

# 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 located within the different sectors. The terms of reference

- Coordinating and preparing a 2-3 year Action Plan strategies of the Human Resource Development Plan
- Coordinating the implementation of the Action pro

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

Resource Development.

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

At the Conference on Women, this Committee also took on the role of a steering committee for the public sectors implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action.

collected,

After the 4<sup>th</sup>

to board the res

Platform of A

## 1. Women

is considered as critical in

Seychellois earns an income

subsistence level. It must be pointed

out that the specific economic situation of

This is an area which, up to now, has

not been fully explored in Seychelles. Statistics show that the

majority of women which allows him/her to live well and

work hard, but, nonetheless that research regarding

women has not been undertaken.

the subsistence level may be

Women whose household income

is below the means-tested for welfare assistance

## 2. Education and Training of Women

### Education

A Gender Strategy and Action Plan

was prepared in 1996 by the Ministry

of Education. The two-pronged approach consisted of

gender sensitisation and capacity building.

streamlining gender in 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 and sensitive education for the 21st century and to meet the needs of the 21st century

gender sensitive.

Ministry of Education launched a major sensitization

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

for 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 content of the workshops and teaching materials

have been so revised for gender bias and to get rid of

gender messages and stereotyping. For many this was an

eye-opening

experience.

Twenty staff

gender sen

Most of the

Gender

is growing

must be sharpened

at the Ministry of the Local Government, Education, AT

interpreted to mean Education for All Boys and

to advise to do it on a regular basis.

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 prepared to deal with specific social demands, including

Distance Education separation from the family, the government

in 1997 available at subsidised rates to

women and men to acquire professional

leave their country and their family.

### 3. Women and Health

Health care in Seychelles is free at 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 73 years for women and the fertility rate has fallen from

3.96 to 2.32 in 1996.

Information about Education provided by Marouk Pardiwalla.



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

#### 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 legal provision of 1996 has made it possible to prosecute the

Section 157-158 and recent amendments make it possible to prosecute the husband for rape in marriage.

A proposed Act for the Prevention of Domestic Violence offering protection

is currently being considered by the

to women from family violence

Act offers easier access to

Attorney General's office. The

is designed to prevent

in cases of violence

of

by the spouse. The Act also offers temporary relief to wo

the

spousal violence by allowing the victim an injunction ord

g to flee

violent spouse unlike the current pattern of the Women Vi

ions

the marital home with the children whilst the male a

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 curriculum on violence against women. Preventive education in domestic violence

have been highlighted by the Head of State himself in many special measures. A Matrimonial Causes Act was re-enforced by legal and policy measures. A Matrimonial Causes Act was promulgated in 1997 and dealt with children issues barring judgement on paternity. In 1998, the Government set up a Family Tribunal which deals with legal issues of family protection especially with regard to maintenance of children and women. Proceedings used to be costly, long and formal. Proceedings are now dealt with by the Tribunal which meets twice a week.

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against women but there is still a lot more to be done from prevention

management of the issue

## 5. Women and the Economy

Since 1996 the government has been promoting the idea of self-employment

Resources

and encouraging men and women to set up their own

of loans.

have been made available to both men and women

operation

This is managed by the Council for Industrial Development

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

1997. The centres are leased for 8 different districts during the hrs. operation with the special condition that they be opened between 0700 and 1730 hrs.

## 6. Women in Power and Decision-making

Women in Seychelles have from the establishment of our republic 25% of ministerial (Government and Parastatal sectors) appointments and 24% of the National Assembly. The number of decision making female employees in the Public Sector has constantly been increasing and figures stood at 25% and 5% respectively in 1997. No formal figures are available for the private sector.

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

... contained in the Constitution of 1993  
... irrespective of gender but with due co  
... women. Included are the rights to lib

... (see the notes at the end of the section for more details) ...

### Women and the Media

Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation makes a conscious effort to avoid

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

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

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

... situations.

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

... hereafter, in the form of interviews, broadcasts, on TV and radio, of issues that are of concern

... on media such as abortion, violence, ...

... women's legal rights, etc.

... to staff recruitment and to

... of its technical operators and

... d qualified women to fill any

... en constitute the majority of

... women's legal rights, etc.

... 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 h



- 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 for child.

• In defaulters there is no possibility of automatic deduction of alimony from

employers.

• Women can claim alimony from an offending husband by applying

for a "protection order" from a magistrate's court.

• The law favours giving custody of very young children to

mothers.

• The Judgement Act of 1977, which deals with breaches

of the law, imprisonment terms are not applicable to women.

• Women who are victims of domestic violence are not subject to civil imprisonment because of their role as

mothers and nurturers.

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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;

norm, to ensure that women  
in formulating policies!!!

provide a forum to give women a voice  
weight is given to women's informed op  
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

and book keeping:

ual members of the

based revenue

and cottage industries to help them towards

iciency.

ASF encourages its regular members to take challenging opportunities for

é, varied skills and improvement of status. ASF

s to celebrate events as well as create awareness to

n national and international days such as: International

ally Day, Mother's Day, Poverty Day.

encouraged to participate in parenting seminars which are

h the assistance of UNEPA

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

generating  
economic

growing

organis

sensitiz

if we

Me

org

The Nurses Association empower the nurses in order to compete for

as.



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

women in general, in the world of work.

Our Aprand Nouvo Artizana runs a paper recycling project.

chool drop-outs and unemployed youth are trained to recycle paper.

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 CRE aims to establish 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 22th of November 1998 there were meetings aimed at preventing

of the family unit. The

is 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-Governmental Organisations of the Sey

Sub-Regional Level

The Regional Secretariat for the Indian Ocean Region comprising 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 report was prepared by UNICOF

2. Abbreviations Used

- Family
- ASFF - Alliance of Solidarity
- NARS - Nurses Association
- SWEES - Seychelles Women Economic Empowerment Scheme
- ASO - HIV and AIDS Support Organisation of the Seychelles
- NCC - National Council for Children
- SAWOP - Seychelles Association of Women Professionals
- ETA WANS - Social Workers Association of the Republic of Seychelles
- ANA - Ateye Pour Apran Nouvo Artizana
- ISD - Management Information System Division
- SDC - Seychelles Housing Development Corporation