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**THE GOVERNMENT OF CURAÇAO
(Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands)**

(Article 16)

for the period
01/01/2010 – 31/12/2013)

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**GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNTY OF CURAçAO
(CARIBBEAN PART OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS)**

**2014 reports on the article 16 of the European Social Charter
(regarding the years 2012-2013)**

**Ministry of Social Development Labor and Welfare,
October 2014**

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INTRODUCTION

This short summary contains the reports on the article 16 (on family benefits) over the years 2012 and 2013 from the Government of Curaçao. The summary contains firstly an overview of the economic situation under paragraph A.

In the Report Section, under paragraph B some positive developments regarding provisions set in place for the family are highlighted.

Some projects solely target special groups in society as for instance children (childtelephone, under paragraph B4) or migrant worker (as the project OMIC, under paragraph B5).

Other projects or initiatives aim at the society in general such as the following projects regarding:

Childabuse and domestic violence, under paragraph B2;

Awareness raising campaigns, under paragraph B3;

The Bureau Social Mediation as elaborated upon in paragraph B1.

The above mentioned initiatives resides in the more preventive sphere, but beginning from the paragraph B6 Warm Meal project and so forth a more active role is being saved for the government.

Last but not least, a small summary, under the paragraph Conclusion, will be given on developments laid down in this report.

A. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN CURAÇAO

After a contraction of 0.1% in 2012, Curacao's real GDP contracted further by 0.8% in 2013 as a result of a decline in domestic demand despite lower inflationary pressures. In contrast, net foreign demand added to the real GDP growth in Curaçao. Meanwhile, consumer price inflation in Curaçao eased to 1.3% in 2013 predominantly because of lower fuel prices.

The decline in domestic demand was driven by a fall in both private and public spending. Private spending reduced because of a drop in private consumption and investment. The decline in private consumption was the result of the measures taken by the government, including an increase in social premiums that negatively affected consumers' disposable income, as well as worsened labor market conditions. The worsening in labor market conditions was attributable mainly to staff dismissals at a number of domestic businesses.

Private investment also declined due to, among other things, less maintenance work at the refinery and fewer construction activities in 2013 compared to 2012.companies. In contrast, net foreign demand added to the real GDP growth of Curaçao in 2013 as imports decreased at a faster pace than exports in real terms. Exports dropped predominantly because of fewer re-exports by the free-zone companies, which in turn induced a decline in merchandise imports. In addition, lower domestic demand and a decline in oil imports further reduced imports during 2013.

An analysis, by sector shows that the manufacturing and restaurants & hotels performed well during 2013. Activities in the transport, storage, & communication sector contracted by 0.8% in 2013 mainly due a decline in airport-related activities as reflected by a reduction in total passenger traffic, particularly transit passengers, and the number of commercial landings. The reduction in the number of passengers was driven primarily by the bankruptcy of the local airline DAE. Activities in the utilities sector also contracted during 2013 (2.8%), reflected by a reduction in both water and electricity production. The decline in electricity consumption resulted from, among other things, the use of inverters and increased awareness of the importance of saving energy.

Table 1: Macro-economic data Curaçao

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2013</u>
GDP(mill. NAf)	5,107	5.135	5,328	5,439	5,604	5,632
Real growth GDP	2.2%	-0.5%	0.1%	0.6%	-0.1%	-0.8%
Inflation	6.9%	1.8%	2.8%	2.3%	3.2%	1.3%
Unemployment	10.3%	9.6%	10.0%	9.8%	11.0%	13.0%

Source: Central Bank of Curaçao and Sint Maarten (2013)

REPORT SECTION

In this Report Section firstly all preventive measure taken to guarantee the safety and well being of the family as a fundamental group unit within the society passes the revue (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5 and B6).

The next projects regard measures taken to reduce poverty as is the project on Warm Meals, outlined in paragraph B6.

B.SECTOR FAMILY AND YOUTH in the MINISTRY

With the constitutional reform the government of Curaçao as of 10th of October 2010 also implemented a remarkable innovation by placing labour development, social development and family and youth care in one and the same ministry. In doing so the government aims to promote social interventions, also conflict resolution in the family, which is considered the natural and fundamental group unit of society, and labour development. Thus the government combines activation on different but integrated levels: in labour development, neighbourhood development, family and youth care on all fronts. In this paragraph six positive developments (B1-B7) in this area is to be highlighted and shortly elaborated upon:

B1. BUREAU SOCIAL MEDIATION

The government aims to combine activation on different levels: in labour development, neighbourhood development and personal development. The Social Mediation Bureau is instituted in order to halt the increasing number of subsidized judicial cases, the so called pro deo cases.

