

# *National Policy on Persons with Disabilities*

## *Foreword*

Persons with disabilities are equal citizens of this nation. They have the same rights and responsibilities and should enjoy equal access to the services available to each and every citizen.

The National Policy on Persons with Disabilities articulates a holistic framework for achieving the goals of social inclusion and equality of opportunity for all citizens with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. The primary objective of the Policy is to create a social and physical environment favouring accessibility, integration and full participation of persons with disabilities.

Following a series of national consultations held during 2004, the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities was revised and subsequently approved by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in December 2005. This milestone is a major step which serves to unify the many disparate guidelines and pieces of legislation that address persons with disabilities. It will also provide the requisite framework to guide Government's strategic decisions as they relate to creation and delivery of essential programmes and services to persons with disabilities.

The approval of the National Policy on Persons with Disabilities clearly signals Government's commitment to creating an environment that is barrier free and which encourages persons with disabilities to participate fully in society. Approval of the Policy also initiates its implementation and enforcement by Government agencies and other stakeholders. By extension, it is intended that the national public would be encouraged to support the Policy and make a positive difference in the lives of persons with disabilities.

# Preamble

*The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are 600 million people in the world with disabilities, 80% of whom live in low-income countries.*

In Trinidad and Tobago, the findings from the 2000 national census indicate that there are 45,496 persons living with disabilities in Trinidad and Tobago. This is approximately 4.1 % of the 1,114,772 individuals who responded to the census. Trinidad and Tobago has a population of 1,262,366. In keeping with the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) (WHO); disability is defined as an umbrella term for impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and the individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors). Whilst it is recognized that it is difficult to have one generic definition of disability, the ICF's definition will be adhered to in this document.

Persons with disabilities are agents of their own destiny and equal citizens of this nation. They have the same rights and responsibilities and should enjoy equal access to the services available to each and every citizen.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago is committed to the full inclusion and holistic development of persons with disabilities. In the pursuit of developed country status by 2020, Government is steadfast in its resolve to address disability issues from a human rights perspective, which in essence is to view persons with disabilities as holders of rights which are to be protected and enforced.

Within this context, it is Government's firm intention to implement measures that will ensure the dignity and full inclusion of persons with disabilities and which will ensure equality of opportunity and respect for differences as part of human diversity.

These measures will be implemented in Trinidad and Tobago within the extent of Government's resources, and in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, utilizing a holistic and integrated approach to achieve the goals of social inclusion and equality of opportunity for all citizens with disabilities in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

## I. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- a) To ensure the equal enjoyment of all human rights by persons with disabilities;
- b) To ensure equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities;
- c) To create a social, economic, political, and physical environment favouring the integration and full participation in society of children, youth and adults with disabilities;
- d) To encourage self-reliance and to promote inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in the country's socio-economic development;
- e) To eliminate marginalisation of and discrimination against persons with disabilities;
- f) To provide opportunities for a better quality of life for persons with disabilities.

## II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

*Government, in keeping with national development policy, is committed to the under mentioned principles regarding persons with disabilities:*

- a. Creation of a legislative base to protect the rights, promote the equalization of opportunities and thereby enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities;
- b. Facilitation of co-operation amongst Government, persons with disabilities, organizations of and for persons with disabilities and community groups in decision-making aimed at improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities;
- c. Strengthening of support to Non-Governmental organizations involved in the provision of rehabilitative and other services to persons with disabilities;
- d. Strengthening of existing organizations and encouragement of the formation of new organizations composed of or representing persons with disabilities;
- e. Dissemination of information on the abilities and rights of persons with disabilities to reduce prejudices against persons with disabilities;
- f. Encouragement of cost-effective information exchange programmes and networking between Governmental and Non-Governmental organizations;
- g. Encouragement and facilitation of community based prevention and rehabilitative services to reduce the occurrence of the causes of disabilities and to promote the development of persons with disabilities;

- h. Ensuring the creation of an accessible physical and built environment for persons with disabilities.
- i. Ensuring access to information, including electronic information and the Internet;
- j. Providing for the education of persons with disabilities in an inclusive education system;
- k. Equalization of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- l. Access to adequate social security and social insurance benefits which do not act as a disincentive to persons with disabilities seeking employment;
- m. Facilitating the involvement of persons with disabilities in community activities, such as sporting, recreational and artistic activities; n. Support and encouragement of research efforts in areas related to disability;
- o. Establishment of monitoring mechanisms to ensure that quality service is being provided by Non-Governmental organizations involved in the provision of rehabilitative, skills training and other services to persons with disabilities.

### **III. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

*The existing institutional framework must be strengthened if society is to ensure the full participation of persons with disabilities in societal development. Two areas of emphasis would be in respect of legislation and administrative machinery specific to the needs of persons with disabilities.*

#### ***Legislation***

Legislation impacting on areas of concern to persons with disabilities will be reviewed and amended and, where necessary, enacted, to eliminate discrimination and prejudice and to promote the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities as outlined in the draft UN Convention: Comprehensive & Integral International Convention to Promote & Protect the Rights & Dignity of Persons with Disabilities.

