



REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

NATIONAL REPORT

**PREPARATION FOR THE 3rd INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES
TO BE HELD IN APIA SAMOA, 2014**

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Executive Summary

The Seychelles has once more denoted strong political commitment to sustainable development through the cabinet endorsement of its Sustainable Development Strategy 2011-2020. The SSDS 2020 revises and builds upon a successive generation of highly successful Environment Management Plans of Seychelles (EMPS). The SSDS 2020 includes a greater input of other sectors and further alignment of the strategy with international conventions. It also provides stronger institutional framework with firmer mechanism for monitoring and evaluation.

Progress, constrains and gaps in BPOA/MSI implementation

Generally, the Seychelles continues to attain a high level of implementation of the BPOA and MSI despite serious economic difficulties in the intervening years. Progress has been made across all thematic and notable high implementations were in areas with good access to funding or technical expertise. Progress in other sectors e.g. freshwater, was hampered by limited investments and exogenous factors such as climate change.

Emerging Challenges & Opportunities

The plight of Seychelles against international piracy has been fully acknowledged by the international community and with a concerted global effort, there has not been a successful pirate attack in 13 months. This is a tremendous success for the country and its partners, however advances are reversible especially in the lack of regional capacity to fully securitise the Western Indian Ocean region. The political instability in Madagascar is an emerging threat to the **peace and security** of the region. In the absence of intervention, it is likely that further instability will bring adverse impacts to the region. National peace and security is increasingly being compromised with a higher by year cases of **crimes** including theft, burglary and robberies. This seems to be following an increased rate of illicit drugs, which is affecting the country. A stern response has been effected by the Government through revision of legislation and more effective legal and enforcement process. Consequently the country has one of the highest prison populations per capita in the world, which includes foreign detainees. Crime is an issue seriously affecting other SIDS in particular in the Caribbean and steps must be taken in Seychelles to prevent emergence of similar effects. It was announced recently that there has been a 15% decline in crimes, which hopefully can be maintained.

Financing for development continues to be the major hurdle for sustainable development for Small Island Developing States like Seychelles. Lack of financing hinders the full implementation of multilateral strategies and action plans. The Seychelles has suffered erosion of its trade preferences and greatly reduced official development assistance. **Access to development funding** is key to further pragmatic actions in sustainable development. Innovative approach is required and a special category for SIDS financing needs to be fully acknowledged by the international community. Capacity to fully adapt to **climate change** is required and assessment of mitigation potential of its **blue carbon**. Seychelles and other SIDS need to valorise their oceans and coasts and maximise the benefit arising from their **blue economy**. Comprehensive benthic and mineral exploratory studies are required of Seychelles EEZ. The under exploited resources in the ocean may be the greatest source of income for SIDS like Seychelles.

The country cognizant of its vulnerability in the **energy** sector through over dependence on fossil fuel has recently installed wind turbines and revised its energy legislation to stimulate the use of renewable energy. The cost of renewable energy however remains a challenge for Seychelles to fully exploit solar and wave energy. Technology transfer is required in this sector as well as human capacity. Similar actions are required in the agricultural sector in order to increase national food production and ensure **food security**.

The emergence of H7N9 virus and the threat of global pandemic is a serious concern to the Seychelles. SIDS in general are ill equipped to diagnose, contain and treat highly infectious diseases. It is important therefore that Seychelles continues to strengthen its resilience to **global pandemics** and work with international organisations such as WHO to further the responsive capacity. Seychelles and other SIDS must continue to affirm the need for technologically advanced countries to further work in vaccine development and treatment against emerging diseases such as avian flu and against tropical diseases in particular, malaria and ebola amongst others.

Amongst the critical success factors for Seychelles are the development and retention of a trained and competent workforce within and outside of Government. With the smallest population in Africa, and one of the smallest in the world, it is difficult to build and retain sufficient capacity to implement effective programmes. Reliance on external consultants and foreign labour in general are not sustainable. Programmes need to align actions that use local expertise where it exists eliminating economic barriers between national and foreign workforce. The strengthening of national **human capacity** ranks as one of the pivotal aspect of sustainable development. The issue of human capacity must be addressed through a systemic analysis of enablers, which serve to retain professionals and tradesmen, and these include **planned urbanisation**, availability of goods and services, leisure and recreational facilities amongst others.

Post 2015 UN Development Agenda

In general there is little awareness and participation in defining the post 2015 UN development agenda in Seychelles. Seychelles was integrated into the Africa process through the African Union and outcomes of that process generally harmonises with the priorities of the country. Stakeholder feels that more consultation in defining the post 2015 UNDA is required and the resources in terms of time and finance allocated to this process has not been sufficient. Nonetheless, there is consensus that SIDS require further consideration within the post 2015 framework and specifically related to access to the blue economy and financing for development.

