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Strategy 2017: Creating our nation's wealth together

Our nation has come a long way in a short time thanks to our commitment to placing people at the centre of development. This has given us the right platform for our future socio-economic development.

We have also achieved a lot in the last two years in terms of re-dynamising our economy.

In many ways, we are witnessing a great transformation in our economy - a transformation which reconciles our increasing growth over the last two years with our commitment to equality and social justice.

All transformations of this scale and of this nature require a dynamic strategy to guide us and provide direction.

Seychelles' strategy for 2017 provides a template for sustained growth through a strategic positioning of Government as facilitator. Wealth creation which will benefit the whole population is at the heart of this approach. Full Government support is available where necessary, with the emphasis remaining on the empowerment of economic actors in the productive sectors of our economy.

Tourism and fisheries will continue to be the main drivers of growth and creators of wealth. Through strategic re-investment, the expansion of revenue in these two sectors will also enable the generation of growth throughout the economy and allow new entrepreneurial initiatives to emerge in previously untapped areas.

The policies developed here also take into account the shifting nature of global economic patterns and endeavour to further establish competitive niches for Seychelles.

To do this, we will require increased flexibility within the Seychellois workforce and our Human Resource

Development initiatives will reflect this. We need an adaptive and results orientated workforce, fully prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

Debates and discussions are vital to the development of dynamic economic policies. This is a document based on a policy of inclusion - representative of a drive to meet the needs of all Seychellois by working 'together, for the love of Seychelles'.

While this strategic plan is a government led document, it has been compiled to address the needs of all sectors; government, private business and civil society. Such a broad based, socially inclusive approach will be of vital importance throughout the implementation of the strategy, to ensure that the development gains are enjoyed by each and every Seychellois.

We look forward to the work and discussions ahead to fully unlock our nation's potential in this new era. Through our hard work together, and with the right tools, we can soar to great heights...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michel', with a stylized flourish underneath.

James A. Michel

President of the Republic of Seychelles



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Governmental Policy Prescriptions for the doubling of Seychelles' GDP by the year 2017: Strategic shift from implementer to facilitator

Mission Statement:

To double the GDP of Seychelles by 2017 through focused fisheries and tourism expansion programmes, the development of the financial services industry and the resultant growth of other economic sectors.

This growth will be achieved while generating the maximum level of local participation, enhancing Seychelles' human resource capacity, securing the highest environmental standards, creating efficient and transparent governance and fostering strategic national and international partnerships.

The Government of Seychelles is committed to doubling the country's gross domestic product (GDP) by the year 2017. At present the population of the Indian Ocean archipelago enjoys a per capita GDP of US\$ 8,722. It is the intention of the Government of Seychelles to double this over the coming ten years in order to maintain and improve the standard of living.

In order to achieve this, it is the Government's policy to create economic conditions conducive to increased wealth generation by private businesses and individuals. The Government proposes to accomplish this by curtailing its role as an economic actor and to focus instead on operating as an economic facilitator, allowing Seychellois and

international business to benefit from an increasingly business-friendly economic environment, streamlined regulatory structure and capable human resource base.

In recognition of Seychelles' comparative economic advantage in the sectors of tourism and industrial fisheries, Government policy will continue to focus on these two economic activities which have, since the 1970's, provided the bulk of the country's foreign currency inflows.

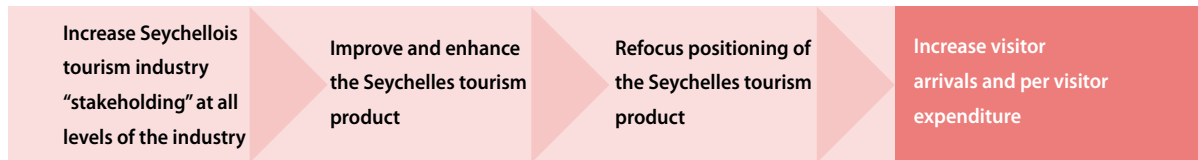
Complementarily, Seychelles' emerging financial services sector will be developed, both as a support to the fisheries and tourism industries and as a powerful additional economic motor.

