

SEYCHELLES

COUNTRY REPORT

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

JUNE 1999
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS
AND MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT

COUNTRY REPORT - SEYCHELLES

PART 1 - Public Sector

Seychelles National Gender Steering committee

In 1993, two years prior to the Beijing World Conference, a national Gender Steering Committee composed of members from the Public Sector and the NGOs was set up in Seychelles - to effectively implement gender strategies outlined in the National Human Resource Development Plan.

The Committee's role was to coordinate activities of the different sectors located within the different sectors. The terms of reference included:

- Coordinating and preparing a 2-3 year Action Plan to implement gender strategies of the Human Resource Development Plan.
- Coordinating the implementation of the Action plan.

- Assisting and monitoring the establishment of a gender network at sectoral/organisational level.
- Ensuring that appropriate capacity building programmes are implemented to enhance skills in gender.
- Sensitising the general public on gender mainstreaming in relation to the National Human Resource Development Plan.

Resource Development.

Ensuring that relevant gender disaggregated human resource data is collected, and analysed at enterprise level.

After the Conference on Women, this Committee also took on the task of monitoring and evaluating the public sectors implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Women are considered as critical in

Seychelles' early income

poverty level. It must be pointed

out that the specific economic situation of

This is an area which, up to now, has been given little attention in Seychelles. Statistics show that there is a significant difference between men and women which allows him/her to live well. However, nonetheless that research regarding the economic situation of women has not been undertaken.

The subsistence level may be

reached by women whose household income is below the poverty line and is means-tested for welfare assistance.

Reported in 1996 by the Ministry of Education, the report made clear that the two-pronged approach consisted of gender sensitisation and capacity building, streamlining "gender in education".

2. Education and Training of Women

Education

A Gender Strategy and Action Plan of Education

Since 1977, a policy of free and compulsory education for all as well as equitable distribution of resources have minimised gender gaps in education. Boys and girls in Seychelles are equally represented at all levels of education from creche to Polytechnic. Equality of access is therefore not

a problem for Seychelles. Nonetheless, in order to provide gender responsive education, the treatment and inclusion of education must be

responsive, a sensitive attitude towards the treatment and inclusion of education must be rendered.

Ministry of Education launched a major sensitization

in the help of a consultant funded by the CFTO. Workshops

curriculum developers, careers guidance teachers, heads of

schools and classroom teachers. Three hundred staff have

been trained and the workshops are continuing this year.

The workshops have been conducted in all schools, teacher training colleges and universities. They have been designed for gender bias and signs that

messages and stereotyping. For many this was an eye-opening experience.

As we know, gender biases are largely unintentional.

Education were also trained as trainers and can now conduct gender sensitive training.

A manual for trainers has been compiled.

Most of the Heads of Units in Education followed a course in

Gender and Management organized in December 1996. There-

is growing awareness in the Ministry that the broad goal of education must be interpreted to mean Education for All Boys and Girls.

Education must be sharpened to meet the needs of the 21st century.

needs of girls and boys. Exam results and education statistics are now more systematically gender-disaggregated so that the progress of both genders in education can be monitored and disparities highlighted.

Professional Training

The policy for equal opportunity in education applies for local and overseas training. The gap between men and women proceeding on professional overseas training has progressively been reduced. In 1997, 47% of such trainees were women. Since individuals proceeding on overseas training are often separated from the family, the government

provides distance education facilities. This facility allows

in 1997 available at subsidised rates to women and men to acquire professional qualifications without having to leave their country and their family.

3. Women and Health

Health care in Seychelles is free at the point of delivery. The government provides the provision of Primary Health Care services at district level, and centralized specialist services.

Due to improved health care for women, the infant mortality rate has fallen from an average of 17/1000 live births in the 1980s to 8.1/1000 in 1997.

The life expectancy is 75 years for women, and the total fertility rate has fallen from 3.96 to 2.32 in 1996.

remarkable maternal and infant health indicators with prenatal coverage being almost 100%².

4. Violence Against Women

Revision of Penal code 1996 makes provision for specific kinds of violence, including sexual harassment. It increases the chances of conviction of the aggressor on the basis of evidence obtained from the victim without the need for corroborating evidence. In cases of sexual offences, therefore, corroborating evidence is not insisted upon and an offender can be convicted on the sole evidence of the victim. At the same time, the legalisation of Dowry Prohibition Act and the Dowry Deaths Act, and several other amendments make it possible to prosecute the husband for rape in marriage.

A proposed Act for the Prevention of Domestic Violence offering protection to women from family violence is currently being considered by the Attorney General's office. The Act offers easier access to justice for women who are victims of spousal violence. It also protects women from violence by the spouse. The Act also offers temporary relief to women from spousal violence by allowing the victim an injunction ordering the violent spouse unlike the current pattern of the Women's Violence against Women Act to leave the matrimonial home with the children whilst the male abuser is confined to the full comfort of the home.

The 1995 Evidence Amendment Act also makes provision for abused children or women to give evidence in court either in chambers or via short circuit television, accompanied by friends or relatives who can offer emotional support.

