at school at all levels, and support for girl's education through various mechanisms
	Education authorities involve communities and parents in their children's education by increasing awareness	All education authorities	On going	School management committees actively encourage the enrollment of all school age children
	Improve education facilities and infrastructures	Government and all Education Authorities	On going	Education facilities and improved and expanded, and particular attention paid to needs of girls, and those with special needs
	Increase the number of females in teacher training courses at all levels especially in math and science	MEHRD	On going	Number of females in teacher training programs increased

	Facilitate special training of teachers for children with disabilities	MEHRD	2009 and ongoing	Teachers specialized in teaching of children with disabilities and an decrease in the number of children with disabilities who are not enrolled
High quality of learning in all levels of the education system strengthened	The number of teachers trained in child rights increases and then supported in their professional development	MEHRD	On going	Increase of teachers trained in child rights Increase in career dev't. opportunities, and training schemes improved
	Develop, and use quality school curriculum	MEHRD	On going	Continuous upgrading of the national school curriculum to international standard Child rights included in the curricula.
Schools to guarantee a safe environment for children	Develop a comprehensive program to monitor the health and safety of children	MEHRD and MHMS	2009 and ongoing	Program in place, reports made and improvements monitored
	Prioritize funding for maintenance of a healthy and non-abusive learning environment for children	MEHRD	On going	Improved learning environments Teachers undertake more leadership and behavior responsibility
All children receive free education for the first 9 years	Schools to build enough class rooms throughout the country to accommodate the continuity of education	MEHRD, All Education Authorities, and Communities	On going	All standard 6 students who complete their grade level continue on to Form 1 without sitting an exam
	More junior secondary school teachers to be trained	MEHRD	On going	Enough teachers available to meet the student teacher ratio
Develop policy on community education demonstrates its importance as an educational tool	Develop an integrated policy for NFE	MEHRD	2009	Policy on TVE/NFE in place
	Government to realign human and financial resources to develop TVE/NFE as an official, multi- sectoral component of the education system	MERHD and Education Authorities	On going	TVET/NFE training facilities receive adequate resources annually
Increase community participation in TVE/NFE	Strengthen community understanding of the benefits	Education authorities and Community	Long term	Community actively participating
	Establish linkages between all development partners, community education programs and the non-formal learning institutions	Education authorities, MEHRD and Communities	On going	Partnership linkages established
	Provide training courses that empower girls to access opportunities aimed at breaking the poverty cycle and improve the wellbeing of their families	MEHRD, MWYCA, MHMS and NGOs	On going	Increase training activities and opportunities targeted at female adolescents

Quality of formal education to be improved by developing an NFE curriculum	Develop TVE/NFE curricula for secondary schools to provide TVE/NFE skills and knowledge to young boys and girls to supplement academic training	MEHRD	2010	TVE/NFE curriculum developed and implemented
	Provide TVE/NFE opportunities within existing school infrastructure	Education authorities	2010 and ongoing	TVE/NFE activities take place in formal education venues
	Integrate local knowledge and values into TVE/NFE curriculum	MEHRD	2010	Traditional and local knowledge included in the curriculum
	Health, good governance, business and literacy skills incorporated into the curriculum	MEHRD	2010	Issues addressed in the curriculum
Creative arts, sports, recreation and cultural activities developed and strengthened in schools	Schools to encourage and develop the potential of the child in creative arts, sports, recreation and cultural knowledge	All schools and Education authorities	On going	Girls and boys develop their potential and widen their knowledge in other important aspects of life
	Encourage interschool sports in primary and secondary, with annual sports competition and cultural festivities	Schools and education authorities	On going	Individual skills developed and knowledge gained School-based child clubs increase

3 Survival

Indicative Planning Framework for Child Survival

Strategies	Activities	Who is Responsible?	When?	Indicators
All curative and preventable child health services and intervention programs be strengthened and expanded to all communities	Government and all service providers to adequately finance all child health services on an annual basis	MHMS and other service providers	On going	Coverage of curative, preventable and intervention programs and activities expand to all communities and including remote villages
	More training of health workers in all health professions to effectively deliver the services	MHMS	2014	Quality and effective service delivery
Child mortality and morbidity rates reduced by improving accessibility to health facilities and continuous health education awareness programs	Promote exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months	MHMS and other service providers	2014	Report on proportion of women who breast feed for the first 6 months
	Strengthen health workers' capacity and commitment to providing child-friendly services, such as educating parents on good nutrition and proper weaning	MHMS	2014	Promotion materials distributed National campaigns conducted and results monitored

	Increase family knowledge of common childhood illnesses, the importance of immunization, prevention, and early care	MHMS	2014	Enhanced training and performance monitoring Parents knowledgeable on nutrition and breastfeeding
	Improve family awareness on the importance of childhood nutrition through self sufficiency efforts	MHMS	2014	Education campaigns conducted
	Improve access to safe drinking water, sanitation and improve hygiene practices such as hand washing with soap	MHMS, other service providers and communities	2014	Community education conducted, and families provide nutritious food
Maternal mortality rate reduced by improving access to health care facilities and improving quality of maternal health care service	Increase access to contraceptive services, link immunization and maternal health with family planning programs	MHMS	2014	90% of population with access to safe drinking water. 90% of population with access to improved sanitation 90% mothers and caretakers of infants practice improved hygiene methods
	Improve quality and accessibility to antenatal care services	MHMS	2014	Fertility rate reduced from 64% to 4% or less
	Undertake activities aimed at reducing teenage pregnancy	MHMS, MEHRD, NGOs and development partners	2014	Deliveries attended to by trained midwives Mortality rate reduced to 50/100,000 by 2020 Training in safe delivery techniques conducted and results monitored
Organizations working for children with disabilities supported by government and the general public to expand on services	Funding allocated and provided to organizations by government through MHMS or a government-approved donor partner program	Government and development partners	2015	IEC materials distributed Counseling and information sharing skills improved
	Expand the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) program to remote communities through funding support	Government and development partners	2015	Coverage of services expanded
Ensure that adolescents have access to information and health care facilities; and develop approaches to deal with adolescent issues, alcohol and substance abuse	Develop and incorporate a national health program into the school curriculum on essential health behaviors, hygiene practices and nutrition	MHMS and all service providers	2013	Organizations provide quality services
	Develop specific strategies to address the needs of adolescent mothers	MHMS, MWYCA and MEHRD	2013	Subject included in the school curriculum
	Establish measures for communities to use to mitigate alcohol and substance abuse	MHMS MWYCA and SIPF	2013	Adolescent mothers receiving targeted health care information and counseling