In particular, legislation relating to issues of immediate concern such as building codes to ensure user-friendly buildings; access to information; employment, including job retention and retraining, and education will be considered.

Legislation should also be enacted to cover both income tax concessions for persons and organizations involved in the provision of rehabilitative and other services to persons with disabilities, and to those employers who modify their work environment in an effort to make it user friendly for persons with disabilities.

## **IV. PREVENTION**

*Effective preventative measures would significantly reduce or eliminate the causes of much impairment. To achieve this, the following will be implemented:*

- a. The establishment of an early intervention programme to detect children at risk of disability;
- b. The immunization of all children against all diseases known to be responsible for disabilities;
- c. The mandatory screening of all children from birth to five (5) years to detect disabilities so that corrective action can be taken;
- d. The provision of public education and counselling in pre-natal, maternal and child health care and family planning;
- e. The establishment of programmes conducted by multi-disciplinary teams of professionals for early detection, assessment and treatment of impairment, for persons with disabilities, their families and organizations concerned with disability issues;
- f. The development and implementation of education programmes in appropriate nutrition;
- g. The conduct of training courses in safety procedures to prevent accidents in the home, workplace, on the road etc. that may result in disabilities;
- h. The adaptation of workplaces to prevent the existence of conditions, which lead to occupational disabilities and diseases;
- i. The dissemination of information on issues such as genetic screening, counselling, effects of sexually transmitted diseases and the causes of disability to prevent such occurrences and facilitate early detection of impairment;
- j. The provision of specialized medical care to persons with disabilities within the regular health system;

- k. The provision of incentives in the form of scholarships and training programmes to increase the number of professionals in areas pertaining to the prevention and rehabilitation of disabilities.

## **V. REHABILITATION**

*In order to provide the best rehabilitative services available, the following measures will be implemented:*

- a. The provision of aids and equipment, at subsidized costs, for persons with disabilities;
- b. The creation of the relevant posts, as required, for the provision of services to persons with disabilities in the health sector;
- c. The establishment of several regional multi-purpose centers to provide assessment, counselling and rehabilitative services for persons with disabilities and their families;
- d. The continued support of Non-Governmental organizations which provide preventive and rehabilitative services to persons with disabilities;
- e. The continuous research into and exploration and application of new rehabilitative technology so as to provide more effective rehabilitative services for persons with disabilities.

## **VI. PUBLIC AWARENESS**

*In order to create a public which is both aware and appreciative of the capabilities and human rights of persons with disabilities, the following measures are considered necessary:*

Public awareness programmes using all forms of media should be developed and implemented to sensitize the public with respect to the abilities and the rights of persons with disabilities to participate in and contribute to their community;

b. The distribution of information to the public on the following:

- Disabilities
- Non-Governmental organizations involved in the development of persons with disabilities
- Directory of services and service providers in Trinidad & Tobago that cater to persons with disabilities
- Facilities for the early detection of impairment
- Programmes to prevent the causes of disability
- Nutritional requirements
- Achievements of persons with disabilities
- Existing legislation and policies that impact persons with disabilities
- Counselling
- Genetic screening
- Effects of sexually transmitted diseases
- Abuse of Persons with Disabilities

## **VII. ACCESS TO THE BUILT PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

*Accessibility to the built physical environment ensures the full participation of persons with disabilities in society. In this light, the following measures will be adopted to ensure a barrier-free environment:*

- a. Development, maintenance and enforcement of an acceptable code of regulations for planning and building construction 'to enable persons with disabilities to access and use all public buildings;
- b. The modification of all public buildings, to achieve accessibility to persons with disabilities inclusive of accessible emergency measures;
- c. The allocation of parking spaces for persons with disabilities in all car parks according to international guidelines;
- d. The "Access Symbol" should be displayed, where appropriate, to indicate that provision is made for persons with disabilities.

## **VIII. PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

*An adequate public transportation system is critical for persons with disabilities to effectively and affordably live productive and enjoyable lifestyles. To achieve this, the following will be implemented:*

- a. The public transportation system will be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. Where applicable, vehicles will be modified to accommodate persons with disabilities. Alternative transportation services will also be developed to accommodate persons with disabilities with limited mobility;
- b. All transport related infrastructure will be modified or built if necessary to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- c. All service providers should ensure training of their employees to interact effectively with persons with disabilities;
- d. Incentives should be offered to the private and public sector for the provision of alternative services to meet the transport needs of persons with disabilities who are unable to utilize the regular transit system.

