

SEYCHELLES

NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY



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FOREWORD



The dynamism, energy and enthusiasm of the Seychellois youth have always given our nation hope for the future. Despite the difficult challenges they may face, our young people demonstrate much drive to make a better future for themselves and for others. It is their positive force and the trust in their abilities which confirms the Government's guiding principle to continuously support all young people to succeed and realise their full potential.

The first National Youth Policy presented by the Ministry responsible for Youth in 1995 has been an important tool in coordinating national efforts for the valorisation of the youth. Its revision in 2008 has allowed for new orientation towards youth development.

Once again, the revision of the policy after five years highlights the Government's constant interest in meeting the rapidly changing needs, aspirations and inevitable challenges of the younger generation. The exercise has allowed us to identify emerging trends and areas of intervention in accord with our current reality so as to increase the impact of initiatives introduced for youth development.

This important document values our young people as key actors in our nation's growth. Additionally, it addresses critical issues for youth development, identifies opportunities, reflects on the roles of each party and gives directions to the services and programmes of the Government, the private sector and the civil society to achieve meaningful results in youth empowerment.

I would like to acknowledge the dedicated work of all those involved in the revision of the National Youth Policy. It is my sincere hope that all young Seychellois, as the principal beneficiaries of this document, will use this policy to realise their aspirations and make their mark in society.

Danny Faure
Vice President of the Republic
Minister responsible for Youth

30th August 2013

RATIONALE

The rationale for the National Youth Policy lies on the fact that, as in most parts of the world, a significant part of the Seychelles' population comprises of people under the age of 30 years. This national environment presents sufficient opportunities for the youth to contribute actively towards the socio-economic growth of our country.

The Government of Seychelles recognises the vital role of the youth in the country's advancement. It acknowledges that young people are partners in development and not passive recipients of services made available to them. It is dedicated to encourage youth empowerment through a wide range of programmes and services offered by different ministries. The support and contribution of civil society and private sector in the process are recognised, appreciated and encouraged.

The Policy is the guiding principle from which actions can be engaged to answer to youth's ambitions and facilitate their meaningful involvement in national development. It acts as a point of coordination between the Government, civil society and private sector for the collective aim of galvanising youth development. It also demonstrates Seychelles' commitment to all international conventions and charters aimed at youth development it has signed and ratified.

The concerted efforts are aimed at empowering young people physically, socially, economically and spiritually to help them shape their future and that of Seychelles. The Policy calls for synergised efforts by all to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes and services for the youth with the youth. It reinforces the need for commitment from all stakeholders and from the youth themselves for the achievement of the vision spelled out in the Policy. It recognises that it is essential that each person knows, understands and fulfills their obligations for long lasting results.

INTRODUCTION

Young people are key agents in the social, cultural, economic and political development of a country. Their sense of creativity and energy, their intellectual and productive abilities fuel the development of a nation. A society cannot advance if this important part of its population is not given the tools and opportunities to develop.

In Seychelles, 47.43% of the population is less than 30 years of age. The youth is therefore a high source of human resource for the country. In view of their importance, the Government, in partnership with different stakeholders, must ensure that young people have opportunities for them to develop their potential to the fullest and grow into responsible and productive citizens.

The National Youth Policy is a broad framework which outlines the direction undertaken by the country for the development of its youth. It should serve as a vehicle for empowering the youth to achieve national development. To ensure this, roles and responsibilities of each key player should be clearly defined, intergovernmental coordination reinforced, partnerships consolidated and capacity in the youth sector strengthened.

The Policy is an important document fully recognised and acknowledged by the Government. It has been revised after consultation with young people, governmental and non governmental agencies concerned with their welfare and personal development. Together with the rights young people can expect when addressing their needs and aspirations, the Policy stresses the responsibilities which accompany such rights.

The formulation of the Policy 2013 is based on key legislative and policy frameworks, the key ones being:

- Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles 2011 (developed in 1993)
- Seychelles National Youth Council Act (2009)
- National Youth Policy 2008 (developed in 1995)
- *Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment 2007-2015*
- African Youth Charter (2006)

DEFINITION OF YOUTH

The definition of youth varies from country to country. Generally, the period between childhood and adulthood is called “Youth”. During this period a person prepares himself/herself to be an active and fully responsible member of the society. It is also a period of transformation from family dependant childhood to independent adulthood and integration in the society as a responsible citizen.

It is often difficult to arrive at a universally acceptable definition of “Youth”. The physical age of a person may not truly reflect the maturity or stage of personal development reached by individuals some of whom may have been characterised by various situations and backgrounds.

The Policy makes provision for young people aged between 15 and 30 years to be given equal opportunity to participate in programmes and activities according to their affinities and interests. This is a period of great emotional, physical and psychological changes that requires appropriate support for a safe passage from adolescence to full adulthood.

