The International Disability Alliance (IDA) has prepared the following suggestions for the list of issues, based on the National Report to the Human Rights Council for the Universal Periodic Review and on concluding observations of previous treaty bodies (see Annex) in the absence of a State report.

**Belize**


**IDA proposed questions for the List of Issues:**

- What measures are in place to collect data and statistics on persons with disabilities for targeted policymaking? (see Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee, **CRC/C/15/Add.252**, 2005, paras 17, 18, 50 & 51(f) in Annex below)
- What steps are being taken to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRPD?

**Articles 3, 7**

- What steps have been taken to address the heightened risk for girls and women with disabilities of becoming victims of violence, abuse and exploitation in the home, community and in institutions? What measures are being adopted to ensure sanctions for perpetrators, services (including shelters), information and complaints mechanisms for victims are made accessible to persons with disabilities, including training for police and other interlocutors?

**Articles 2, 7, 9, 26**

- What steps are being taken to ensure that all health care and services, provided to persons with disabilities, including all mental health care and services, is based on the free and informed consent of the person concerned, and that involuntary treatment and confinement are not permitted by law in accordance with the CRPD?\(^1\)

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\(^1\) Further, OHCHR Thematic Study on enhancing awareness and understanding of the CRPD, A/HRC/10/48, 26 January 2009, para 49; “Legislation authorizing the institutionalization of persons with disabilities on the grounds of their disability without their free and informed consent must be abolished. This must include the repeal of provisions authorizing institutionalization of persons with disabilities for their care and treatment without their free and informed consent, as well as provisions authorizing the preventive detention of persons with disabilities on
• What steps are being taken to build up community based services and support (including increased social assistance and welfare benefits) to persons with disabilities and to their families?

Articles 16, 19 & 25
• What laws and policies are in place to ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in accordance with Article 12, CRPD?
• What steps are being taken to repeal Articles 58 and 63 of the Constitution and Article 7 of the Electoral Law\(^2\) which exclude people with intellectual or psychosocial disability from voting and standing for election which is in violation of the right to political participation as set out in Article 25, ICCPR and Article 29, CRPD\(^3\)?

What measures are being adopted to ensure the accessibility of polling stations, booths and voting material, including by permitting an individual an assistant of their own choice to help them to vote, without external surveillance? How is information on elections and political campaigns being made accessible in the lead up to elections?

Articles 19 & 27
• What steps are being taken to introduce the recognition of sign language as an official language in accordance with Article 27, ICCPR and Article 21, CRPD? What measures are being adopted to ensure access to information to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others?

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2 Constitution (1981, last amended 2002) Article 58, section (1) states, “No person shall be qualified to be elected as a Member of the House of Representatives who...(c) is a person certified to be insane or otherwise adjudged to be of unsound mind under any law.” Article 63, section (1) states, “No person shall be qualified to be appointed as a Senator who...(d) is a person certified to be insane or otherwise adjudged to be of unsound mind under any law.” Electoral Law Representation of the People Act (1980, last revised 2000) Article 7 states, “A person shall be disqualified to be registered, or being registered, to vote at an election and shall not be registered if such person is...(c) certified to be insane or otherwise adjudged to be of unsound mind or is a patient in any establishment maintained wholly or mainly for reception and treatment of persons suffering from mental illness of mental defectiveness by virtue of or under any law in force in Belize.”