Review and establish an intensive national HIV/AIDS awareness program	Embark on a joint intensive national HIV/AIDS campaign program targeting the teenage population	MHMS and other service providers	2013	Cases reported and abusers counseled
Educate school children on the importance of preserving the natural environment and the virtues of sustainability	Develop advocacy campaigns on the preservation of the natural environment, sustainable harvesting of resources	ME&C, and MEHRD	2012	National-wide campaigns conducted twice annually.
Develop the will and capacity to manage the environment for sustainable among children	Mobilize young children as active participants at appropriate levels of decision making regarding the environment, including the care of eco-systems and the development of natural resources	MEHRD, Education Authorities and ME&C	2012	Campaigns conducted No of programs involving young people in decision making and in initiatives with an environmental component
	Develop awareness programs and plans for schools to educate children on the effects of climate change on them	ME&C	2012	Number of schools with environmental activity work plans
Develop measures to reduce the poverty of disadvantaged children whose families by circumstance are living in poverty	Develop a poverty reduction measure strategy through which children and their families may benefit from a social security protection scheme	MWYCA, MHMS	2012 1	
	Assist families to build proper sanitation facilities in communities lacking those	RWSS	2012 1	A social security protection scheme established for disadvantaged children. Families have proper sanitation facility Disadvantaged children have access to health and education services

4 Participation

Indicative Planning Framework for Child Participation

Strategies	Activities	Who is Responsible?	When?	Indicators
Increase individual capacity to access child rights information	Implement an advocacy plan to ensure all parents and children understand their rights and obligations under the CRC	MWYCA	2009-15	Plan developed and implemented. Children participation in school committees increases.
	Facilitate links between welfare partners, law enforcement and policy makers	MWYCA, SWD, and SIPF	2009-10	Parties meet regularly. Evidence of referral cases. Case management procedures developed

Children encouraged to effectively participate in decision making about themselves	Establish once a year consultation with children and young people to review government's work for children and discuss issues relevant to children	MWYCA, NACC	2009	Consultations held annually Children and young people participate in decision making processes Input from children reflected in MWYCA work plan
	Educate families, community leaders, decision makers, and school authorities on the importance of including children in decision making and their right to participate	MWYCA	Long term	Parents, communities and leaders aware of the right of the child to participate and provide ways to facilitate this
	Help children to form Child Clubs at community level and an umbrella bodies at Provincial and National level, build their capacities to participate at the matters that affect their lives	MWYCA	Long term	Increase participation of children in community life and what is best for them Sustainable systems established at different levels to promote children participation

5 Planning

Indicative Planning Framework for Planning for Children

Strategies	Activities	Who is Responsible?	When?	Indicators
Ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration in community, provincial and national planning	Provide NACC with financial resources to advocate and coordinate CRC implementation and issues related to the well-being and welfare of children at all levels of governance	MWYCA and NACC	2009 and onwards	Budgetary allocation for NACC
	Consolidate working relationship with MOF and Planning to advocate for children in the national planning process	NACC	2009	NACC advocates for children's concerns and interests
	Report regularly or as needed on emerging issues of concern for children	NACC	2009 and onwards	Semi-Annual report submitted to government
	Coordinate and conduct training of officials and media in the principles of the best interests of the child and in child-friendly media	MWYCA and NACC	2009/2010	Training conducted and skills transfer objective fulfilled Best interests principle applied consistently at national and provincial government levels
Increase understanding and appreciation of the rights and responsibilities of children and parents	Develop advocacy materials for dissemination to the general public	NACC	2009 and 2010	Advocacy materials disseminated Increase intake of inputs from children on development plans

	Provide briefings and reports on emerging issues to all stakeholders on the situation of children inclusive of those in difficult circumstances	NACC	On going	Briefs provided to stakeholders Reporting on children's issues through use of the medias
	Develop training materials for all professional groups working with children and create IEC materials for the promotion of the CRC	NACC	Medium to Long term	Training materials developed as well as IEC materials Professionals apply child focused training in their work
Plan & facilitate interventions for children based on evaluations and previous experiences	Monitoring tools applied to all interventions including implementation of the CRC	NACC and the Independent monitor and advocator	On - going	Tools developed and applied
	Ministerial annual report submitted to Cabinet on progress made on the implementation of the policy and the CRC	MWYCA and NACC	Annually	Annual report submitted for Cabinet decision
	Report to Cabinet on new issues that would require policy revision or direction	MWYCA	Long term	Cabinet kept informed of new developments affecting children
	Develop child assessment impact assessments and advocate their use in national development planning	MWYCA	Annually	Impact assessment reports used to guide planners in developing national and provincial plans
	Establish an independent mechanism to monitor implementation of the CRC and deals with complaints from children provide remedies to the problems and advocate rights of the child	Government	2010	Mechanism established, data collected and analysed CRC reports completed and submitted on time