Child protection has been receiving quality attention by government over the last three years. The National Commission for Child Protection (NCCP) chaired by the Minister for Social Affairs and Manpower Development formulates child protection policies and oversees implementation of same. The NCCP has recently approved a series of media programmes on child protection that are currently being put together. Seychelles is, at this very moment, looking at the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and drawing up monitoring mechanisms for its implementation. There is a 24-hour operational help line for children in distress manned by social workers in the Ministry of Social Affairs and Manpower Development.

There have been concerted efforts in public sensitization and education on the issue of domestic violence with the aim of replacing the tolerant and passive reaction to domestic violence with condemnation and determination to break the recurring cycle.

Joint efforts are ongoing with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Manpower Development (Social Affairs and Probation) to sensitise and train officers on the management of domestic violence cases. These efforts need to be intensified with regards to police reaction to incidence of domestic violence.

which unfortunately are still often shrugged off as 'normal private family affairs'.

The personal and social education programme of the Ministry of Education has recently incorporated relevant issues in the preventive education against violence against women. Preventive education in domestic violence

has been highlighted by the Head of State himself in many speeches. The Family Protection Act was

issued barring judgement on

up a Family Tribunal which deals

specially with regard to maintenance.

It used to be costly, long and formal.

It meets twice a week.

The duties and obligations of the Head of State himself in many speeches. A Matrimonial Code promulgated in 1997 and dealing with paternity. In 1998, the Government dealt with legal issues of family protection of children and women. Proceedings are now dealt with by the Tribunals.

Incidentally, while the Head of State has a general criminal tolerance to violence against women, but there is still a lot more to be done, from prevention

5. Women and the Economy

Since 1996 the government has been promoting the idea of self employment. The government is giving financial support to the self employed by providing them with resources, Resources and encouraging men and women to set up their own business. Loans have been made available to both men and women.

To enable women to take up full-time employment, facilities such as day care centers are indispensable. Many private individuals have set up

businesses in this area. The government has also built 9 daycare centres in

8 different districts distinctive

hrs. ~~1~~ ~~2~~ ~~3~~ ~~4~~ ~~5~~ ~~6~~ ~~7~~ ~~8~~ ~~9~~ ~~10~~ ~~11~~ ~~12~~ ~~13~~ ~~14~~ ~~15~~ ~~16~~ ~~17~~ ~~18~~ ~~19~~ ~~20~~ ~~21~~ ~~22~~ ~~23~~ ~~24~~ ~~25~~ ~~26~~ ~~27~~ ~~28~~ ~~29~~ ~~30~~ ~~31~~ ~~32~~ ~~33~~ ~~34~~ ~~35~~ ~~36~~ ~~37~~ ~~38~~ ~~39~~ ~~40~~ ~~41~~ ~~42~~ ~~43~~ ~~44~~ ~~45~~ ~~46~~ ~~47~~ ~~48~~ ~~49~~ ~~50~~ ~~51~~ ~~52~~ ~~53~~ ~~54~~ ~~55~~ ~~56~~ ~~57~~ ~~58~~ ~~59~~ ~~60~~ ~~61~~ ~~62~~ ~~63~~ ~~64~~ ~~65~~ ~~66~~ ~~67~~ ~~68~~ ~~69~~ ~~70~~ ~~71~~ ~~72~~ ~~73~~ ~~74~~ ~~75~~ ~~76~~ ~~77~~ ~~78~~ ~~79~~ ~~80~~ ~~81~~ ~~82~~ ~~83~~ ~~84~~ ~~85~~ ~~86~~ ~~87~~ ~~88~~ ~~89~~ ~~90~~ ~~91~~ ~~92~~ ~~93~~ ~~94~~ ~~95~~ ~~96~~ ~~97~~ ~~98~~ ~~99~~ ~~100~~ ~~101~~ ~~102~~ ~~103~~ ~~104~~ ~~105~~ ~~106~~ ~~107~~ ~~108~~ ~~109~~ ~~110~~ ~~111~~ ~~112~~ ~~113~~ ~~114~~ ~~115~~ ~~116~~ ~~117~~ ~~118~~ ~~119~~ ~~120~~ ~~121~~ ~~122~~ ~~123~~ ~~124~~ ~~125~~ ~~126~~ ~~127~~ ~~128~~ ~~129~~ ~~130~~ ~~131~~ ~~132~~ ~~133~~ ~~134~~ ~~135~~ ~~136~~ ~~137~~ ~~138~~ 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6. Women in Power and Decision-making

Women in Seychelles have from the establishment of our republic been part of our decision makers. Women present

appointments and 24% of the National Assembly of decision making female employees in the House has constantly been increasing and figures stand at 30%.

respectively in 1997. No formal figures are yet

It should be noted that the number of female participants attending courses at the Seychelles Institute of Management has always been very high.

Women trainees currently represent 65% of all those being trained in various management skills.