3 This is confirmed in OHCHR thematic study on participation in political and public life by persons with disabilities which explicitly states that there is no reasonable restriction nor exclusion permitted regarding the right to political participation of persons with disabilities, A/HRC/19/36, 21 December 2011.
ANNEX:

Select references to persons with disabilities:

E. Persons with disabilities
94. Consecutive governments have made commitments to integrate persons with disabilities into society and to provide decent support for their treatment. The commitment has also included a pledge to increase public awareness of their rights and needs and to recognize persons with disabilities as equal citizens.
95. The 2000 population census estimates that 6 per cent of the population or 13,774 persons have some form of disability in Belize.
96. In Belize, there is no Act which deals particularly with persons with disabilities. However, the Belize Constitution Act, the Domestic Violence Act, the Families and Children Act and the Education Act address issues relating to persons with disabilities.
97. The Ministry of Education has tasked schools to integrate children with disabilities into regular classrooms wherever possible.
98. The Special Education Unit at the Ministry of Education plays a pivotal role in creating educational opportunities for children with disabilities. Its role is to oversee the integration and education of all children with special educational needs in the country of Belize. The unit works in partnership with school personnel, families, religious, government and non-governmental organizations to develop inclusive school communities which nurture and appreciate diverse learning needs of all students. A curriculum has been developed for teacher training in special education at the University of Belize and workshops are given by the unit when requested by principals, school managers and district officers.
99. The unit collaborates with the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired, to support blind and low vision children in schools country wide. Teachers are advised on strategies that can effectively integrate the visually impaired child in regular classes. School books are converted to large print and Braille by the Belize Council for the Visually Impaired with the assistance of volunteers who scan and edit textbooks.
100. Services for children with disabilities are addressed indirectly in the Maternal and Child Health Program in the Ministry of Health. CARE-Belize, a non-government organisation, provides community based rehabilitation services to children ages birth to 6 years. Special services for children with disabilities are available when visiting specialists hold annual clinics and select candidates for treatment abroad.
101. There are challenges in respect of persons with disabilities since there is no specific legislation governing treatment of them. Very few people with disabilities are employed in the private and public sector. Public buildings are still not designed to make it possible for persons with certain physical disabilities to access them. Public transportation is also not friendly for persons with disabilities.

ANNEX - References to persons with disabilities by other treaty bodies with respect to Belize

Concluding Observations of the CRC Committee, CRC/C/15/Add.252, 2005

The Committee’s previous recommendations
7. The Committee notes with satisfaction that various concerns and recommendations (CRC/C/15/Add.99) made upon the consideration of the State party’s initial report (CRC/C/3/Add.46) have been addressed through legislative measures and policies. However, some of the concerns it had expressed and recommendations it had made regarding, inter alia, the need to bring domestic legislation into full conformity with the principles and provisions of the Convention (paras. 7 and 14), the priority of adequate
IDA proposed questions for the List of Issues on Belize

budgetary allocations to ensure implementation of the economic, social and cultural rights of children (para. 12), the equal access to birth registration (para. 18), the prohibition of corporal punishment (para. 19), the protection against domestic violence, ill-treatment and sexual abuse (para. 22), the equal enjoyment of all human rights by children with disabilities (para. 26), the legal minimum age of criminal responsibility (para. 30) have not been sufficiently addressed.

8. The Committee urges the State party to make every effort to address the recommendations in the concluding observations on the initial report that have not yet been implemented, and to address the list of concerns contained in the present concluding observations on the second periodic report.

Allocation of resources
15. While noting the devastation caused by hurricanes and the budgetary burden of reconstruction, the Committee is concerned that there are no budget allocations for children, that the resources in the national budget are insufficient to meet the needs of all children and that there are regional disparities, particularly between urban and rural areas, with regard to a range of social indicators.

16. In the light of article 4 of the Convention, the Committee urges the State party to allocate considerably more resources to children, in particular to the most vulnerable groups of children, including children with disabilities, children living in extreme poverty, abused and neglected children and children belonging to minorities and indigenous children, such as Maya and Garifuna children. While noting with appreciation the development of an investment project with a component on rights-based budgeting with the involvement of the Minister of Finance, the National Human Development Advisory Committee and the National Committee for Families and Children, the Committee recommends that the State party expedite this process as much as possible and ensure its effective implementation. The Committee also recommends that the State party prioritize budgetary allocations to the implementation of the economic, social and cultural rights of children to the maximum extent of available resources. In order to be able to evaluate the impact of expenditure on children, the Committee recommends that the State party identify the yearly budgetary amount and proportion spent on persons under 18 years of age.