ACRONYMS

AIMS	Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AU	African Union
BPOA	Barbados Programme of Action
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
COP	Conference of Parties
EEZ	Economic Exclusive Zone
EMPS	Environment Management Plan of Seychelles
ESA-IO	Eastern and southern Africa-Indian Ocean countries
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GLISPA	Global Island Partnership
GEF	Global Environment Fund
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICRI	International Coral Reef Initiative
IMF	International monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organisation
IUCN	International Union of Conservation
MSI	Mauritius Strategy
M&E	Monitoring & Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEA	Multilateral Environment Agreements
MTNDS	Medium Term National Development Strategy
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa Development
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
RAPPICC	Anti Piracy Prosecutions Intelligence Coordination Centre
SADC	South African Development Community
SD	Sustainable Development
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SSDS	Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy
UCSIS	University Consortium of Small Island states
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea
UNDA	United Nations Development Agenda
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNDESA	United Nations Division for Environment Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment & Development
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs & Crimes
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
WHO	World Health Organisation
WIOCC	Western Indian Ocean Coastal Challenge

1. Introduction

1.1 Country background

The Seychelles is an archipelagic democratic Republic consisting of 125 islands located in the Western Indian Ocean 55.6 degrees east of Greenwich meridian and 5 degrees south of the equator. The total land area is 451km² and the EEZ comprises of 1.3 million KM² of ocean. 90% of the population lives on the mainland of Mahe, which consists of a number of reclaimed artificial islands along its eastern coast. The new islands are assisting to meet further development needs of the country and currently used for human settlements, higher end tourism accommodations and renewable energy hosting seven wind turbines. Previous reclamations have been used to extend the width of the coast of Mahe allowing for a host of economic activity such as port infrastructure and industrial zones.

The population is 87,400¹ being the smallest in Africa and twelve² smallest in the world. The population is tri plural in creole (native), English and French and is composed of a racial mix of Europeans, Asians and Africans. The islands were previously uninhabited and the human population is due to migration from other countries. The populace elects a president who is head of state and Government for a period of 5 years and is constitutionally restricted to three terms in office. The Seychelles parliament comprises of 34 members of which 25 are elected by popular vote with nine seats appointed proportionally on votes received by each party. The other component of Government namely the judiciary functions separately to the executive and legislature. The Seychelles is ranked 4th on the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance³ out of 52 African countries (2012) and 46th world wide for human development with HDI rating of 0.806⁴ (2013), being the highest in Africa.

1.2 Socioeconomic context

The country is currently under an extended IMF programme since 2008 to restructure its economy after decades of economic stagnation and high debt servicing. High debt has accrued due to capital-intensive infrastructures such as land reclamation, roads, schools, hospitals, district clinics, water and sanitation amongst others. At the end of 2012, economic growth was 2.9% GDP and inflation at 8.9%. The country still has a sizeable current account deficit at 22% of GDP and relied on FDI and external borrowing to meet the budgetary shortfall. Debt in December 2012 was 77% GDP representing a 10% reduction over same period in 2011⁵. The country has recently committed to reducing debt to 50% of GDP by 2018 having successfully negotiated two important debt-restructuring agreements in 2012. Funding for social programme and infrastructure is being contemplated through development grants as far as possible with a 2013 debt forecast at 74% of GDP⁶. Economic growth forecast for 2013 is 3% with concurrent reduction in inflation now standing at around 5%.

¹ Seychelles in figures 2012; <http://www.nsb.gov.sc/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/Seychelles-In-Figures-2012-Edition.pdf> Accessed 21.05.13

² <http://www.worldatlas.com/aatlas/populations/ctypopls.htm#UaiDZFHd6JU> Accessed 30.05.13

³ <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org/downloads/2012-IIAG-summary-report.pdf>; Accessed 29.05.13

⁴ http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/HDR2013_EN_Summary.pdf; Accessed 29.05.13

⁵ <http://www.cbs.sc/Downloads/publications/Annual%20Report%202012.pdf>; Accessed 29.05.13

⁶ <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2013/cr1324.pdf>; Accessed 29.05.13

Recent measures has been introduction of a new taxation regime with mandatory VAT registration at SCR 5 million turnover which the aim of going to SCR 3 million in 2014 and SCR 2 million turnover in 2015. A new Corporate Social Responsibility tax of 0.5% on turnover with sales above SCR 1 million has been introduced and a 0.5% tourism marketing tax on tourism establishments and other sectors benefiting from tourism e.g. banks and insurance. The Seychelles Customs has upgraded to the ASYCUDA world web based programme, which is expected to facilitate trade operations and improve quality and accuracy of trade statistics.