For some years already, the government provide persons with less than a minimum income per month (Naf 1500,-- (approximate 800.00 US dollars) judicial assistance of a lawyer. This assistance is given, on free basis or against a small contribution and is provided mainly for labour disputes and family disputes (divorce, alimony, issues of inheritance). Recently however, the amount of these so called pro deo cases on divorce, alimony and even conflict between neighbours increased so rapidly that measures had to be taken to control these judicial costs (attorney's fee) weighing heavily on the public funds.

After satisfactory social mediation, the course to and the costs of an independent judge is avoided.

If after social mediation by the Bureau Social Mediation, the client is not satisfied, the course to an independent judge remains open and is financially offered and covered by the government.

Table 2: work terrain of the Bureau Social Mediation

	Alimony	Divorce	Debt consolidation	Labour	Accidents	Heritance	Parenthood	Hood	Relations
2012	5	12	3	7	1	1	6	1	3
2013	9	10	13	15	3	6	9	3	9

Source: Bureau Social Medation of the Ministry of Social Development Labour and Welfare

B2. NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON CHILDAUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

On the 28 and 29th of May 2012, the NGO National Alliance working against child abuse and domestic violence held a national dialgoue in which government officials, policy advisors and other stakeholders participated. The Ministry of Social Development Labour and Welfare, reiterated its commitment to combatting domestic violence and child abuse and committed itself to working with the Alliance towards a comprehensive and structural management and policies concerning domestic violence and childabuse.

In October 2013 the government issued a National Decree instituting a Committee to work on development of an action plan to combat child abuse and domestic violence. The National Committee has already become operational since the formal appointments of its members, originated from the government (policy officers from several ministeries) and of the civil society.

B3. AWARENESS RAISING CAMPAIGNS: “Ku Ki Derechi”

During 2012 and 2013 an awarenessraising campaign, named “Ku ki derechi” (“With what right”), financed by the SEI funds and in close cooperation with the NGO Bos di Hubentut, was launched. In this campaigns child abuse cases were exposed with due confidentiality for the victims. Th eexperts on several disciplines (psychologists, social workers, doctors) in a very frank way sorted out the effects and the lifelong scars as a result of the abuses. This campaign achieved in a short time (1-1,5 years) that the silence about this matter to finally been broken.

B4. CHILD TELEPHONE

The institution of the so called “Child Telephone”, number 918, is a free (telephone) line where children with all kind of problems can get help so the early detection of adolescence, drugs, alcohol, negligence, child abuse or even worse can be signaled. Professionals on different fields of expertise give help or a listening ear to these youngsters. Up till today sufficient the help offered by this number is broadcasted on national television and radio.

B5. OMIC: PROJECT FOR MIGRANT WOMEN WORKERS and MIGRANT CHILDREN

Another interesting development regards the OMIC Project for Migrant Women Workers and their children. In 2009, the Ministry of Social Development Labor and Welfare started a project focused on determining the impact of migrants on our society. The project is called OMIC, which can be translated into “a survey on migration and integration issues on Curaçao”. It is being funded with both local and Dutch support. Partners to the project, beside from the Ministry of Social Development Labor and Welfare, are the local university UoC (University of Curaçao) and the Bureau of Statistics, CBS. The reason for starting OMIC is the fact that hardly any data is available on migrants in our society, nor their impacts on several systems such as healthcare and labour disputes issues and off course the school system. A lot of what we know is based on “hear say”. The goal of the project is to get real data, and based on this data, to design specific policies for the migrant women and migrant youngster.

Related to this OMIC project a conference named “The undocumented child on Curaçao” was held the 21st of June 2013. The findings of the conference can be found as annex c in this document). A resolution towards the delicate position of the indocumented migrant child has been formulated where the right on education with the final to obtain a diploma has been set central. Although our legislation (articles 3, 26 and 27 Constitution of Curaçao, AB 2010 no 86) provides the legal framework for protection, measures should be taken in policies to be developed properly to enforce the legal setting on the right to education, right to family and to adress some forms of possible discrimination. The Caribbean point of view on parental migration, childlabour (-abuse) was brought by Dr Michele Reis of the International Relations at the University of West Indies.

B6 PROJECT WARM MEAL

The projekt is based on the Ordinance of Obligatory Education (P.B. 1991 no 85) where is laid down that youngsters in the ages between 4-18 jaar have to attend school obligatory. But to attend school they have to be fed with a healthy anti-allergic diet to increase the concentration thus resulting in better accomplishment at school. The government, with the help of Dutch funds (SEI-funds) and in the light of the particular initiative “Breakfast at school”, began a project where schoolchildren aged between 3-11 years are provided with a healthy, allergic proof (without pork meat, yogurtproducts) warm meals at school in “poor” neighbourhood. This warm meal offered to youngsters take place with the consent of their parents. These parents are or low incomed (below the Minimum Wage, NafI 7,93 (guilders) per hour) or jobseekers on social benefits.