National support for the nation's industry

■ *Strategic Overview:*

The tourism strategy of the Government of Seychelles is to attain self-sustaining economic growth by securing targeted increases in the number of tourist visits to the country and the amount spent by each tourist.

This will be achieved by improving the overall quality of the Seychelles tourism product and refining the positioning of the destination on the international tourist market. In order to achieve these advances the degree of direct and indirect local participation in all elements of the sector will be increased.



■ *Situation Analysis:*

Since the opening of Seychelles International Airport in the early 1970's, tourism has played a crucial role in the country's economy.

By 2005, the sector accounted for over 50% of Seychelles foreign exchange earnings and 20% of gross domestic product (GDP).

The sector directly supports around 7,260 jobs and the combination of direct and indirect tourism-generated employment is estimated to account for in excess of 40% of the total national workforce.

In recent years, the number of tourist visits to Seychelles has been showing positive signs of sustained growth. In 2005, a total of 128,654 tourists visited the country, a figure which topped 140,627 in 2006.

The growth in tourist numbers has also been accompanied by an increase in tourist spending, in large part thanks to increases in bed availability in the four and five star sectors. Tourist spending increased by an average of 6% per annum, from 2001 to 2005.

By 2005, the average tourist visit to Seychelles was 10 nights with an average daily spending of SR 841, with the hotel industry achieving an average bed occupancy rate of 46%.

However, the national benefit accruing from the recent expansion in the tourism sector has been limited by the fact that the new generation of hotels are early in their economic lifecycle and predominantly foreign-owned, especially in the highest standard categories. This attests to the high level of external leakages currently prevailing in the industry.

Due to the human resource limitations inherent in a small island state and the prevalence of long-held anti-service industry views amongst much of the population, Seychelles' tourist industry has also been forced to rely to a large extent on expatriate labour, further exacerbating foreign exchange leakages from the sector.

In addition, low – albeit improving – profitability in the industry has resulted in the situation where Seychellois employees in the sector earn approximately 10% less than the national average wage, further diminishing its appeal as a source of employment.

Traditionally and currently, tourists visiting Seychelles predominantly come from Europe, leaving the country vulnerable to economic fluctuations in this part of the world. In 2006, 81% of tourists came from Europe, with South Africa currently the only other supplier country of note.

■ ***Focused strategic objectives:***

1. Increase Seychellois “stakeholding” at all levels of the tourism industry

The participation of Seychelles’ workforce and private sector will be encouraged at all levels of the tourism sector.

Existing tourism investment legislation will be rationalised in order to provide a level playing field to all investors, local and international. Seychellois ownership and managerial responsibility will be guaranteed through training programmes and consultative mechanisms aimed at achieving a target quota of Seychellois management representation in the industry.

The Seychellois tourism workforce will be dynamic, enthusiastic and committed to the success of the industry.

This will be achieved by restructuring the existing hotel school as a centre of tourism excellence. The latter will be dedicated to meeting the needs and skills requirements of the industry. It will also provide opportunity for further development of the Seychellois labour force. Private sector input into the curriculum, staffing and student body of the centre will be utilised to ensure it conforms to the highest international standards.

Increased Seychellois holding of equity in the tourism industry, the growth of a Seychellois managerial class and the world-class standards fostered by the centre of excellence will result in improvements in the perception of a career in the tourism industry. This will create a self-reinforcing, ever improving tourism product, capable

of attracting the best employees, operating at the highest level and providing the maximum possible income generation for the individual employees, management, owners and the country.

Although the projected expansion of the tourism industry will continue to rely on expatriate labour, increased skills availability in the local pool of tourism workers will minimise dependence upon expatriate labour, which, combined with increased Seychellois tourism equity holdings, will significantly enhance foreign currency retention in the economy.