## **IX. ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

*Every effort will be made to ensure that information is accessible to persons with disabilities to enhance their opportunity for personal growth and fulfillment. The following actions will be implemented:*

- a. All public information should be made available in a manner, which is accessible to persons with disabilities using the appropriate technologies;
- b. Telecommunications Providers should install special devices and units to ensure information is accessible to the hearing and visually impaired. These devices and units will also be made available commercially;
- c. The media will be encouraged to present information in a manner accessible to persons with disabilities;
- d. A Certified Body of Sign Language Interpreters should be established to develop a National Sign Language Programme.

## X. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

*Education is a critical component of every individual's life. To achieve an adequate education in an inclusive education system, the following measures will be implemented:*

- a. The creation of opportunities for all children and adults with disabilities to receive education and training;
- b. The provision of adequate and appropriate support services for all children with disabilities in an inclusive education system beginning at the Early Childhood Care and Education level;
- c. The provision of appropriate teaching aids and supports to enhance the methodology of teachers;
- d. The development of modules in the curriculum at Early Childhood Care and Education Centres, and primary and secondary schools, to instill in students, respect for, acceptance and appreciation of the differences among people;
- e. The establishment and upgrading of programmes designed to train persons with disabilities for productive employment and for creative pursuits;
- f. The establishment of facilities for persons with severe or multiple disabilities who cannot be integrated;
- g. The provision of adequate sign language interpreters in all learning institutions (primary, secondary, tertiary);
- h. Provision of special education teachers and resource personnel at all levels of the education system;
- i. The development and implementation of sign language programmes to teach the basics of sign language to children with hearing impairments, their families and communities. These programmes should also be transmitted via the media;
- j. The availability of educational and training materials in an accessible format by all learning institutions and training centres;
- k. The development of guidance and counseling programmes for parents and students at all levels of the education system;
- l. The conduct of sensitization and training programmes for all public officers;
- m. The incorporation of training modules into the curriculum at teachers' colleges

- and at training centers for further and tertiary education;
- n. Co-operation among the community, Government, the private sector and organizations of/catering for persons with disabilities to create appropriate training opportunities for persons with disabilities.

## **XI. EMPLOYMENT**

*To ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of access to, retention of and advancement in employment for which they are qualified, the following measures will be adopted:*

- a. Establishment of A Public Sector Employment Policy, which promotes integration of persons with disabilities into open employment and also creates a favourable working environment by making available support mechanisms;
- b. Encouragement of assistance for the private sector to improve employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- c. The provision of loans, grant schemes, managerial assistance and training in small enterprise development designed to encourage persons with disabilities to become self-employed;
- d. The encouragement of Trade Unions firstly, to review their rules and regulations to allow membership of persons with disabilities into unions and; secondly, to ensure equitable recruitment and promotion policies and employment conditions for persons with disabilities;
- e. The encouragement of all Employment agencies or Job placement agencies (Public and Private) to cater to persons with disabilities seeking jobs;
- f. The provision of incentives to encourage employers to re-train individuals who become I disabled on the job, and provide suitable employment where applicable.

## **XII. TECHNICAL AIDS AND EQUIPMENT**

*To improve access of persons with disabilities to assistive aids and equipment the following measures will be encouraged:*

- a. Incentives to local companies which import or manufacture devices that assist persons with disabilities to achieve independent living;
- b. The provision of tax concessions to persons with disabilities on the purchase and maintenance of assistive devices.

## **XIII. HOUSING**

*To ensure adequate and affordable housing for all citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, the following measures will be adhered to:*

- a. The adoption of the concept of 'Universal Design' in all housing developments to ensure accessibility to all persons with disabilities;
- b. The establishment of supervised residential facilities / group homes to enable persons with disabilities to live independently;
- c. The provision of assistance to persons with disabilities who own land to construct their homes;
- d. The provision of assistance to homeowners to modify their houses in the event that an occupant becomes disabled;
- e. The review of existing accommodation of homeowners with disabilities to ensure compliance with "universal design" specifications.

## **XIV. INCOME MAINTENANCE AND SOCIAL SECURITY**

*In order to provide social security and income maintenance schemes for all persons with disabilities the following measures shall be established:*

- a. The development and implementation of disability benefit programmes (in

accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act) by public and private sector organizations, for employees who become disabled;

b. The review of existing social security programmes to assess their adequacy, and the necessary restructuring of such programmes to ensure that they meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The following areas need to be reviewed:

- . Criteria to qualify for the Disability grant - inclusive of income qualifying criterion
- Definition and assessment of disability
- The composition of the Social Welfare local boards to include representatives from the community of persons with disabilities where possible.
- Training for employees of Social Security Programmes to communicate with persons with disabilities
- The alignment of Social Security Programmes to the cost of living or as close as possible.

## **xv. FAMILY LIFE**

*Family life agencies will continue to provide family care services to persons with disabilities within the family environment, ensuring their right to experience parenthood. Adequate support to persons with disabilities within the family will be facilitated through the following measure:*

a. Provision of a respite care service to families caring for disabled family members at home.