7. Human Rights of Women

Seychelles charter of fundamental human rights and freedoms is

ffees to all citizens. It is contained in the Constitution of 1993
n to the child bearing role of women irrespective of gender but with due co-
cy, property, education, women. Included are the rights to

u snicker; (see notes above regarding sexual network and obscenities)

Women and the Media

Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation makes a conscious effort to avoid

ing stereotyped images of women. Staff have been taught to be

such pitfalls and to strive to portray women in productive duties, in

s involving technology, as well as in their reproductive role and in

situations.

In the last few years there has been greater coverage in SBC's

newspapers and on its television programs on issues of concern

to women such as:

Women's health, women's rights, women's roles in society, women's legal rights, etc.

In staff recruitment and to

of its technical operators and

qualified women to fill any

which constitute the majority of

The SBC has also decided to modify

find ways to employ more women in

engineering staff. However, it has no

of the technical posts. On the other hand,

- Women can own property in their own right. Women are also encouraged to put names of both partners/spouses in title deed for lands and houses when they are married or co-habiting. Under the law, a surviving spouse's (male or female) claims take precedence over other heirs, and children inherit equal shares irrespective of their sex.

Women who have had children from common-law husbands may claim

alimony for the children at one-fifth of the man's salary per child. Even

defaulters there is no possibility of automatic deduction of alimony from

employees' salaries.

can claim alimony from an offending husband by applying

a "non-pecuniary compensation order" from a magistrate's court.

The law favours giving custody of very young children to

of the Judgement Act of 1971, which deals with breaches

of sentence etc., imprisonment terms are not applicable to women.

offenders. They are not subject to civil imprisonment because of their role as

mothers and nurturers.

Women are exempted from civil liability for damages

time when they babies

A Seychellois woman can pass on her nationality to her children born in

formed the Seychelles Women's Commission. This body is to work towards getting women empowered to take on stronger roles and play an active part in the decision-making process of the country. Their Mission Statement reflects this;

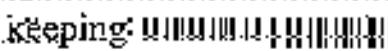
...to ensure that women are given their due weight in formulating policies!!!

Provide a forum to give women a voice
weight is given to women's informed opinions
pertaining to women and women issues

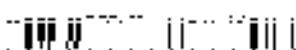
men and women, preferably set up as a family income -generating activity. These projects are to reach the unskilled, unemployed women who have spent too many years on social benefits to provide them with a better standard of living.

Since its creation Alliance of Solidarity For the Family has put great emphasis on programmes to alleviate Poverty through the following

- organisation of training workshops on
- facilitation of loan transactions between Association and financial institutions
- education of families on the advantages

and book keeping;  for individual members of the  

based revenue

and cottage industries to help them towards self-sufficiency.   <img

The Nurses Association empower the nurses in order to compete for

various positions in the nursing field and this adds to their emp-

women in general, in the world of work.



Our Aptan CNyvo Artizana runs a paper recycling project.

school drop-outs and unemployed youth are trained to recycle news-

We have very few NGOs operating in this field, namely, the Seychelles Headteacher's Association and the Early Childhood Development Association.

Women's Vital Role in Culture, the Family and Socialization.

A CDE aims to establish greater equality and equity between men and women by encouraging greater equality and equity between men and women by promoting their equal partnership in the family and community life by formulating objectives and strategies to sensitize the population on family related issues. The Association is about to launch a Community

NGOs working for and with families are to be grouped into the Health and Social Welfare Commission.

The Seychelles Women's Commissions together with a few of our female members of the National Assembly have discussed the issue of violence against women especially family-based violence.

This year a committee initiated by LUNGOS was set up. The Government responded positively in that many sectors nominated a representative to the Committee. Together the Committee looked into ways of raising awareness and how to sensitize the public on the issue of Violence Against Women.

On the 28th of November 1998 there were meetings aimed at preventing

c of the family unit. The
are used as one of the papers

this form of behaviour that is destroying
Recommendations of the community d

APANA as well as Caritas provide training and empowers the young girls

for self-reliance.

An NGO Children and Youth Committee is being considered to deal with all issues pertaining to this vulnerable and important group.

Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

National Level

The NGO body in Seychelles that is to deal with all issues pertaining to

women's Commission under the aegis of Liaison Unit of Non-

Sub-Regional Level

Madagascar, Mauritius, Reunion and Seychelles. Together these NGO

bodies discuss issues of common interest. They could, on a sub-regional

level take on the Platform of Action. The Secretariat for Reseau Islands is

LUNGOS

NOTES:

1. The NGO section prepared by LINCOLN CONSULTANTS LTD. (see also note 1)

2. Abbreviations Used

ASFF - Alliance of Solidarity

NARS - Nurses Association

SWEES - Seychelles Women Ethnic Empowerment Scheme

ASO - HIV and AIDS Support Organisation of the Seychelles

NCC - National Council of Children

SAWOP - Seychelles Association of Women Professionals

FETAWA - Female Workers Association of the Republic of Yemen

NA - Afelye Pour Avenir Nouvel Attazaa

MISD - Management Information Systems Division

SDC - Seychelles Housing Development Corporation