2. Improve the Seychelles tourism product

Increased Seychellois involvement, commitment and shareholding in the tourism industry will guarantee the support necessary for the improvement of the entire Seychelles tourism product.

Improvements in the industry will be based around diversification, destinations and distinction.

The range of holiday activities in Seychelles beyond the traditional sun, sea and sand, will be expanded and publicised. Sectors to be exploited include environmental, historical, cultural and culinary holidays.

Synergistically, the number of Seychelles' 115 islands open to tourists, for either overnight stays or day trips, will be extended and the necessary infrastructure for the support of unique holiday experiences on each provided.

The range of holiday experiences and islands available to visitors will be combined to distinguish Seychelles from competitor destinations. Where other countries compete to offer cut-price beach vacations, the Seychelles tourism industry will be dedicated to offering distinctive branded products, each offering a unique value for money experience.

The role of Government throughout this process will be to ensure the supply of infrastructure and support in situations where this cannot be provided by the private sector, provide fast, efficient and transparent decision-making and ensure that the highest standards of environmental protection are adhered to.

3. Refocus position of Seychelles tourism product

Offering an unsurpassable tourism product and supported by an enthusiastic and committed workforce, the Seychelles tourism sector will be capable of attracting tourists from beyond traditionally targeted market sectors.

The upper end of the tourist market, capable of generating the highest per person yield, will be the principal target of tourist sector expansion, with the goal of achieving 60% of Seychelles tourist bed availability in the four-star and upwards categories.

Seychelles tourism marketing will be broadened beyond the traditional western European demographic. The destination will be promoted amongst tourists in Eastern Europe, China, India and the Arab countries and support infrastructure bolstered to accommodate the needs of visitors from previously under-exploited markets.

The expansion of Seychelles' tourist supplier countries will require substantial improvements to the current level of air access, with a similar expansion of focus beyond Western Europe, to include countries capable of supplying the discerning, high-spending tourists Seychelles needs and is capable of attracting.

Additionally, port and associated infrastructures will be improved to encourage increased cruise ship visits and inter-island facilities upgraded.

Strengthening the role of the private sector

■ *Strategic Overview:*

The fisheries strategy of the Government of Seychelles is to increase the yield, value of the yield and the financial benefit of fisheries to Seychelles by maximising domestic processing, promoting export and increasing Seychellois stakeholding in the industry. The ultimate objective is to turn Seychelles from a mainly fisheries transshipment hub to the primary seafood processing centre of the Indian Ocean.

To achieve this, the Government will facilitate increased local and international participation and investment in the sector and enact measures to enhance its competitiveness.

■ *Situation Analysis:*

The crucial role of the fisheries sector in the economy of Seychelles – both as a source of foreign currency and for domestic employment provision – is clearly demonstrated by economic figures generated by the sector in recent years.

In 2005, US \$200 million (gross) – equivalent to 30% of Seychelles' GDP – was generated by the fisheries sector.

The sector dominated Seychelles' visible exports, accounting for 97% or US \$253 million. As a result, the sector has ensured crucial regular port visits by cargo ships and the resultant necessary infrastructural developments have allowed Port Victoria to emerge as an important regional shipping hub, most notably in the field of tuna transshipment and petroleum re-exports.

The fisheries sector employed 17% of the 2005 workforce, some 4,600 Seychellois directly employed and a further 1,000 finding employment on an ancillary basis. As a result, in excess of 2,200 families were supported by employment in the fisheries sector.

Dominant in the sector, in terms of employment, revenue generation and volume of fish caught and processed, is the industrial fisheries segment, and more specifically, the industrial tuna fishery.

Seychelles tuna fishery, exploited principally by European Union flagged vessels, brought in a total catch of 389,256 metric tonnes in 2005, a year on year increase of around 16% on the 1996 catch of 265,658 tonnes. Unlike many other international industrial fisheries, there is currently no indication of over fishing of the skip jack and yellow fin tuna stocks targeted by the Seychelles-based fishing fleet, suggesting the sustainability of the on-going catch increase.