This will be irrespective of their gender, race, colour, religion, political affiliation, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability or any other conditions which could in any way disadvantage them from participating.

For practical reasons, the activities will often need to embrace children below 15 years and those above the age of 30.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF SEYCHELLES

Geography

The Seychelles archipelago is made up of 115 islands, 41 of which are granite in geological formation and the others coralline. It lies between 4 to 10 degrees latitude south and between 46 to 56 longitudes east of the Indian Ocean, north of Madagascar. The total area covered by the Republic is 1,340,000 square kilometers of which the total land area is 455 square kilometers.

Political Status

A lengthy struggle between France and Great Britain for the islands ended in 1814 when they were ceded to the latter. Independence came in 1976. Socialist rule was brought to a close with a new constitution and elections in 1993.

The People

The cosmopolitan Seychellois are a colourful and harmonious blend of different races, which stem from African, European and Asian roots all of whom have brought something of their own customs and way of life to the islands. The majority speak three languages: Creole, English and French.

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Population: The position in 2010

Total estimated population	= 90,945 people
Total estimated population under 30 yrs	= 43,138 people
The numbers under 30 yrs	= 47.43 % of the total population
Of this total of under 30's – 20,427 females	= 44.35 % of the total under 30's
22,711 males	= 52.65 % of the total under 30's

Population: The projected number in 2017

Total estimated population	= 95,687 people
Total estimated population under 30 yrs	= 43,264 people
The numbers under 30 yrs	= 45.21 % of the total population
Of this total of under 30's – 21,104 females	= 48.78 % of the total under 30's
22,161 males	= 51.22 % of the total under 30's

Source: National Statistics Bureau

VISION

An empowered youth participating actively in the realisation of their aspirations; in the economic, social, political, cultural and spiritual development of Seychelles and prepared for the global opportunities and challenges.

GOAL

Provide an appropriate framework to enhance the aptitude of the youth, properly address their needs and offer appropriate services, opportunities and support for their holistic development.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

The youth of Seychelles is empowered to realise their potential, to appreciate their roles and responsibilities in contributing towards the advancement of Seychelles and to be active leaders.

OBJECTIVES

In line with the vision, goal and expected outcome stated above, the objectives of the Policy are to:

1. Provide support to all youth and motivate them to take part in productive initiatives, programmes and activities for individual, community and national development.
2. Set and maintain the highest standard of quality youth work by involving young people in consultation, planning, implementation, management, evaluation and review process of policies, programmes and activities geared towards them.
3. Empower the youth to develop their creative and innovative sense.
4. Strengthen the culture of honest, hard and smart work among the youth, enabling them to improve quality of their life as well as that of others.
5. Promote in the youth a strong sense of patriotism and the spirit of volunteerism.
6. Ensure effective networking, integration and coordination in the delivery of youth services between all governmental ministries and civil societies concerned with youth development and welfare.
7. Be flexible and responsive to the changing development trends and needs of young people.
8. Encourage adults to participate actively in the development of youth through sharing of skills and experiences.

9. Address the issues and constraints relating to the specificities of gender and marginalised groups in all aspects of youth development.
10. Facilitate domestic and international networking for effective exchange of knowledge, expertise and experience between young people.
11. Make proper use of all resources for youth development.

PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF THE NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY

The Policy ensures that it is consistent with national laws and development priorities. As such, the its key principles and values are:-

1. Respect

- Respect for human rights, freedom and democracy expressed through personal qualities such as integrity, the rejection of prejudice, tolerance, self esteem, unselfishness and honesty with oneself and others.
- Respect for the family unity and all members of the community.
- Respect for law and order and acceptance of the principles of fairness, equality and non discrimination in everyday life.

2. Patriotism

- Pride for the motherland and the willingness to contribute to its advancement.
- Honour and respect the national symbols and institutions.

3. Leadership

- Hone youth leadership skills and knowledge through their active participation in matters that affect them, their communities, and the nation.
- A strong sense of leadership by adults to guide the youth through positive examples.

4. Self reliance

- The tenacity and will-power to strive towards their personal well being and fulfillment by harnessing their inner potentials, creativity and sense of initiative.

5. Participation and inclusion

- Ensuring gender equity and equality by adopting a gender inclusive approach to youth development.
- Ensuring inclusion of marginalised youth groups in development activities.

6. Youth empowerment

- Involvement of young people in issues pertaining to their own development.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE YOUTH

The Policy is derived from the Constitution, the laws of the land and agreed international conventions to which Seychelles is a signatory. The rights of the youth are founded on the sanctity of human life, freedom and dignity. Tied to those rights are responsibilities and obligations the youth are expected to uphold in securing a promising future for themselves and for the nation.