## **xvi. RECREATION, CULTURE AND SPORTS**

*To ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunity to access recreational, cultural and sporting activities, the following measures will be implemented:*

- a. The provision of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in sport, physical education, cultural programmes, and all related activities offered, by providing appropriate equipment, facilities and programmes;
- b. To adapt all public and private recreational, sporting and cultural facilities to accommodate persons with disabilities and to ensure that the services offered are accessible.

## **XVII. DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

*Disaster Preparedness measures must ensure that the special needs of people with disabilities are adequately addressed, prior to and during the recovery phase of a disaster, in order to minimize the adverse impact on them and their communities.*

*The under mentioned measures will address this:*

- a. Include persons with disabilities on the National Emergency Management Authority so that they are involved in the emergency planning process;
- b. Evaluate all existing infrastructure earmarked for use during emergencies to ensure that they are accessible and meet the special needs of persons with disabilities.

## **XVIII. RESEARCH**

*There is a critical need to undertake studies focusing on issues, which affect the lives of persons with disabilities and their families. Best practices, and innovation in service provision (including inclusive education, mainstream vocational training, career guidance and employment services) are possible areas of research.*

Research efforts in the under mentioned areas, should be conducted with a view to establishing a comprehensive data bank on persons with disabilities providing data on areas such as:

- Causes, types and incidences of impairment and disability

- The economic and social conditions of persons with disabilities, their families and/or caregivers
- Participation concerns
- Development of assistive devices for persons with disabilities;
- Assessment of the needs, skills and potential for training of persons with disabilities Statistics on available services and programmes
- Open labour market participation rate of persons with disabilities
- Gender and disability - the experiences of the male as opposed to the female  
Access to social services

A national survey on persons with disabilities should be conducted to determine the exact size of the group and the different types of disabilities. Such data will be collected on an ongoing basis by the Central Statistical Office.

## **XIX. POLICY PLANNING**

*To ensure that policies are always relevant to the disabled population, the following measures will be implemented:*

- a. Consultation and collaboration with organizations of/catering for persons with disabilities and individuals with disabilities in decision-making on issues which are likely to impact the lives of persons with disabilities;
- b. Implementation of policies and programmes designed to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

## **XX. INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

*To encourage international co-operation and the exchange of information, the following measures will be implemented:*

- a. The encouragement and support of the exchange of knowledge and expertise among Non-Governmental organizations, research institutions, professionals

- and national bodies concerned with persons with disabilities;
- b. The active participation in and support for regional and international activities dealing with disability issues.

## **XXI. REVIEW AND EVALUATION**

Government undertakes to ensure, via the appropriate machinery, the continuous review and evaluation of programmes pertaining to persons with disabilities to ensure their continued relevance. Such evaluation will seek to foster overall efficacy in meeting policy objectives.

# **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

## ***DISABILITY***

Disability is an umbrella term for impairment, activity limitations and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and the individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors) (ICF WHO)

## ***INTERNATIONAL ACCESS SYMBOL:***

The wheelchair symbol should only be used to indicate access for individuals with limited mobility including wheelchair users. For example, the symbol is used to indicate an accessible entrance, bathroom or that a phone is lowered for wheelchair users. ([www.accessexpressednetwork.com](http://www.accessexpressednetwork.com))

## ***ACCESSIBLE:***

In the case of a facility, readily usable by a particular individual; in the case of a program or activity, presented or provided in such a way that a particular individual can participate, with or without auxiliary aid(s); in the case of electronic resources, accessible with or without adaptive computer technology. (United Cerebral Palsy web site)

## ***ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY:***

Products, devices or equipment whether acquired commercially, modified or customized that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. (ISO 1999).

## ***BRAILLE***

Braille is a system of raised dots representing letters of the alphabet. To read Braille, the fingers gently glide over paper that has been embossed with the Braille code. The basis of the Braille system is known as a Braille cell. The cell is comprised of six dots numbered in a specific order. Each dot or combination of dots represents a letter of the alphabet. (Compiled from the Canadian National Institute for the Blind)

## ***CAPTIONING:***

Text that is included with video presentations or broadcasts that enable people with hearing impairments to have access to the audio portion of the material. (United Cerebral Palsy web site)

## ***CAR PARK / PARKING LOT:***

An area of ground for parking cars. (Cambridge dictionary)

## ***FACILITY:***

All or any portion of a physical complex, including buildings, structures, equipment, grounds, roads, and parking lots. (United Cerebral Palsy web site)

## ***GROUP HOME:***

A group home refers to a small-supervised residential facility, as for people with psychiatric or cognitive disabilities, in which residents typically participate in daily tasks and are often free to come and go on a voluntary basis. (Disability History Museum, (DHM Library web site)

## ***HEARING IMPAIRMENTS:***

Complete or partial loss of ability to hear caused by a variety of injuries or diseases including congenital defects. (United Cerebral Palsy web site.