■ ***Focused strategic objectives:***

1. To increase the yield, value-addition and local stakeholding, in an industry of enhanced competitiveness

The competitiveness of Seychelles' industrial fisheries sector will be benchmarked against competitor nations, in accordance with the strictures laid down by an independent international auditor on an annual basis. The findings of the benchmarking exercises will be used to make informed policy decisions to enhance the competitiveness of the sector in coordination with businesses working within it. Macroeconomic policy will then be regularly reviewed to ensure that the country sees no erosion in its relative competitive position.

Drawing on lessons learnt from the successful operation of an international tanker fleet by the state owned petroleum company, a feasibility study into national investment in an industrial fishing fleet will be undertaken and its findings implemented.

The projected dramatic growth of Seychelles' tuna catch will allow for expanded production by the Indian Ocean Tuna factory and the potential development of additional industrial scale processing facilities, focused on producing the highest value added tuna products for maximum per-unit income.

In addition, the increase in tourist visits to Seychelles will create an increased market for the supply of high-value fresh fish, allowing for an expansion of the local fresh fish processing sector.

This will be facilitated by increasing the diversity of fish species targeted by the local fishing fleet, improving fishing methods, developing the capacity of the local fishing fleet through the assistance of institutions such as the Development Bank of Seychelles, and other policy prescriptions as recommended by the Seychelles Fisheries Authority (SFA).

Growth in the industrial fisheries sector will allow for increased Seychellois employment in the sector, including at the Indian Ocean Tuna factory and onboard vessels in the industrial fishing fleet.

To promote local employment in the sector, clear career structures will be identified and consultative mechanisms introduced to achieve a target quota for Seychellois management representation in the industry.

In addition, Seychellois access to equity will be enhanced, in order to increase domestic ownership, interest and pride in the fishing sector, beyond the traditional local stakeholders and into the wider Seychellois business community.

Existing fisheries sector enterprises will be encouraged to outsource non-core activities to local businesses, further increasing the economic footprint of the sector in Seychelles.

2. Governmental industry support

In order to offset the potential erosion of preferential access to the European Union – as a result of EU-ACP (African Caribbean Pacific group) post-Cotonou negotiations – the Government of Seychelles will implement policies to enhance the industry's competitiveness.

An effective communications strategy, including the identification of fisheries sector representatives, will be developed in order to enhance community awareness and ownership of the fisheries sector.

Community participation in leadership structures and fisheries business equity will be encouraged.

The policy of social marketing of the sector will be introduced in schools, with emphasis placed on career opportunities in industrial fisheries, including at the managerial and ownership levels.

Fisheries sector compatible training and expertise of the private sector will be incorporated into the curriculum of the Maritime Training Centre. This will be accompanied by an integrated skills needs assessment to ensure adequate labour support for the sector and in industries supporting the sector.

Incentives, including tax reforms and reductions in administrative processes, when offered, will be granted on an equal and transparent basis.

The Government of Seychelles will reduce its share of equity in the industry, operating instead as a facilitator to Seychellois and international private sector investment.

The role of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) as a body to promote Seychellois industry involvement will be bolstered. The Authority will adopt a more commercial orientation and be charged with developing strategic partnerships between international and Seychellois investors. The SFA will take the lead in researching, developing and disseminating fisheries sector technological advances.

Business income will be increased through productivity gains achieved through increased acceptance and ownership of the fisheries industry by Seychellois, and an increase in performance based incentivisation.

The potential of additional markets for Seychelles' fisheries products, such as China, India, member states of regional groupings of which Seychelles is a member and countries with which bilateral trade agreements have been signed, will be actively explored.

An Integrated Fisheries Development Project has been developed and will be implemented with private sector participation to enhance and promote the strengths of Seychelles' fisheries sector and tackle its weaknesses.