Data collection
17. The Committee takes note of the establishment, in 1996, of the Social Indicators Committee, which supervises the national social sector statistics and monitors the quality of such statistics. However, the Committee regrets the lack of adequate resources allocated to the Social Indicators Committee and the interruptions in its work. The Committee is concerned at the insufficient data in some areas covered by the Convention, including children with disabilities, migrant children, children living in extreme poverty, abused and neglected children, children within the justice system, children belonging to minorities and indigenous children.

18. The Committee reiterates its previous recommendation on the adequate data collection mechanism and recommends that the State party strengthen its system for collecting data and formulating indicators in collaboration with the Monitoring and Evaluation Subcommittee of the National Committee for Families and Children as a basis to assess progress achieved in the realization of children’s rights and to help design policies to implement the Convention. The data should cover all children below the age of 18 years and be disaggregated by sex and by group of children who are in need of special protection. The Committee recommends that the State party allocate adequate human, financial and other resources to the Social Indicators Committee in order to develop indicators to effectively monitor progress achieved in the implementation of the Convention and seek assistance from international agencies and NGOs.

Non-discrimination
25. While appreciating that some measures have been taken to promote the principle of non-discrimination against children, such as the enactment in 1998 of the Families and Children Act, which guarantees that all children are of equal status in the application of the Belizean legislation, the Committee is concerned at the persistent discrimination faced by girls, children with disabilities, migrant children, children living in poverty, children belonging to minorities, indigenous children, children infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS, children living in rural areas, and pregnant students and teenage mothers in schools.

26. In the light of article 2 of the Convention, the Committee recommends that the State party increase its efforts to adopt appropriate legislation, to ensure the implementation of existing laws guaranteeing the principle of non-discrimination, and to adopt a proactive and comprehensive strategy to eliminate discrimination on any grounds and more so against all vulnerable groups of children.

27. The Committee requests that specific information be included in the next periodic report on the measures and programmes relevant to the Convention undertaken by the State party to follow up on the Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the 2001 World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, with due regard to the Committee’s general comment No. 1 on the aims of education (2001).

Children with disabilities

50. The Committee expresses grave concern about the situation of children with disabilities and regrets that de facto discrimination against them still exists. The Committee notes with concern the lack of specific legislation which would ensure full and equal participation in social life, including access to social and health services, education, training, information and communication, rehabilitation, recreation and care, for children with disabilities. The Committee is concerned about the lack of basic services supporting children with disabilities and of adequate financial and human resources partially caused by the closing of the Disability Services Division, resulting in a situation in which the non-governmental organization CARE-Belize can only provide very limited services for children with disabilities. Furthermore, the Committee expresses its concern about the lack of statistical data on children with disabilities.

51. The Committee urges the State party, taking into account the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (General Assembly resolution 48/96 of 20 December 1993, annex) and the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its day of general discussion on “The rights of children with disabilities” (see CRC/C/69, paras. 310-339):

(a) To enact special legislation dealing exclusively with disability issues, including access to social and health services, rehabilitation, support services, physical environment, information and communication, education, recreation and sports, in order to achieve the objectives of full participation and equality for children with disabilities;
(b) To initiate and plan a comprehensive national policy for children with disabilities and to allocate the necessary financial and human resources to implement the plan;
(c) To consider the establishment of a national focal point on disability issues to strengthen coordination between governmental and non-governmental actors;
(d) To integrate education for children with disabilities into national educational planning and curriculum and to include children with disabilities in the mainstream school system to the extent possible, including by providing the necessary financial and human resources for the training of teachers;
(e) To disseminate information concerning the rights and potential of children with disabilities and to raise public awareness of disability;
(f) To collect adequate statistical data on children with disabilities, allowing for disaggregated analysis of the problems facing children with disabilities;
(g) To seek international assistance from, among others, UNICEF and WHO in this respect.