RIGHTS

All young people of Seychelles, irrespective of their age, gender, socio-economic status, physical and mental abilities or any other defining factors, have the right to:

- decent and dignified existence;
- healthy, supportive, secure and stable family environment and good parental care;
- freedom of movement, thought, expression and association in cultural, religious and other activities, programmes and services;
- care and protection against discrimination, exploitation, violence or any forms of other abuse and social ills;
- a safe and clean environment;
- equal protection under the law and legal representation;
- access to education, vocational guidance and training corresponding to their aspiration;
- adequate health care;
- access to youth services, leisure facilities and appropriate information;
- decent work;
- ownership and protection of property;
- participate in decision making processes.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

In this Policy, the youth of Seychelles have the responsibility to:

- Honour and respect the national symbols and institutions of Seychelles;
- Be patriotic and loyal to the motherland and be willing to add to its achievements;
- Participate in consolidating and promoting the ideals, values and practices of peace and democracy as stated in the Constitution and laws of the Seychelles;
- Show respect for self and all members of the community;
- Show respect and strengthen family values and traditions;
- Be courteous and willing to assist others at all times;

- Adopt at all times behaviour that is dignified and responsible;
- Adopt a teachable attitude to accept guidance from adults;
- Recognise and respect the rights of others;
- Fully take advantage of available education and training opportunities;
- Contribute to the socio-economic progress and social stability of Seychelles;
- Develop a positive attitude towards work;
- Participate in the protection of the environment and the promotion of sustainable development for the wellbeing of future generations;
- Actively promote positive and healthy lifestyles and behaviours.

OBLIGATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ADULTS

The Policy underlines the importance of adults in the development, guidance and training of young people and confers upon them the obligation to:

- Act in an exemplary manner and put into practice the values and laws upon which the Seychellois society is based;
- Provide emotional, psychological, moral and economical support to the young people under their charge whether from parental, legal or professional responsibility;
- Accept young people, not only in respect to their potential to be of service to society but also with regard to their differences, preferences and particular needs;
- Help young people to develop responsibility for themselves and have capacity to stand on their own;
- Collaborate in developing programmes aimed at the youth and offer to share skills and knowledge voluntarily for the benefit of young people and the community in which they live;
- Be sensitive to young people and their difficulties by entering into dialogue with them, suggesting solutions, exchanging views and developing understanding and communication;
- Be willing to work on committees or advisory groups in partnership with young people to achieve the aims and objectives set out in the Policy.

PRIORITY AREAS FOR ACTION

The development and welfare of young people are the responsibility of several ministries and agencies, each of which offer clearly defined services and programmes. Youth development requires a multi-disciplined approach to achieve maximum benefit to individuals and the community. The Policy aims to complement, strengthen and support existing policies of all ministries and civil societies which offer youth development programmes and services.

The Policy identifies the following priority areas for action:

1. Education and Training

Quality education and relevant training which meet the needs of the youth are key to future prosperity of Seychelles. The offers should match young people's capabilities and ambitions and equip them with all relevant skills and knowledge to join the world of work.

Close collaboration with the ministries responsible for education and labour, the private sector and all other stakeholders in training must be established to ensure that courses offered by educational institutions match the demands of the labour market.

The Policy's objective is to contribute to the development of a knowledgeable and disciplined youth population equipped with the appropriate skills to play an active role in the socio-economic development of Seychelles.

2. Economic participation

The principle of equal opportunity for all young people to be trained for and enter employment of their choice depending on labour demand should be emphasised and practiced. Youth entrepreneurship has also proven to foster economic participation.

It is therefore the Policy's aim to enhance youth participation in the economy by working closely with the ministries responsible for education, training and labour to increase youth employability as well as promote self employment by accompanying young people who manifest the entrepreneurial spirit.

3. Health and Well being

A healthy body and mind is a fundamental requirement for living a meaningful, productive and active life. Healthy eating habits and participation in physical, socio-cultural and recreational activities help young people live a healthy lifestyle and spend their leisure time in meaningful ways for the welfare of themselves, their families and the community.

It is the intention of the Policy to contribute to the improvement of the knowledge of youth about preventive health care. Effort will continuously be put in the provision of accurate information, sensitisation programmes, efficient socio-recreational and educational activities. Strategies will also be put in place to help youth leading unhealthy lifestyles.

4. Social ills

The growing number of youth engaging in anti social behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse, prostitution and criminal activities in Seychelles is cause for concern. These negative behavioural patterns and lifestyles result in number of health challenges and they also have an adverse effect on the productivity of young people.

In order to successfully address the growing social ills closely related to young people, the Policy endeavours to develop programmes and activities which support character building of the youth.

5. Responsible sexual behavior

Given the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, teenage and unplanned pregnancy as well as abortion, emphasis should be placed and sustained on key areas such as policies,

communication, awareness and behaviour change. Access to affordable treatment and counseling for those infected and affected should continue to be available. The protection of youth under the law should also be maintained and promoted.