Throughout the development of Seychelles' fisheries sector, emphasis will be placed on meeting and exceeding FAO standards, ensuring environmental protection, stock sustainability and the incorporation of new technology in fishing and fish processing.

■ *Strategic Overview:*

To facilitate the development of the financial services sector both to complement the growth of the fisheries and tourism sectors and as an internationally recognised jurisdiction for offshore services.

■ *Focused strategic objectives:*

Concomitant with the development in tourism and fisheries, financial services will be expanded to become the third pillar of the economy, leading to innovations in the financial sector and complementing the country's fast tracked development.

The sector's growth will partly be achieved through the active promotion of the menu of offshore services on offer, such as IBC registrations, mutual funds, special license companies, and insurance captives.

At the centre of the national drive to promote corporate culture and develop the financial sector, will be the setting up of a stock exchange, tailored to meet the country's development aspirations. This institution will serve as an important mechanism under which an enhanced Seychellois stakeholding in both fisheries and tourism will be achieved over the 10-year projection period.

In parallel, the scope of professional services available locally will be expanded and their quality strengthened to support the exacting requirements of local and international clients with special emphasis placed on raising customer service delivery standards and encouraging innovation in business practice.

With the development of the country as a financial jurisdiction, the potential of developing Seychelles as a reputable offshore banking sector will emerge and such an opportunity will be exploited.

Of principal impetus to offshore banking development could be Seychelles' double taxation avoidance (DTA) agreements, signed with 10 countries, including China, Malaysia, South Africa and Indonesia.

International investors will be encouraged to invest in Seychelles' DTA partners, through Seychelles' registered businesses, allowing the country to benefit from a wide range of banking services on such transactions.

The activities of the financial services sector will continue to reflect international standards and best practices where applicable, so as to promote transparency and strengthen customer confidence. To achieve this, where appropriate, local legislation will be updated.

Offshore Petroleum Activity

Government remains fully committed to developing and optimising the potential of SEPEC's offshore businesses including storage, bunkering and regional oil distribution, international tanker fleet operations and oil exploration.

Monetary & Exchange Rate policy

The Government of Seychelles is committed to an independent monetary and exchange rate policy as set by the Central Bank of Seychelles, consistent with internal and external balance and in line with national growth objectives.

Mobilisation of Savings

Vigorous marketing by saving institutions, principally the Seychelles Pension Fund, Insurance and Credit Union will be carried out to attract potential savers and improve public attitudes towards saving, in recognition of shifting international government stances regarding the provision of public pensions.

The development of a stock exchange will encourage the creation of a capital market allowing individuals access to new investment avenues whilst providing investors with a mechanism to source equity financing.

Increasing the domestic savings ratio will in turn raise the level of domestic investment in the economy, which in complement with foreign direct investment should lead to stronger economic growth as well as ensuring a larger Seychellois equity stake in new development projects.

To encourage the development of a savings culture at a young age a youth savings account scheme will be established, encouraging young people to save small amounts of money and benefit from the income this generates.

Fiscal Policy

Transparency, responsibility, fairness and efficiency are the core principles guiding the Government of Seychelles' fiscal policy.

Strict fiscal discipline will be maintained through stringent expenditure controls and the reinforcement of revenue collection policies.

Fiscal rules will be established and against them fiscal performance targets set to permit continuous assessment of policy effectiveness. Total debt will be gradually reduced to 60% in a managed manner so as to minimise any negative collateral impact on the economic growth process.

Benchmarks will be established allowing for on-going assessment of the performance of fiscal policy and adaptations incorporated to meet the requirements of a changing economic landscape.

The tax regime will be re-examined, rationalised and if feasible, reduced to a single tax (similar to the existing GST), to present a clear, easy to understand, fair and efficient tax system.

Capital budgets will be tied to development plans to allow for structured expenditure and sequential development, as well as to minimise adverse impacts on external accounts. Government will borrow only to invest; not to fund current spending.