## ***INCLUSIVE EDUCATION***

Inclusive education means disabled and non-disabled children and young people learning together in ordinary pre-school provision, schools, colleges and universities, with appropriate networks of support. Inclusion means enabling pupils to participate in the life and work of mainstream institutions to the best of their abilities, whatever their needs. (CSIE Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education Web site)

## ***INDEPENDENT LIVING:***

A well-organized movement among people with disabilities to enhance self-esteem and self-determination, as well as the socio-economic resources available to choose and maintain individual, independent lifestyles. (Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago)

## ***INTERPRETER:***

Professional person who assists a deaf person in communicating with hearing people. (United Cerebral Palsy web site)

## ***MAINSTREAMING***

The concept that students with disabilities should be integrated with their non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible, when appropriate to the needs of the child with the disability. Mainstreaming is one point on a continuum of educational options. The term is sometimes used synonymously with "inclusion."  
(Colorado school for the Deaf and the Blind)

## ***PUBLIC BUILDINGS:***

Any building (public or private) that is available for use by members of the public.  
(National Co-ordinating Committee on Disability)

## ***REHABILITATION***

An organized program of medical and clinical treatment designed to maximize residual physical, perceptual and cognitive abilities following disablement.  
(Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago)

## ***RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY:***

A facility licensed to provide room and board, supervision and, sometimes, social and other services for individuals who need assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) but do not routinely require nursing or medical care. Also known as a rest home.  
(Inter generations web-site)

## ***SIGN LANGUAGE:***

Manual communication commonly used by deaf. The gesture or symbols in sign language are organized in a linguistic way. Each individual gesture is called a sign. Each sign has three distinct parts; the handshape, the position of the hands, and the movements of the hands. American Sign Language (ASL) is the most commonly used sign language in the United States. Deaf people from different countries speak different sign languages. (United Cerebral Palsy web site)

## ***STREET FURNITURE:***

Refers to all forms of public facilities or equipment signage, zebra crossings, public telephone booths, letter boxes, parks, curb cuts. (United Cerebral Palsy web site)

## ***TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVICE FOR THE DEAF (TDD) OR TELETYPEWRITER (TTY)***

A device which enables someone who has a speech or hearing impairment to use a telephone when communicating with someone else who has a TDD/TTY. TDD/TTYs can be used with any telephone, and one needs only a basic typing ability to use them. (United Cerebral Palsy web site)

## ***UNIVERSAL DESIGN:***

The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. The intent of the universal concept is simply life for everyone by making more housing usable by more people at little or no extra cost. Universal design is an approach to design that incorporates products as well as building features and elements, which, to the greatest extent possible, can be used by everyone. The universal design concept targets all people of all ages, sizes, and abilities and is applied to all buildings. (The Centre for Universal Design; [www.design.ncsu.edu/cud](http://www.design.ncsu.edu/cud))

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>1. Legislation</b></p> <p>(a) Establishment of a Committee to review existing legal frame-work, international agreements and conventions, and recommend legislation necessary for implementation of the various measures contained in the policy;</p> <p>(b) Drafting of legislation.</p>	<p><b>1. Legislation</b></p> <p>(a) Drafting and approval of legislation deemed necessary for implementation of measures contained in the Policy;</p> <p>(b) Implementation of legislation.</p>	<p><b>1. Legislation</b></p> <p>(a) Implementation and enforcement of legislation;</p> <p>(b) Monitoring &amp; Evaluation of legislation.</p>	<p>Office of the Attorney General, Ministry of Legal Affairs, Law Commission, Ministry of Social Development, (DAU)</p>
<p><b>2. Prevention</b></p> <p>(a) The development and implementation of public education programmes in all areas of health;</p> <p>(b) The conduct of training courses in safety procedures to prevent accidents in the home, workplace, on the road etc. that may result in disabilities;</p>	<p><b>2. Prevention</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>2. Prevention</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Ministry of Health</p> <p>Ministry of Health</p>

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
(c) The establishment of an early intervention programme to detect & treat with children at risk of disability at the earliest stage;	On going	On going	Ministry of Health
(d) The establishment and implementation of programmes conducted by multi-disciplinary teams of professionals for early assessment and treatment of impairment, for persons with disabilities, their families and organizations concerned with disability issues;	On going	On going	Ministry of Health
(e) The adaptation of workplaces to prevent the existence of conditions, which lead to occupational disabilities and diseases.	On going	On going	Ministry of Health

