

## **History of Child Protection in Seychelles**

The first child Protection Services introduced in Seychelles was the “Child Welfare”. Its office was situated at Huteau lane, which is found in town. The office had a mini bus known as the “auto-mobile” at that time. It took the officers on their routine visits to the disadvantaged people in all districts over Mahe.

1969: A named David Colette sought help from one of the affluent merchants at that time, Mrs Oliagi, to help in the development of about fifty crèches around the country.

1970: The Children’s Society was founded. It was set up to help families in need. The same year it officially opened its own crèche, sir John Thorpe Hall. Its aim was to also train teachers to educate the small children.

1977: The School for the Exceptional Child was opened. It was situated in Victoria, the capital city.

15<sup>th</sup> September 1978: The Children’s Society opened its first Day Care Centre for children who were not yet of age to attend crèche.

1<sup>st</sup> June 1979: The International Day for Children was introduced by the United Nations.

5<sup>th</sup> February 1980: The National Council for Children (NCC) became in existence, it replaced and continued the work of the Children’s Committee.

September 1980: The role of the Children’s Society was taken over by the National Council for Children.

1982: Introduction of the Children Act. It recognises the welfare and protection of children. The main Child Protection laws are embedded in the Children Act 1982. The NCC had the power and was mandated by the Children Act to work with the children and their families.

September 1990: The largest number of Heads of States and Government ever assembled, gathered in New York for a first World Summit for Children. They

adopted a declaration on “The Survival Protection and Development of Children” and a plan of Action for implementing the Declaration.

1990: The Seychelles ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention sets legal norms and parameters for the protection of children and for safeguarding their fundamental rights.

Children Act 1982: The Amendment Act 1991 gave all mandate powers previously owned by the NCC to the Social Services. The Social Services therefore took over the mandate of child protection from the NCC. With this same Amendment, a Children’s Board was created.

January 1993: A Committee was set up by the Minister responsible for Social Affairs to prepare a National Plan of Action For Children based on the New York Declaration of Heads of States and Governments.

1996: An Inter-Agency Committee chaired by the Social Services was set up to strengthen the Working Together concept in dealing with Child Protection issues.

1997: A “Working Together” document was introduced/adopted, outlining the Inter Agency Procedures, following referrals of cases.

1999: A Child Protection Team was introduced within the Social Services. The Social Workers who formed part of the team was solely to undertake cases of child abuse cases.

1998: The Children Act was subsequently amended, whereby the Family Tribunal was established. The Children’s Board was dissolved and the functions of the Board was handed over to the Family Tribunal.

2000: The introduction of the Family Violence (Victim Protection) Act.

2005: The Ministry responsible for Social Affairs set up a Committee to work on a National Plan of Action for children, for the year (2005-2009). This came about from the National Theme of the year 2005, “Our Children, Our Treasure, Our Future”.

2004: The “L’Observatoire Des Droits de L’enfant de la region de L’Ocean Indien” (ODEROI) was created by the “COI” and “UNICEF”. Its role is to ensure that there is a systematic follow up on the situation of children in south west countries of the Indian Ocean.

2006: The Penal Code was amended- mandatory sentence of 7 years to be applied in cases of sexual abuse against children.

2007: The Children Act was amended whereby the Children Regulations 2007 (Child Protection Register) was passed.

2007: The “Children’s Homes Foundation” was set up by Mrs. Nathalie Michel.