A revenue authority will be established to facilitate government tax collection and eliminate current bureaucratic bottlenecks.

Government Restructuring & Business Facilitation

The Government of Seychelles is committed to providing an efficient and transparent service, to reducing the size of government in favour of the private sector and improving service delivery through the adoption of technological advances.

Good governance structures will be promoted and the role of government as a facilitating body will be enhanced through the streamlining and consolidation of administrative and regulatory structures, the use of a fair and transparent procurement system and improved communication with the public.

With the planned retrenchment of Government in production areas, policies to encourage the expansion of the private sector in these areas will be implemented.

All government agencies involved in business facilitation will be merged into one entity, providing an efficient point of contact for business registration, licensing and regulation services, to increase both national and international investment.

The current discriminatory and discretionary allocation of business concessions will be withdrawn and replaced with concessions available to all businesses on a transparent basis.

Intra-government communication will be improved through the introduction of an IT network, linking civil servants within departments and across ministries. The same system will be employed to offer the public reliable 24-hour access to government information through the computerisation of the Registrar General's office.

Civil Service

The role of the civil service and individual civil servants will be clearly defined, increasing the responsibility and accountability of the service and its employees.

Improved job definition and output objectives will streamline the service, reducing bureaucracy and improving service delivery.

To ensure civil servants carry out their functions with honesty, confidentiality, objectivity, integrity, professionalism and diligence in serving the community, decentralised monitoring will be introduced, achieved and enforced through regular performance-based appraisals by a proactive human resources unit.

Performance criteria will involve clear targets and the achievement of results, leading to transparent and meritocratic recruitment, remuneration and career advancement.

Civil Service training will promote awareness of developments throughout the economy and structure of government in order to synergise decision making and implementation.

The separation of policy from implementation will be a core principle of governance, achieved through the formation of dedicated policy cells, charged with the formulation of policy and removed from day to day civil service operations.

Law & Order

To guarantee a stable and cohesive social order, the maintenance of law and order is of critical importance. In this connection, the Nation must have full confidence in the judiciary, to deliver justice in accordance with the Constitution and Laws of Seychelles.

The Government of Seychelles will work with and support an independent judiciary, committed to honesty, integrity and the rule of law, working in the best interest of Seychelles and free from the taint of bias and corruption.

The reinvigorated judiciary will be supported by a re-dynamised police force founded on professionalism, integrity, commitment and the maintenance of peace and stability.

Utilities

The Government of Seychelles will invest in the necessary utilities infrastructure required to meet the objectives of the 2017 plan.

Additional electricity generating facilities will be installed on Mahé and Praslin and an improved power distribution network installed, serving the districts and reclaimed land as necessary, and including an upgrade in the carrying capacity of the undersea cable to La Digue.

An integrated potable water distribution network, linking all water sources will be constructed, a new dam will be built and dam-to-dam water transfer infrastructure installed.

Appropriate technology will be made available to the Public Utilities Corporation (PUC) to increase efficiency in providing water, sewerage and electricity requirements. Further, energy and water conservation policies will also be promoted nationally.

Benefiting from resultant increased efficiency, PUC will pass on savings to its customer base, offering more competitive tariffs.

In situations where the possibility for private sector utilities provision exists (such as in the supply of electricity on outer islands) the business community, especially from within Seychelles' private sector, will be encouraged to take a lead role.

Government policies to enhance Seychelles' construction industry will focus on bolstering human resource capacity and increasing the quantity and quality of firms active in the industry.

Policies to encourage more businesses to enter the sector and the expansion of existing construction firms will be introduced, alongside measures to augment the supply of construction materials, allowing the industry to expand and intra-industry competition to force up construction standards.

Focused training by the Seychelles Industrial Training Centre, dedicated to meeting the needs of the industry will be provided, guaranteeing capacity in the sector to meet investment needs.