It is the Policy's aim to ensure that young people have the capacity and knowledge required to make responsible choices with regards to their sexuality.

6. Environment

Seychelles' leadership in the area of the protection of the environment is recognised on the international scene. Protection and awareness of the importance of a healthy environment for the future well being of the nation is essential. Young people should continuously be provided with adequate information on environmental issues to help them understand the country's biodiversity and be encouraged to adopt good environmental practices in their everyday life.

In view of the importance of a healthy environment to national development, this Policy recognises that the role of the youth in ensuring good environmental practices and sustainable development should be highlighted.

7. Culture

Seychellois culture serves as a source of pride in the nation's heritage and joy of living. It allows for a better understanding and appreciation for the identity and heritage of the country.

Young people should be supported in developing their artistic and creative abilities and be carriers as well as ambassadors of our cultural values. Their sense of pride in their creole culture should be enhanced. Accordingly, it is the Policy's endeavour to promote youth participation in arts and cultural activities at national and international level.

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8. Access to accurate information and responsible use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

Access to information is not restricted to access to information technologies and media. It also applies to the type of information available to young people. Accurate and age appropriate information can enable youth to make informed decisions about the different aspects of their lives. In today's world, a good knowledge information and communication technology (ICT) is essential for personal, business and national growth.

The goal of this Policy is to give youth appropriate means for them to develop a strong information culture and to make use ICT in a safe and productive manner. Young people should be equipped with tools to use information and ICT for productive purposes, to recognise and stay away from the negative effects of these technologies.

9. Morality/Spirituality

Moral and spiritual values are essential to the wholesome development and well being of young people. The launching of the Social Renaissance programme by President James Alix Michel in 2011 was a strong appeal for the return to the core values of the Seychellois society so as to ensure the successful progression of the country both socially and economically. A youth with strong moral and spiritual sense is essential in guaranteeing social cohesion.

Consequently, the ambition of the Policy is to engage youth in programmes for their positive development by strengthening their sense of core values and encouraging them to create a positive change in their lives and in the lives of others.

10. Volunteerism

Volunteering plays a vital transforming role in society. It instills a sense of community implication and a habit of services amongst young people. It is vital in the development of positive values and attributes towards the most vulnerable in our society and their environment. It is also a tool which develops leadership skills.

The Policy aims to make volunteerism attractive to young people and encourage them to engage in activities for the good of their communities.

11. Youth Empowerment

Empowering the youth is guaranteeing the nation's prosperous future. To enable them to play their role as architects of our great nation, they should take ownership of opportunities available to them and urged to make great use of them to realise their dreams, to participate fully in society and be responsible citizens.

The Policy recognises that youth should be considered as partners and involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of initiatives geared towards them. Such approach will instill a clear sense of purpose and a desire for them to reach their personal goals and strengthen their sense of belonging to the society.

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

The Policy acknowledges that close collaboration with all stakeholders is important for the successful realisation of the Policy's vision, goal and objectives. It provides a framework for collective action and coordination of approaches for youth development among governmental institutions, civil society organisations and all other stakeholders working towards youth empowerment.

The Policy outlines the following mechanisms to be in place for implementation.

The Ministry responsible for Youth is responsible to:

- i. Coordinate the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and review of the Policy.
- ii. Design key performance indicators and mechanisms to ensure adherence to Policy.
 - i. Ensure that the necessary human and financial resources are made available for the attainment of the objectives outlined in the Policy.
- iii. Conduct research to ensure that youth work is respondent to the youth's needs, views and aspirations.
- iv. Provide the necessary framework for the youth to fulfill their obligation as stated in the Policy;

The Policy also recognises the importance of the Seychelles National Youth Council (SNYC) in ensuring the successful implementation of this important document.

The SNYC is expected to fulfill the following objectives:

- i. Provide a platform for youth development activities.
- ii. Strengthen and support district and regional youth structures to ensure that programmes and services are delivered at community level.
- iii. Act as an advisory body to the Government to ensure that the latter is kept informed of the views and aspirations of the youth.
- iv. Consolidate partnership with its local and international partners.

The role of civil society organisations and all other stakeholders in youth empowerment is fully acknowledged in the Policy. The following roles will continue to be expected from them:

- i. Integrate priority areas outlined in the Policy in their programmes and activities.
- ii. Participate actively in initiatives and programmes of the SNYC.

POLICY REVIEW

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The Policy will be reviewed every five years.

CONCLUSION

Young people are leaders of today and as such, they must be given the adequate tools to successfully fulfill the responsibilities and obligations expected of them by the Nation. The Policy fully understands the necessity to provide all Seychellois youth with opportunities to hone their leadership skills, to trace a bright future for themselves and to better the lives of those around them. Through this Policy, all young Seychellois are called upon to take their rightful place as partners in national development.