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>3. Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>(a) Conduct Rehabilitation needs assessment;</p> <p>(b) Identify posts that are necessary &amp; Develop job descriptions.</p>	<p><b>3. Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>(a) The creation and filling of the relevant posts as required for the provision of services to persons with disabilities in the Health &amp; Social Sector.</p>	<p><b>3. Rehabilitation</b></p> <p>(a) The establishment of several state of the art regional rehabilitation centres to provide assessment, counselling and rehabilitative services for persons with disabilities and their families (including the acquisition of aids &amp; devices)</p>	<p>Ministry of Health</p>
<p><b>4. Public Awareness</b></p> <p>(a) The distribution of information to the public on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disabilities</li> <li>- Programmes to prevent the causes of disability</li> <li>- Nutritional requirements</li> <li>- Achievements of persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Existing legislation and policies that impact/affect persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Genetic screening</li> <li>- Counselling</li> <li>- Effects of sexually transmitted diseases</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Public Awareness</b></p> <p>On Going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>4. Public Awareness</b></p> <p>On Going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Ministry of Social, (DAU) Development; Ministry of Public Administration and Information (Information Division)</p>

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilities for the early detection of impairment</li> <li>- A directory of services and service providers in Trinidad &amp; Tobago that cater to persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Abuse of PWDs</li> </ul> <p>(b) The use of drama, role-plays, caricatures and jingles to increase the public's awareness of disability issues.</p>	<p>On going</p>	<p>On going</p>	
<p><b>5. Access to the Built Physical Environment</b></p> <p>(a) The international "Access Symbol" should be displayed where appropriate, to indicate that provision is made for persons with disabilities;</p> <p>(b) All agencies must develop measures to cater appropriately for the needs of persons with disabilities inclusive of emergency measures.</p>	<p><b>5. Access to the Built Physical Environment</b></p> <p>(a) Develop relevant legislation;</p> <p>(b) Development, maintenance and enforcement of an acceptable code of regulations for planning and building construction and other physical infrastructure to</p>	<p><b>5. Access to the Built Physical Environment</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Office of the Attorney General, Ministry of Legal Affairs</p> <p>Ministry of Planning and Development, Town and Country Division, Ministry of Works &amp; Transport, Ministry of Local Government</p>

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
	<p>access and use all public buildings;</p> <p>(c) The modification of all public buildings, to achieve accessibility to persons with disabilities inclusive of accessible emergency measures.</p>	<p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Ministry of Planning and Development, Town and Country Division, Ministry of Works &amp; Transport, Ministry of Local Government</p>
<p><b>6. Public Transportation</b></p> <p>(a) All service providers shall train their employees to interact effectively with persons with disabilities;</p> <p>(b) Improve the efficiency and maintenance of the existing transportation service.</p>	<p><b>6. Public Transportation</b></p> <p>(a) Incentives shall be offered to the Public and Private Sector for the provision of alternative services to meet the transportation needs of persons with disabilities who are unable to utilize the regular transit system;</p> <p>(b) Expand the transportation system to more adequately cater to persons with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>6. Public Transportation</b></p> <p>(a) The public transportation system (air, sea &amp; land) will be fully accessible to persons with disabilities. Where vehicles will be modified to accommodate persons with disabilities;</p> <p>(b) All transport related infrastructure will be modified or built if necessary to accommodate persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Ministry of Works &amp; Transportation (PTSC, Port Authorities, Airport Authorities)</p> <p>Ministry of Works &amp; Transportation (PTSC, Port Authorities, Airport Authorities)</p>

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>7. Access to Information and Communication</b></p> <p>(a) Encourage the media to present information in a manner that is accessible to persons with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>7. Access to Information and Communication</b></p> <p>(a) All public information should be made available in a manner, which is accessible to persons with disabilities using appropriate technologies;</p>	<p><b>7. Access to Information and Communication</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>(b) Telecommunications providers shall install special devices and units to ensure information is accessible to the hearing and visually impaired. These devices and units shall also be made available commercially;</p> <p>(c) Establish a Certified Body of Sign Language Interpreters and develop and National Sign language programme.</p>	<p>Ministry of Public Administration and Information; Ministry of Social Development, (SSD); Ministry of Public Administration and Information</p> <p>Ministry of Public Utilities (Regulated Industries Commission)</p> <p>Ministry of Social Development, (DAU), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Science and Technology and Tertiary Education (National Training Association)</p>

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>8. Education and Training</b></p> <p>(a) The creation of opportunities for all children and adults with disabilities to be educated and trained</p> <p>(b) The upgrading of programmes involved in training persons with disabilities for productive employment and for creative pursuits;</p> <p>(c) The conduct of sensitisation and training programmes in interaction skills for all public officers;</p>	<p><b>8. Education and Training</b></p> <p>(a) The development and implementation of modules in the curriculum at pre-school, primary and secondary school, to instil in students, respect for, acceptance and appreciation of the differences among people;</p> <p>(b) Learning institutions and Training Centres should ensure that educational and training materials are available in an accessible format;</p> <p>(c) The development and implementation of guidance and counselling programmes for parents and students at all levels of the educational system;</p>	<p><b>8. Education and Training</b></p> <p>(a) The inclusion of children with disabilities into the regular school setting with adequate and appropriate support services beginning at the Early Childhood Care &amp; Education level;</p> <p>(b) The provision of appropriate training, teaching aids and supports to enhance the methodology of teachers;</p> <p>(c) The establishment of facilities for persons with severe or multiple disabilities who cannot be included in regular schools;</p>	<p><b>Responsible Agencies</b></p> <p>Ministry of Education; Ministry of Social Development, (DAU); UWI; NIHERST; Ministry of Science &amp; Technology; UTT</p> <p>Ministry of Education; Ministry of Science &amp; Technology</p>