Links will be developed with international institutions of higher education and with the local private sector, to raise the standards of the Centre and ensure that the syllabus it provides meets the requirements of the industry. Coupled with improved training and raised entry requirements, it is envisaged that the Centre will begin to attract a higher calibre of student.

Technical and architectural specification requirements will be reviewed and monitored in line with international standards to ensure the competitiveness of local industries, especially tourism, through the revision of licensing requirements.

Productivity levels will be raised through the introduction of an hourly wage rate and the Seychelles Bureau of Standards and Planning Authority will increase monitoring of the industry to ensure compliance with safety standards.

Transport

To ensure the geographic mobility of Seychelles' human resource pool as a key element necessary for sustainable growth, Government support and subsidisation of the Seychelles Public Transport Corporation (SPTC) will be maintained. However, public transport policy will be revised to allow private participation alongside the public transport service, with the attendant benefits associated with the introduction of private sector competition.

Seychelles transport situation will be improved through enhanced road planning and upgrades to public transport infrastructure.

The existing five year Department of Transport plan will be reviewed and upgraded to meet the needs of the 2017 strategy, through the incorporation of professional road planning especially in and around Victoria town centre.

Vehicle pricing and road tax will also be analysed as another method of traffic management.

Land Management

One of the principal constraints faced by Seychelles is land availability. Careful land management plans will be developed focused on deriving the maximum utility from land allocation, which will be allocated on a fair and transparent basis.

This will be complemented with a detailed assessment of future land needs and an assessment of possible areas available for reclamation.

Environment

At no point will economic development be allowed to compromise Seychelles' deserved reputation for environmental excellence and the highest national and international ecological standards will be adhered to throughout.

This stance will be bolstered by a review of national environmental legislation to bring it into compliance with international best practices.

The Government of Seychelles will invest in improved waste disposal and treatment and the sustainable management of natural resources. It will also introduce programmes to raise public awareness of and contributions towards environmental protection. In line with policies to promote Seychellois involvement and ownership of national output growth, the people of Seychelles will also be encouraged to view themselves as environmental stakeholders, at district, national and international levels.

Agriculture

Seychelles' agricultural policy is to ensure food security through the most economically effective methods available, given the numerous constraints to intensive agricultural production – such as climate, soil type, and limited available land – present in Seychelles.

The agriculture strategy will focus on subsistence farming as well as on small to medium scale agricultural and livestock production (destined primarily for domestic consumption) in which Seychelles has established comparative advantage. Thus, to ensure national food security and adequate supply for a growing tourism sector, the country will engage in import, a more cost effective option than attempting food self-sufficiency. This policy would ensure that agriculture does not hinder the development of the identified core socio-economic activities, notably tourism, fisheries, housing and environmental conservation.

Support Services

To facilitate the growth of Seychelles' economy, and, in particular, the contribution of the international financial services sector, fast, efficient telecommunications are required.

A government appointed regulatory body will oversee the development of the sector, charged with ensuring the implementation of fair and transparent rules and processes and the equal treatment of all service providers.

A study into the efficacy of the installation of a sub-marine fibre optic cable will be conducted and acted upon, and inter-island wireless connectivity will be upgraded. In addition access to hardware, especially for educational and training purposes will be improved and partnerships with international bodies capable of boosting Seychelles telecommunications capacity will be actively sought.

Government education policy will be to promote training in vocational, managerial and service skills, to meet the human resources requirements of the economy as envisaged by the ten year plan. Special emphasis will be accorded to promote national IT literacy in order to equip the country's workforce with the basic fundamental skills required for success in an increasingly technologically-driven business environment.

This policy will be achieved by restructuring training institutions, aligning standards with local needs and internationally recognised certification processes and forming partnership with international institutions of higher learning to offer full qualification training, skills programmes and short courses.

The skills available in the private sector will be utilised through a strategic partnership focused on mentoring, practical orientation and the ultimate absorption of trained Seychellois into the market.

