

The South African Law Commission has been developing a comprehensive new law about children accused of crimes. The new system emphasises individual assessment of each child and tries to find alternative ways to deal with children; keeping them within their families and communities and protecting them from the damaging effects of courts and prison as far as is possible.

Contact details

The UNDP Child Justice Project
Directorate: Children and Youth Affairs
Department of Justice
Private Bag X81
Pretoria 0001

Room 11.11, Merino Building, Corner of Pretorius and Bosman Streets, Pretoria

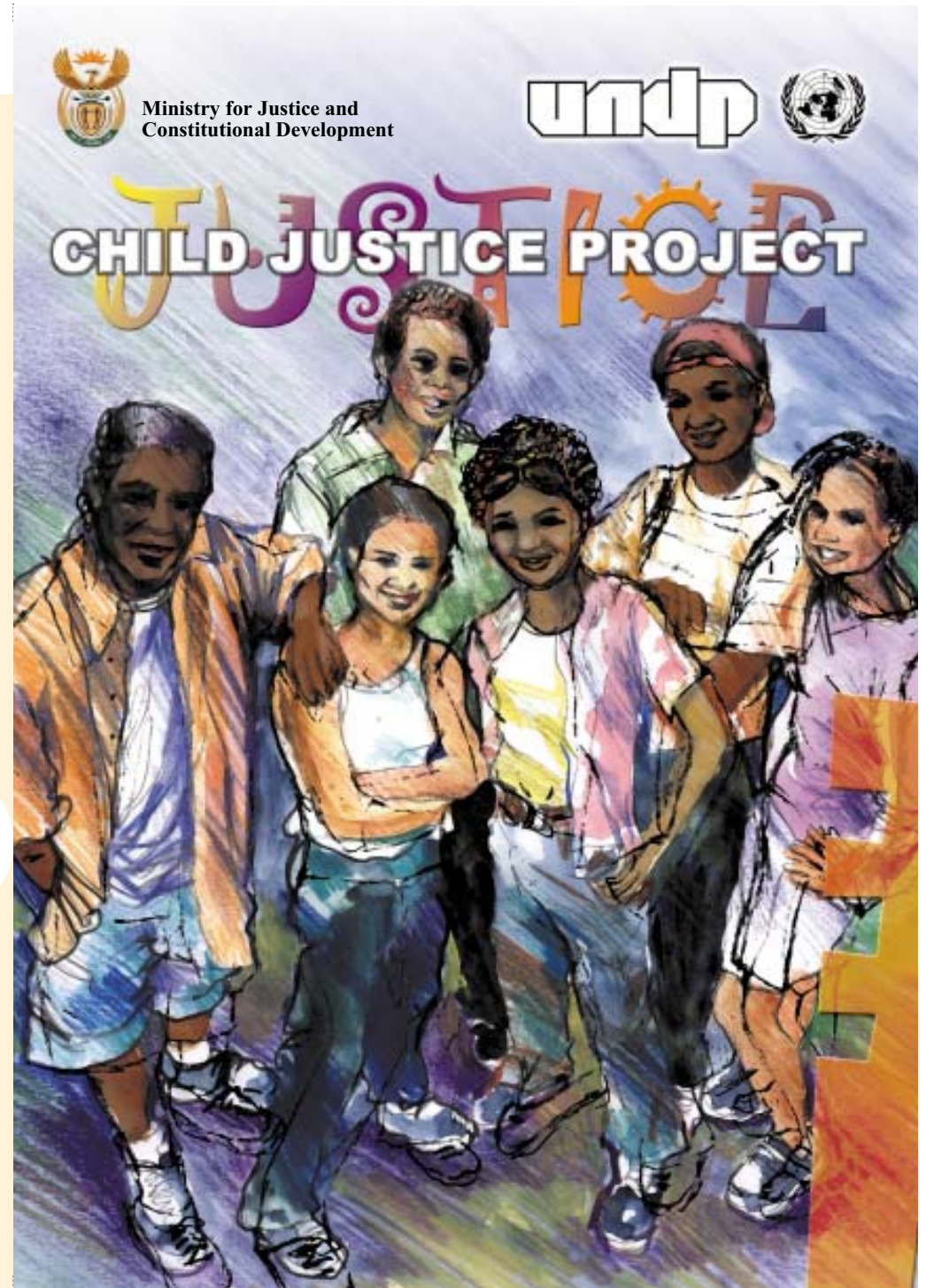
National Project Co-ordinator: Ann Skelton
Assistant Project Co-ordinator: Buyi Mbambo
Administrative Assistant: Tina Tshuma

Telephone: 012 315 1809
Fax: 012 315 1808
E-mail: askelton@worldonline.co.za

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Private Bag X81
Pretoria
0001

 SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION



The United Nations Development Programme and the Ministry for Justice and Constitutional Development have entered into an agreement for UN technical assistance in the field of Child Justice, giving rise to the UNDP Child Justice Project.

Located in the Department of Justice, as part of the Directorate on Children and Youth Affairs, the main objective of the project is to assist government in the implementation of a new law dealing with children accused of crimes, which is to be put into operation in the near future.

The project will assist with the development of the new system for dealing with children accused of crimes in a number of ways;

1. Enhancing the capacity and use of programmes for diversion and appropriate sentencing of children

The project will work with the relevant departments, NGOs and CBOs to make sure that there are adequate and effective programmes to which children can be sent instead of going to trial or as a sentence following the conclusion of their trials.

2. Finding ways to protect children in detention

The project will work with all government departments and NGOs working with children deprived of their liberty to seek alternatives to detention and to set minimum standards on the treatment of children during detention.

3. Supporting the implementation of the new law

The project will provide information to all government and non-government role players about the new law, assist with the drafting of regulations, and assist with planning for its implementation by providing cost estimates and other information regarding the resources needed to underpin the new system.

4. Raising awareness and training of personnel

The project aims to raise awareness amongst the general public about children accused of crimes and new ways of dealing with them. Children themselves will be targeted through this awareness campaign. The project will also assist government departments in developing curricula and training materials about the new system for personnel working within the child justice system.

5. Helping to establish a monitoring process

The proposed new law requires that there should be a monitoring procedure in place to protect children and to help maintain an efficient and effective system of justice for children accused of crimes. The project will assist with the setting up of inter-sectoral committees in the provinces and the development of a monitoring procedure at a national level.