The tourism industry representing 68% GDP for the country continued to perform well with tourism arrivals achieving record number in 2012 (208,034) representing growth of 7% over 2011 and 31% increase over the last four years⁷. Europe is the principal market representing 69% of arrivals however there has been a significant (53%) increase in the Asian market, which now accounts for 12% of total arrivals. This is attributed to increased marketing and air coverage by international airlines over the last few years. The profitability of air transportation is vulnerable to fuel costs and financial difficulties of the national airline (Air Seychelles) urged a strategic partnership with gulf based Etihad Airways through a 40% equity sale in 2012. The loss of direct flights to Europe is seen as a drawback although the upside is increased international coverage, marketing and resilience of the national airline. In 2013, new destination was added (Hong Kong) and partnerships are underway to tap into the South American continent amongst others.

The fisheries sector currently accounts for 0.9% GDP and has shown 13% decline mostly in the artisanal and semi artisanal sub sector. There was no growth in agriculture sector remaining unchanged at 1.3% GDP.

In terms of social services, the Government continues to pursue its social inclusive policy. The Seychelles provides free medicare at primary and secondary level. Through a comprehensive health care programme, all Seychellois children are immunised at birth eliminating previously life strengthening or debilitating diseases such as polio. There exist a number of private clinics complementing the work of free Government clinics some offering specialist treatments. Average life expectancy is 72.6 with females outliving males by at least 10 years. Education at primary and secondary level is free and a limited number of scholarships are available for tertiary education. Over 95% of children finish primary schooling⁸ and literacy rate are 94%⁹, which is declining somewhat over previous years. There exists post secondary institutions and students are able to pursue education at Advanced level and eventually at overseas universities through Government scholarship. Since 2010 Seychelles opened its very own University (University of Seychelles) and now offers courses at degree level.

Housing poses a particular challenge in Seychelles in view of land shortages, difficulty and cost of house ownership. Presently 70% of existing households are owner occupied and 11% are rented from Government¹⁰. Nonetheless the demand for housing is significant as a greater part of the population rely on Government to build and rent houses in housing estates, the most prolific being on reclaimed Perseverance Island. Government is committed to building more houses to meet the increasing demand and vowed to build 5000 houses for the period 2006-2011. The fact that around 50% houses were built reflects

⁷ <http://www.cbs.sc/Downloads/publications/Annual%20Report%202012.pdf>; Accessed 28.05.13

⁸ http://www.nsb.gov.sc/files/Reports/MDG%20Report%202010_Seychelles.pdf; Accessed 28.05.13

⁹ Seychelles in Figures 2012 National Statistics Bureau

¹⁰ Population and housing census 2010

the ever-increasing challenge for housing¹¹. There is a need to revisit this issue in a more integrated manner (see chapter 5.16).

With respect to ICT, the country is covered throughout with telephone landlines and although only 48.7% households are connected; 90% of households uses mobile telephone through 3G networks serviced by two main telecom providers. Population and housing census 2010 revealed that 94.6% of all households have access to television, 37.8% of Seychellois owned a computer amongst these 18.2% of households access Internet on PC while 13.6% from smart phones. Since 2012, Seychelles is connected to the global optical telecommunications network through undersea fibre optic cable and now enjoys fast telecommunications including Internet. Disruptions to the service notably in 2013 highlighted the need to maintain backup installations, the need for local operators to diversify the services with international providers and the need for alternative alternate fibre optic cable link. The unexpected decrease in high speed connectivity and high cost of Internet due to consumptive charging is now an issue that needs to be addressed if Seychelles is to maximise fully the benefit of undersea cable and meet 2015 targets set by the Broadband Commission for Digital Development.

The utility sector (electricity, water and sewerage and gas), is an area where investment is lacking and are currently subsidised to residential customers. There is cognizance on the need to achieve cost recovery in these sectors and increase tariffs in the near future¹².

The Seychelles like all other countries have a vulnerable segment of the population which are low earners and are assisted by the state. A social welfare agency exists to assist this group in particular those worse affected by economic policies.

1.3 Sustainable development in Seychelles

The principal sustainable development mechanism in Seychelles is the Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy 2011-2020 (SSDS 2011-2020). The SSDS 2020 replaces the Environment Management Plan of Seychelles (EMPS 2000-2010) and revises significantly the means to sustainability. It remains a multi thematic programme that define the policy and strategy within 13 thematics namely 1) Social and human development, 2) Land use, coastal zone and Urbanisation 3) Biodiversity and Forestry, 4) Agriculture and Food Security, 5) Fisheries and Marine Resources, 6) Water Sanitation and Waste Management, 7) Tourism and Aesthetics, 8) Economics of Sustainability, 9) Sustainable Consumption and Production, 10) Energy and Transport, 11) Climate Change, 12) Education for Sustainability and 13) Policy, Institutional and Regulatory.

The SSDS was developed after an extensive review of the EMPS 2000-2010 the result of which revealed that 85% of the programmes were implemented despite adverse economic

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