

REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES



STATEMENT

BY

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PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

It is 20 years since the major conferences of Cairo, Copenhagen and Beijing, yet our world is still rife with inequalities and where inequality persists there can be no sustainable development.

Ultimately the aim of all development efforts is to bring about sustainable improvements in human wellbeing. This calls for a substantial transformation in approaches to development, one which blends social progress, sustainable environmental management, inclusive and equitable growth ensuring that gender is mainstreamed, which, in our country, has received renewed vigour with the introduction of our 'social renaissance initiative' since 2012.

It is also the pillars on which the ICPD stands and to which Seychelles is committed.

Seychelles is categorised as having a very high level of human development, ranking 46 in the 2013 Human Development Report with a Human Development Index of 0.806, enjoying a decent standard of living and is considered as a high middle income country.

We have achieved almost all the MDGs, especially those relating to education, health and social development. Access to ten years of education, provided free at the point of use is at 96%; free basic health care (including universal coverage for essential medicines and anti-retroviral therapy) is available to all. There is almost universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation and good housing provision. The country also has a high literacy rate (97%), significantly low infant mortality and high life expectancy at birth (72 years). Severe income poverty is no longer significant.

Despite our big achievements for our small size, we suffer from many of the same challenges as other countries. Our history of putting people at the centre of development and our heavy and sustained investment in the social sector has left us one of the most highly indebted countries in the world.

A number of challenges remain, particularly linked to the country's status as a small developing island state. The small size of the country and its population, the environmental fragility characteristic of small islands, Seychelles geographical isolation, and its comparative economic vulnerability combined.

Other ongoing challenges remain the need for improved data gathering and dissemination, the capacity to undertake sustained monitoring over time, the country's limited pool of qualified and experienced professionals coupled with a small labour force, reduction in external development assistance, and the importance of addressing human development in terms of sustainable development.

Not forgetting the trials that social ills brings, including that most pervasive form of human rights abuse, GBV which is manifested in increased domestic violence, which impacts on all families as women are disproportionately the victims.

Whilst we take encouragement from our achievements, we are however cautious and mindful of the challenges that lie ahead

YOUTH

Much investment is undertaken to build the capacities of our youth, to equip them with life skills to cope with the realities of life.

Furthermore, following participation in the global conference on early childhood in 2010, the Vice President of our republic has worked tremendously hard to ensure the integration of ECCE into our national agenda. To the extent that we now have an Institute for Early Childhood Care and Education (IECD) which oversees the overall developmental framework for the 0 to 7 years old.

HEALTH

Our Constitution provides for free health care at the point of use. Citizens and all residents in Seychelles enjoy universal access to quality health services including sexual and reproductive health services.

Youth Health services are provided, at district and central levels. Only last week all Primary 9 student girls (i.e. last year of primary schooling) who have not yet started to engage in sexual activity have been given the HPV vaccination for the first time, in our effort to sustain our promotion of a healthier society, but although we educate, we sensitise our youth from an early age, yet teenage pregnancy still remains an issue of concern as it is still too high.

HIV/AIDS and NCDs continue to be the main areas of preoccupation especially the onrise of co-infection of HIV and Hepatitis C which are predominantly concentrated amongst two specific target groups: Intravenous Drug Users and MSMs, but we are striving to reach the 3 zeros.

Chair,

Our Constitution guarantees protection of each individual and promotes support for all persons to reach their full potential and participate fully as independent beings and work at ensuring the necessary support structures.

➤ **OLDER PERSONS**

All those over 63 receive a government pension and are in receipt of free bus passes. Government also provides homes for the elderly in some districts which cater for the active and independent.

➤ **PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Seychelles has signed all 9 core human rights convention and are currently in the process of defining our national action plan to operationalise the Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities.

➤ MIGRANTS

Migrants are generally afforded the same status as all residents in the country but the issue of human trafficking is bringing with it new challenges that we must identify and if necessary, deal with ...

INTRODUCING SDGS

The outcomes of the Rio+20 meeting in June 2012 agreed that the proposed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) be universal, in terms of presenting a prioritised set of common aspirations for all countries and this acknowledges the Seychelles interdependent approach of the economic, social and environment - as the crux to achieving sustainable development.

The specificities of SIDS are clearly acknowledged in its resolution 'The Future We Want'; it reaffirms the commitments made in the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy. Seychelles emphasizes the need to give due prominence to the special conditions of SIDS and recognizes the importance of strong and consolidated action for the achievement of the goals.

CONCLUSION

The Secretary General is conscious of the fact that SIDS are a priority area of concern which has been affirmed through the adoption of this year's global theme. We have used this theme as the backdrop for our own national theme "*International Year of Small Island Developing States: Seychelles – A Determined Island Nation*".

Seychelles may be one of the smallest nations on earth, with a resident population of just approximately 90,000 AND

As a determined island developing state, we have a long-term vision for our population. We are looking beyond the Post 2015 agenda to ensure the sustainability of development. We feel there is a need to have a convergence with the Sustainable Development Goals process and have thus proposed our own goals that are reflective of our concerns.

In addition to peace, justice and security other drivers and enablers of development, Seychelles support the promotion of good governance for sustainable development gains, the participation of citizens through civil society organisations as a means of demanding the accountability of governments to SDG commitments, evidence-based and coherent policies for sustainable development and harnessing the cultural knowledge-base of communities to inform decision making.

We also stand committed to the inclusion of the 'green economy' and the 'blue economy' as tools by which states may implement a more sustainable approach to development. Tides, waves, currents, and offshore wind are the new energy sources which contribute greatly to the climate change agenda and it is precisely for this reason why Seychelles is calling for world recognition of the "blue economy," precisely due to the fact that our seas and oceans contribute to the sustenance of our very existence.