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p>(d) The provision of incentives in the form of scholarships and training programmes to increase the number of professionals in areas pertaining to the prevention and rehabilitation of disabilities.</p>	<p>(d) The implementation of sign language programmes to teach sign language to children with hearing impairments, their families and communities. The programmes will also be transmitted via media;</p> <p>(e) The incorporation of training modules indicated in points: (a), (b), (c) &amp; (d) into the curriculum at Teachers Colleges and at training centers for tertiary education.</p>	<p>(d) The provision of adequate sign language interpreters in all learning institutions;</p> <p>(e) Special education teachers and resource personnel will be made available at all levels of the education system.</p>	<p>Ministry of Health; Ministry of Social Development (DAU); Ministry of Education; Ministry of Science &amp; Technology</p> <p>Ministry of Education; Ministry of Science &amp; Technology</p>
<p><b>9. Employment</b></p> <p>(a) The encouragement of all Employment agencies or Job placement agencies (Public and Private) to cater to the needs of persons with disabilities seeking employment.</p>	<p><b>9. Employment</b></p> <p>(a) A Public Sector Employment Policy, which will promote integration of persons with disabilities into open employment and will also create an accessible working environment by providing, support mechanisms;</p>	<p><b>9. Employment</b></p> <p>(a) The encouragement of employers to establish equitable recruitment, promotion policies and employment conditions for persons with disabilities;</p>	<p>Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro-Enterprise Development; ECA, Trade Unions; Ministry of Social Development HRMATT</p>

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
	<p>(b) The provision of loans, grants, and entrepreneurial training to encourage persons with disabilities to become self-employed.</p>	<p>( b) Encouragement of employers to re-train individuals who become disabled on the job, and provide suitable employment where applicable;</p> <p>(c) Encouragement of worker organizations to incorporate items (a), (b), &amp; (c) into their collective agreements.</p>	<p>Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro-Enterprise Development; Ministry of Social Development, (DAU)</p> <p>Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro-Enterprise Development</p>
<p><b>10. Technical Aids and Equipment</b></p> <p>(a) Provide simple assistive aids and devices under the Chronic Disease Assistance Programme (CDAP);</p> <p>(b) The provision of tax concessions to persons with disabilities who purchase assistive devices.</p>	<p><b>10. Technical Aids and Equipment</b></p> <p>(a) Provide incentives to local companies, which import or manufacture devices to aid persons with disabilities</p>	<p><b>10. Technical Aids and Equipment</b></p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Ministry of Health; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Social Development, (DAU)</p> <p>Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Social Development, (DAU)</p>

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>11. Housing</b></p> <p>(a) The continued allocation of houses for Persons with Disabilities as articulated in the Housing Policy for Trinidad and Tobago</p> <p>(b) The provision of assistance to homeowners to modify their houses in the event that they become disabled;</p> <p>(c) The immediate adoption of the concept ‘Universal design’ in all housing developments to ensure accessibility to all persons with disabilities;</p> <p>(d) Review existing accommodation of homeowners with disabilities to ensure compliance with universal design specifications.</p>	<p><b>11. Housing</b></p> <p>(a) The continued allocation of houses for Persons with Disabilities as articulated in the Housing Policy for Trinidad and Tobago;</p> <p>(b) The provision of assistance to persons with disabilities who own land to construct their homes;</p> <p>(c) Review existing accommodation of homeowners with disabilities to ensure compliance with universal design specifications.</p>	<p><b>11. Housing</b></p> <p>(a) The continued allocation of houses for Persons with Disabilities as articulated in the Housing Policy for Trinidad and Tobago;</p> <p>(b) The establishment of supervised residential / group home facilities to house persons with disabilities to live independently.</p>	<p>Ministry of Housing and Settlement; NHA</p> <p>Ministry of Housing; Ministry of Social Development, (DAU)</p> <p>Ministry of Planning &amp; Development; Ministry of Housing</p> <p>Ministry of Housing; Ministry of Local Government</p>

