

## SEYCHELLES PRESENTATION

### SIDS GLOBAL BUSINESS NETWORK (SIDS-GBN) PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIP FORUM 21-22 MAY 2018, MAURITIUS

Excellencies, Fellow delegates, Ladies and gentlemen. Good morning. On behalf of Seychelles I would like to thank the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing State (UN-OHRLLS) for the opportunity to participate in this conference. I would also like to thank Mauritius for the warm welcome and for being a wonderful host.

It is a pleasure to share with you today the case of Seychelles Ministry of Tourism sustainability scheme.

The concept of sustainable development is not new to Seychelles as a country. Being a small island nation with many challenges Seychelles has a strong political commitment to ensure the continuous development and prosperity of its nation.

Tourism remains at the centre of development of Seychelles in view of its importance to the economy. According to the World Tourism Travel Council the total tourism contribution to Seychelles GDP is approximately 58%.

Sustainable tourism in Seychelles is governed by various documents developed over the years. Two examples being the 'Vision 21', a strategic plan for the development of tourism in Seychelles for 2001-2010 as well as the Seychelles Tourism Master Plan 2012-2020 which is currently under review.

Perhaps the most significant document to date pending the Ministry's newest policy and strategic plan is the ***Seychelles Sustainable Development Strategy (SSDS) 2012-2020*** which is a national action plan developed to replace the environment management plan 2000 - 2010. The document addresses sustainability across all sectors and is a result of consultations with various stakeholders and groups, including community groups.

Under the tourism and aesthetic thematic area, it identified 2 goals.

Goal 1 is To Promote a Sustainable Tourism Industry with the objectives to minimize the negative impact of tourism development on the environment and society and To promote the sustainable management of existing local and natural resources within the industry

Goal 2 aims to Enhance the economic benefits of tourism for the local communities by promoting Seychellois involvement in tourism development and preserving and promoting cultural heritage and traditional values of Seychelles

One of the major programmes under Goal 1 of the SSDS has been the development and implementation of a Sustainable Tourism Label for accommodation businesses.

The implementation of this Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label (SSTL) which falls under the purview of the Ministry of Tourism addresses the strategic objectives towards the promotion of a sustainable tourism industry. The mission of the label is to encourage hotel enterprises to mainstream sustainability practices into their business operations to safeguard the biodiversity and culture of Seychelles. Under the label, hotels have invested in green technologies for renewable energy. Water conservation, waste management, environment conservation, staffing and

community involvement are also important elements of this label. At Constance Ephelia Resort for example, one of our champion hotels has implemented a number of sustainable activities.

- The hotel has in place a Towel and linen re-use programme
- They have invested in Water saving toilets and washing machines
- electronic water meters have been installed at strategic areas for more effective monitoring
- Installed floating valves at swimming pools which automatically shuts off when the pool is full
- The hotel also operates its own desalination plant and water bottling plant supplying 52% drinking water (guestrooms, swimming pools, fitness center)

In terms of waste management

- Use of biodegradable items
- Purchase items in bulk
- Donate Used items to the community
- Compost green waste
- Use eco friendly cleaning products and pesticides
- All these actions have resulted in Monthly waste volume being reduced by 10 tonnes/month

As part of their efforts at energy management they have installed

- Presence detection sensor in guestrooms
- Ceiling fans in guestrooms as an alternative to aircon
- Energy saving light bulbs
- Energy efficient equipment and appliances
- Heat exchange system from chillers and generators providing hot water for entire resort
- Photovoltaic system used for bottling plant
- Constant monitoring of all major equipments (chillers, freezers)
- Meteorological data monitoring (possible solar or wind energy development)

Other activities have been for

- Providing a conducive workplace and encouraging good team spirit (OHS, staff welfare, training, bonus system, team building activities, national events)
- CSR donations for community projects including the conservation of wetlands
- Respecting business ethics and human rights, diversity of cultures, equal employment opportunity, code against employment of minors, sexual harassment & exploitation, gender equality

Some of these activities have successfully been replicated at other certified properties from large international brands in the likes of the Hilton Labriz Silhouette Resort, Four Seasons Resort, Kempinski Resort as well as smaller locally owned establishments Chalets D'Anse Forbans and Acajou.

Challenges exist in the implementation of the label. Uptake has been slow and the ministry has looked at various ways in which to increase certifications. International recognition to increase credibility for the label was put on the agenda and we are proud to say that in April 2017, the label obtained recognition status by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council. the SSTL criteria has been integrated in the hotel classification criteria with the aim of ensuring that all our 3 to 5 star resorts and high end small tourism establishments are sustainable tourism products. Under discussion with

the Seychelles Tourism Board is the development of a more effective marketing plan/strategy for the label that will target the hotels but also the DMCs and international Tour Operators. Free technical assistance is offered for the smaller establishments

Partnerships between the hotels and civil society has also yielded positive results especially in terms of environment protection and biodiversity conservation initiatives such as wetland management and reef rehabilitation and restoration projects.

The Ministry is currently looking at expanding the label to include other tourism activities both land and marine based.

Despite the successes there are still challenges. Seychelles economy is small and there is limited financial and human capacity from both the public and private. There is also still a need for education of tourism operators that sustainability is not only the protection of the environment.

In all our efforts we have to acknowledge the contributions of our partners who continue to push for sustainable development. Government agencies, Tourism associations, NGOs, other local and international organizations. We have come a long way, but we are not there yet.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.