My name is Mohammad Yaaseen Edoo from Mauritius. Since birth I have been suffering from Spina Bifida, a malformation of the vertebral column affecting the spine and the nervous system.

I have never attended primary school in my life. I stayed at home with my mum. During that time I was not able to read and write. Then one day an interest to read crop up my mind. So I watched TV and try to read the programme schedule of MBC after news. From that I decipher the words until I could read and write. Newspapers and dictionary were two materials I never separated myself from. To such an extent that I knew practically all the capitals of the countries in the world by heart. I met a primary school teacher Mr. Rishi Bundoo came at my place to support me with tuition on a voluntary basis once per week during nine month. Then I sat for the end of primary education Certificate of Primary Education (CPE) Examinations which I succeeded with flying colours.

My CPE result in hand I got admission at the Professor Hassan Raffa State Secondary School for my secondary education where I completed my School Certificate and Higher School Certificate with flying colours. During my years spent at college I received tremendous support and help from my teachers, friends and the non-teaching staff. For my movement on my wheelchair the rector Mr. Ramanah made necessary arrangement for the construction of ramps to give access to my different classes. This facility allowed me to get access to my classes. All my classes were carried out in the ground floor while computer practical lessons I did in the Administrative Office. My college time was the best one in my life since it was the first time I found myself in a class with friends and teachers. A truly worthwhile experience especially when you received so much love, care and support from your friends, teachers and everyone. I am very much thankful and grateful to all my friends and teachers of Professor Hassan Raffa SSS for everything they have done for me. After my H.S.C I was rewarded a Special Award for being a special student of my college and who never repeated any class.

Then to pursue my tertiary education I enrolled for a BSc in Web and Multimedia at the Université des Mascareignes which I completed with flying colours and I had my graduation.

Just like college, in university also I received so much love, care, support and help from my friends, lecturers, non-teaching staff and everyone at Université des Mascareignes. It was a great experience and the second educational institution I had known in my life. Here also all my classes were carried out on the ground floor.

Beside my academic achievements I am also a Disability Activist working for equal rights of persons with disabilities in Mauritius. Thus I am engaged in several committee and national and international organisations for persons with disabilities. Nationally I am a Board Member of the National Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and the Leader member of Young Voices Mauritius by the Leonard Cheshire Disability. With Young Voices I have participated in May and October 2013 in Regional and Global Meeting in Zambia and Kenya respectively. I was also invited to a Special Reception in May 2014 hosted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at St. James’ Palace in London. I am also a member of the Global Partnership on children with disabilities (GPcwd) and in June 2014 I participated in the 7th Session on the Conference of States Parties at UN and side events at UNICEF organized by GPcwd where I learnt a lot of effective techniques and tools to carry out my work in Mauritius.

Last year I won the Queen’s Young Leaders Award whereby I received my award from Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace and back in Mauritius I won the Junior Chamber International (JCI) Mauritius The Outstanding Young Person (TOYP) 2015. This year I received the distinction of Associate Fellow granted to me by the Royal Commonwealth Society. These recognitions I have obtained because of all the work I do in Mauritius to promote equal rights of persons with disabilities in Mauritius.

In Mauritius I do a lot of awareness campaign for equal rights of persons with disabilities on the press and also directly to the government through the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institutions and also writing article to the press. Several time I have discussed on the importance of Inclusive Education, Accessibility and Employment for persons with disabilities as these are the major issues we have to tackle. Education is not fully inclusive since the hearing impaired and the visually blind cannot attend mainstream school because of lack of training programme for teachers to learn sign language and Braille for communication. Accessibility is not yet a reality as our pavements are not accessible thus low floor buses cannot be introduced. While government force the private sector to recruit persons with disabilities and if they do not abide by this they have to pay fines but the government itself is not employing persons with disabilities and the law do not mention about government. I am working on these major issues to make sure our equal rights are respected as stipulated in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Mauritius has signed and ratified.

**My engagement:**

If I am not mistaken in a previous mail for engagement I said about social media.

**My opinion on Vision and Mission and TOR:**

I find them okay except I want to know what this mean: “Engagement of young people as caretakers of parents with disabilities”?

I agree with the Secretariat Office to be at the UNICEF Office. Even though the Secretariat will be from 5 Founder Members still we need to have someone from UNICEF to represent us.