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>12. Income Maintenance and Social Security</b></p> <p>(a) Implementation of the proposed policies as articulated by the Regulatory Authority for Utilities re: Bill of Concessions</p> <p>(b) The review of existing social security programmes to assess their adequacy, and the necessary restructuring of such programmes to ensure that they meet the needs of persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The following areas need to be addressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Criteria to qualify for the Disability grant; inclusive of income qualifying criterion</li> <li>- Definition and assessment of disability</li> </ul>	<p><b>12. Income Maintenance and Social Security</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>12. Income Maintenance and Social Security</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Ministry of Public Utilities, RIC</p> <p>Ministry of Social Development, (DAU)</p>

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The composition of the Social Welfare local boards in order to include representatives from the community of persons with disabilities where possible</li> <li>- Training of employees of the Social Welfare Division to communicate with persons with disabilities</li> <li>- Social Security benefits need to be tied to the cost of living</li> <li>- Grant programmes will be modified so they do not act as a disincentive to persons with disabilities from seeking a higher standard of living, through seeking employment.</li> </ul>			
(c) Proclamation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act.	Enforcement of the Act	On going	Ministry of Labour and Small and Micro-Enterprise Development

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>13. Family Life</b> (a) The provision of family care services to ensure that all families regardless of income level can provide adequately for the needs of their family members with disabilities; (b) Provision of family planning information, advice and services, to persons with disabilities and their families.</p>	<p><b>13. Family Life</b> (a) Provision of an affordable respite care service to families caring for disabled family members at home.  On going</p>	<p><b>13. Family Life</b> On going  On going</p>	<p>Ministry of Social Development, (DAU); Ministry of Health, Ministry of Community Development</p>
<p><b>14. Recreation, Culture and Sport</b> (a) Provision of training programmes for coaches to include persons with disabilities in their programmes;  (b) Increase the availability of sporting &amp; recreational programmes and activities for persons with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>14. Recreation, Culture and Sport</b> (a) Provision of sport scholarships for persons with disabilities;  (b) Adapt all public and private recreational, sporting and cultural facilities to accommodate persons with disabilities, and to ensure that the services offered are accessible;</p>	<p><b>14. Recreation, Culture and Sport</b> On going  On going</p>	<p><b>Responsible Agencies</b> Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs; Ministry of Public Administration and Information  Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs; Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Planning and Development; Ministry of Works and Transport</p>

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
	(c) The provision of accessible facilities by the hospitality industry for persons with disabilities.	On going	Ministry of Tourism; Ministry of Planning and Development
<p><b>15. Disaster Preparedness</b></p> <p>(a) Include persons with disabilities on NEMA so that they are involved in the emergency planning process;</p> <p>(b) Evaluate all existing infrastructure air marked for use during emergencies to ensure they are accessible and meet the special needs of persons with disabilities. Where necessary build the infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>15. Disaster Preparedness</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>15. Disaster Preparedness</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Ministry of National Security, NEMA</p>

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Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>16. Research</b></p> <p>(a) Research efforts in the under mentioned areas, will be conducted on an ongoing basis to inform Policy development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Causes, types, prevalence and incidences of impairment and disability;</li> <li>- Data on available services and programmes;</li> <li>- Access to social services.</li> <li>- The economic and social conditions of persons with disabilities, their families and/or caregivers;</li> <li>- Assessment of the needs, skills and potential for training of persons with disabilities;</li> <li>- Gender and disability.</li> </ul>	<p><b>16. Research</b></p> <p>(a) Qualitative studies to be conducted on Disability;</p> <p>(b) Review the questions on Disability in the National Census to ensure that all relevant information is captured.</p>	<p><b>16. Research</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p>Ministry of Social Development, (DAU); CSO Ministry of Social Development, (DAU); CSO</p>

## Policy on Persons with Disabilities – Action Plan

Area/Action Short Term (0-2 yrs)	Area/Action Medium Term (3-5 yrs)	Area/Action Long Term (5-7yrs)	Responsible Agencies
<p><b>17. Policy Planning</b></p> <p>(a) Consultation and collaboration with persons with disabilities and relevant stakeholders on all issues which impact the lives of persons with disabilities.</p>	<p><b>17. Policy Planning</b></p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>17. Policy Planning</b></p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>Responsible Agencies</b></p> <p>Ministry of Social Development, (DAU)</p>
<p><b>18. International Co-operation</b></p> <p>(a) The active participation in and support for regional and international activities dealing with disability issues;</p> <p>(b) The encouragement and support of the exchange of knowledge and expertise on disability issues.</p>	<p><b>18. International Co-operation</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>18. International Co-operation</b></p> <p>On going</p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>Responsible Agencies</b></p> <p>Ministry of Social Development, (DAU); Ministry of Foreign Affairs; All relevant Ministries &amp; bodies</p>
<p><b>19. Review and Evaluation</b></p> <p>(a) Continuous review and evaluation of all programmes pertaining to persons with disabilities to ensure their continued relevance.</p>	<p><b>19. Review and Evaluation</b></p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>19. Review and Evaluation</b></p> <p>On going</p>	<p><b>Responsible Agencies</b></p> <p>Ministry of Social Development (DAU)</p>

