



child rights connect

Country session: Antigua and Barbuda

Date: 75th session – 29 May 2017

Background information

[OHCHR press release](#)

[Webcast](#)

[Audio file](#)

[Summary of records](#)

Reporting

Reporting methodology

Regular reporting procedure

Simplified reporting procedure

Concluding Observations with urgent measures

State report:

Common core document	
Initial submission	Not submitted

CRC		OPAC		OPSC	
No. of report	Second to fourth periodic reports	No. of report	Not ratified	No. of report	First report
Due date	03 May 2009	Due date	-	Due date	30 May 2004
Submission	9 July 2014	Submission	-	Submission	Not submitted

Written replies to LOIs - CRC	
Due date	1 June 2016
Submission	15 May 2017

Additional comments: The Committee urged the State to fulfil its reporting obligations OPSC

Public reports from children's rights defenders:

	Alternative reports / Additional information
NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Global Initiative to end all forms of corporal punishment ▪ International Disability Organization

State delegation

The delegation was led by Maureen Hyman, Junior Minister in the Office of the Attorney General of Antigua and Barbuda and Parliamentary Secretary. She was supported by a delegate from the Family and Social Services Division of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs.

Committee's Task Force members

Name & Last Name	Country
Clarence Nelson	Samoa
Ann Skelton	South Africa

Dialogue description:

i. Character of the dialogue

The atmosphere during the session was cooperative and constructive. The answers of the State to the Committee's questions were mainly focused on law development.

ii. General assessment made by the Committee

The Committee welcomed the ratification of Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2016 and the progress achieved in various areas since last session, and expressed its understanding on the challenges and problems that a small territory faces. However, members remained concerned that some legislation has yet to be harmonized with the CRC and that proper budget allocations are needed for program implementation.

iii. Main issues discussed

- **Corporal punishment:** The Committee was concerned about the widespread acceptance of corporal punishment in both public and private settings, despite being banned by law in public spheres. It asked whether there were any programs or campaigns on how to change the behavior and culture of parents/caregivers to change methods of discipline. The delegation replied that this issue is being addressed by developing a national behavioral policy for students. As of now, only the head teacher could conduct corporal punishment in very particular circumstances.
- **Administration of juvenile justice:** The Committee raised its concerns about the minimum age for criminal responsibility at 8, one of the lowest in the world. It stated that this must be one of the main priorities for the State in terms of child rights. Committee members asked about the assessment undertaken for children between 8 and 14 years old in conflict with the law by a suitable person as per the Child Justice Act. The delegation replied that the age would be increased to 12 in line with other members of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. In regards to the assessment, the suitable persons were social workers, probation officers and teachers that evaluated the criminal capacity of the child as per his/her age, socio-economic background, school performance, among others.
- **Children with disabilities:** The Committee pointed out that this was an issue of concern in the country, due to lack of services and laws to protect them. Members asked whether there was any comprehensive strategy put in place to gather data on this topic and develop tailor-made programs, particularly for inclusive education. The delegation replied that they are working on a draft bill on children with disabilities in consultation with all necessary groups. There were also planning to adapt several facilities to children with disabilities, as well as develop data gathering activities to have evidence based programs and comply with international obligations.

Recommendations of the Committee

In its [Concluding Observations](#), the Committee recommended, inter alia:

- **Corporal punishment:** The State should end all forms of corporal punishment in all settings and explicitly repeal related provisions within national law, in particularly the education act. Awareness-raising programs and education campaigns must be carried out to change the mindset of the population, as well as promoting non-violent methods of discipline. Moreover, teacher and staff working with/for children must be trained on positive behavioral management to promote safe environments in schools.
- **Administration of juvenile justice:** The State should fully align its Child Justice System with the CRC. The Committee urged the State to raise the minimum age for criminal responsibility to an internationally accepted level and ensure budget for the Child Justice Act implementation, including training for judicial staff. Moreover, the State should allow diversion to be applied for all children and escalate efforts to establish a proper residential option for boys used as a last resort for detention as per the UN standards.
- **Children with disabilities:** The State should adopt a human rights-based approach to disability and develop a comprehensive strategy for the full inclusion of children with disabilities in all areas. It should improve data collection on this topic and conduct evidence-based programs. Moreover, the Committee suggests to reform the social assistance system to avoid institutionalization of children, as well as ensure training of teachers and personnel working with/for children to foster inclusive education.

Sustainable Development Goals

Throughout its Concluding Observations the Committee referred to the following targets:

- 16.2 on ending abuse and other forms of violence against children
- 1.5 on building the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations
- 4.1 and 4.2 on ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

Next State report

CRC	
No. of report	Fifth and sixth periodic report
Due date	3 May 2022

Disclaimer: Child Rights Connect reports are all drafted in English. If the State report and/or the alternative reports were submitted in another UN language (Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian or Chinese) the report will be translated accordingly.