The workers to help implement the project Warm Meal are also jobseekers who are offered a job (helpling to distribute the meals, take care of dishwashing etc) and paid more than the amount of social benefits they receive on a monthly basis. Beside that

they receive free transportation (bus) tickets and a warm meal. In this way they the so called “help mothers” (helpmoeders in Dutch) are given the incentive to earn more than the amount on social benefits and simultaneously gain work experience to enroll, later on, in the labour market and in regular jobs.

The Ministry of Public Health Environment and Nature is in charge of the public health aspects of these help mother: every 6 month a medical test is taken to ensure that they can continue with the foodhandling of the project.

The Warm Meal-menus are weekly put together by professionals and in accordance with dietary rules.

The restaurants which were appointed by the government to take care of the cooking and transportation of the warm meals to the schools were set under strict hygienic surveillance and offered meals at a price of Nafl 8,63 (Antillean guilders) per meal. The government distributed and financed the cleaning materials (such as detergents, floor cloth and stainless cutlery etc) to the schools participating with the Warm Meal project.

Beside the provision of Warm Meal, professionals take care of the whole family of the youngsters who are entitled to their daily warm meals. With an integral approach not only the unemployment of the family member(s) is taken care of, but also the debt repayment, adequate housing, psychological problems, teenager pregnancies.

The main intention of the Warm Meal project is firstly to diminish the poverty line of the family but on the other hand to increase slowly the aspect of self supporting (“zelfredzaamheid” of all family members involved.¹

The amount of children who benefitted from this Warm Meal projekt per year 2008, 2009 and 2010 as shown in table 2 below.

¹ Ms Corinne Mollis, projectleader Warm Meal, Ministry of Social Development Labor and Welfare, 2012 and 2013

Table 2: Warm Meal Project

Neighbourhood/Schools	Amount children who got warm meals
Soto/Barber	141
Jan Doret	90
Sta Maria/Kura Piedra	180
Seru Fortuna/Muizenberg	118
Bonam	60
Sta Rosa	40
Buena Vista	30
Montaña	35
Total	694

Source: Corinne Mollis, projekteleader Warm Meals projekt, Ministry of Social Development Labor and Welfare

B 7 Housing Policy (Fundashon Kas Popular)

In the recent past, the Committee on Social Rights has insistently requested the Government information about whether a housing policy is being developed regarding newly weds (youngsters). The Committee encouraged the Government to give priority to newly wed youngsters in obtaining housing in order to stimulate the right on family ties, a fundamental human right.

Recently however, the Government started a new process of dialogue, with the housing entity, the Fundashon Kas Popular, in order to establish some updated arrangements on the housing policy. The Committee will be duely informed on these future developments.

B 8 Fiscal facilities

In the recent past, the Committee on Social Rights has insistently encouraged the Government to introduce in Curaçao a general system of child benefit. Due to limited financial resources the Government was impeded to introduce a general system of child benefit, however certain groups in the society (for example the civil servants and the government companies) maintained, so far, their secondary labour condition which provide them a monthly child benefit of Nafl 55 (fifty five Antillean guilders) per child. (1 Antillean guilder is 1,78 US dollar)

CONCLUSION

The economic crisis in Curaçao, as stated in paragraph A of this document, resulted unexpectedly in one positive result. The interim cabinet of the Prime Minister Stanley Betrian in 2012 and the government of the current Prime Minister Ivar Asjes recommitted to the national dialogue process directly and indirectly to the social

dialogue and tripartism with the social partners organized within the platform Kolaborativo. This commitment resulted on April 2014 in the ratification of ILO Convention 144 (social dialogue). With the international legal framework put in place all stakeholders, representatives of the social partners, governments and experts united in resolving pressing issues, such as the reduction of the costs to the elder pension and the health care insurance, to the benefit of the community at large.

Within the Ministry of Social Developments Labour and Welfare no stone was left to institute the Bureau Social Mediation in order to halt the increasing subsidized judicial cases, the so called pro deo cases (paragraph B1). In doing so, persons with limited financial resources can freely get advice on labour and family dispute, avoiding thus the costly course to an independent judge.

Because of the limited financial resources and restraint on personnel within the government administration, the Government focused its attention on attacking social problems repressively as laid down in paragraphs B2 (National Committee on Childabuse and Domestic Violence), B3 (Awareness raising campaigns “Ku ki derechi”), B4 (Child telephone), B5 (Project for migrant women and migrant children) and B6 (Warm Meal project). Proper attention is given to safeguard the moral, physical and domestic health of the family in general and children specifically. As stated in paragraph B5 this attention of the government administration is not only directed to the local families but also includes the migrant families within our community.

As for the Housing policy (paragraph B 7) and the Fiscal facilities (paragraph B 8) the Committee will be duely informed of future developments on both terrains.