A centre of service excellence will be developed – from the existing Seychelles Institute of Management – to meet the need for trained staff in Seychelles' burgeoning service sector, once again utilising private sector skills to bolster both curriculum and staff.

Clear linkages between training and career paths will be developed, and training will focus on those areas most required by the economy, notably tourism, fisheries, construction, services and business.

To facilitate the effective management of the country's human resource pool a national skills database will be established to assist employers in sourcing employees and to enable the Government to identify and address possible skills shortfalls.

This will be supplemented by skills audits conducted by institutes of higher learning.

Seychelles' schools will be given greater autonomy from central government, reducing bureaucracy and

fostering a greater sense of school ownership amongst staff, students and parents. In addition, schools will be encouraged to seek private sector expertise and funding to enhance their education provision.

Educational standards will be safeguarded through the establishment of an education watchdog, with clearly defined terms of reference and powers, within the Ministry of Education, to assess and monitor the standard of schools throughout the country, and where relevant, influence the school's curriculum content and training in line with government's policy.

Government policy is to ensure that those in greatest need continue to receive free health care.

The policy making body in the Ministry of Health will be divorced from the running of the hospital, allowing for improved analytical and long term strategic planning.

In order to increase efficiency and improve service delivery standards, certain elements of the health service which can be outsourced to private businesses will be opened for private sector involvement.

In addition to the medical training received by health care professionals, additional training in customer service delivery will be given.

Employment

The Government of Seychelles will introduce policies to foster an active, empowered and multi-skilled flexible workforce, able to meet the needs of existing and emerging industries. This will be achieved through training to develop both skills and attitudes and will be accompanied by a review of existing employment legislation and employment schemes, both intended to foster clear career development paths and positive attitudes to work.

In all sectors emphasis will be placed on improving human capacity through partnerships with the private sector, improved and defined career development structures, increased Seychellois equity holding and performance related incentives schemes.

The limited size of Seychelles' population will, despite increased training, result in human resource shortages, presenting the need for expatriate employment to support the country's development process and economic growth target.

Expatriate workers will be employed to augment and supplement, not replace, the local workforce, in a manner agreed upon by the Government and private sector through consultation.

To protect the underprivileged and uphold a minimum dignified level of living standard, employer and employee compatible minimum wage and hourly wage rates will be introduced.

Targeted sickness benefits for persons with long term medical conditions will be introduced and in order to reduce unnecessary burden upon health centres, it is proposed that regulations be implemented permitting sick leave not exceeding three consecutive days to be taken without the need for validation by a doctor's certificate.

Social Development

The Government of Seychelles will work to ensure that the doubling of GDP over the next ten years does not result in the emergence of unsustainable income divides.

All sectors of society will be encouraged to contribute to the national economic growth, while those unable to do so will be assisted through an improved social safety-net, bolstered by increased government revenue from national economic growth. In parallel, through special training schemes and other supporting initiatives, government will focus on the re-integration of marginalised but able-bodied persons (presently beneficiaries of state assistance), into the workforce in order to take on increased employment opportunities, notably in tourism and fisheries.

The importance of personal and community level responsibility in all sectors – from environmental conservation to participation in the employment structure – will be emphasised throughout the development process.

Community Development

A participatory approach to community development from inception to implementation will be promoted. Where possible, services will be decentralised and local capacity reinforced to meet the emerging needs of the population.

Participation in sports and culture will continue to be encouraged through the provision of infrastructure to enable Seychellois to participate effectively at the level of their community as well as in the national and international arenas.

The Government of Seychelles will continue to promote Seychellois home ownership, financed by private capital.

Private sector participation in the provision of housing for private individuals, for sale and rent, will be encouraged, if necessary in partnership with government.

Commercially compliant levels of financial discipline will be applied to government-run housing schemes, with transparency of process and bank-compatible mortgage structures enforced. However, government subsidisation, applied on a case by case needs-assessed basis, will still be provided to ensure social contiguity.

