



# Seychelles and FAO

## *Partnering for sustainable agricultural development and food security*

Since Seychelles joined the Organization in 1977, FAO has provided continuous technical assistance despite the small island state's income status: in July 2015 Seychelles was classified in the high-income category. Interventions have comprised policy and programme formulation, including the development of a strong agricultural information base, and a wide range of projects supporting effective management of scarce natural resources across the country's agricultural sector. Recent features of cooperation include capacity building for soil and water management.

### Forest genetic resources inventory

The forestry sector in Seychelles faces a number of challenges, including the spread of urbanization and physical infrastructure development, particularly on the main island, the planting of new forests with introduced timber species, indiscriminate logging of endemic timber species and – over the last 40 years – a proliferation of invasive creepers, compounded by degenerative diseases of some major forest species. In addition, current forest law prohibits development on about 50 percent of the country's land area, which is a limiting factor for agricultural production, with negative effects on food and nutrition security.

In order to reassess the genetic composition of Seychelles' major forests, a forestry genetic resources inventory was recently conducted under an FAO TCP project. The inventory provided an insight into the existing composition of forest species, noting a significant spread of introduced exotic timber species. With regard to the invasive creepers, alarmingly it indicated that such species can modify the genetic composition of the forests and, as a result, decrease the ecosystem services provided by the forests. This results in negative impacts on water resources, which has serious implications considering the current context of climate change and extreme weather events.

### Matching FAO's expertise to Seychelles' development priorities

The Organization's assistance in Seychelles is shaped by the 2014-2017 FAO Country Programming Framework (CPF), which centres on three priority areas:

- **Development of the legislative, investment and policy environment**, with the aim of improving national food security and nutrition and harmonizing Seychelles' domestic policies and laws with its international obligations.
- **The introduction of agro-forestry to support improved productivity and enhanced food security**, through sustainable production and management of natural resources that mitigate effects of climate change. This includes the formulation and strengthening of management frameworks in the land, water and forestry sectors.
- **The creation and enhancement of more inclusive and efficient agribusinesses and agrifood chains**, including the development of local markets and production-to-consumption value chains that support the entry of small-scale producers onto the local tourist market.

Jointly developed with the Government of Seychelles, the CPF is aligned with relevant priorities in key national development policies, including the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the draft national policy on food and nutrition security (NFNSP) and sectoral strategies.

#### CONTACTS

##### Patrice Talla

FAO Representative to Seychelles (residing in Madagascar)  
FAO Representation  
Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture  
PO Box 408, Caravelle House, Victoria  
Mahe, Seychelles  
Tel: (+248) 4378312  
E-mail: FAO-SC@fao.org

## Building capacities for soil and water management

As a small island developing state (SIDS), Seychelles is particularly prone to the effects of climate change and global warming, which have negative impacts on agricultural production and hence food and nutrition security. Over the last twenty years, extreme weather events resulting from climate change have become more

*“Small island developing states face considerable challenges, but they also have great potential.”*

**José Graziano da Silva**  
FAO Director-General

frequent and more violent, with heavy rainstorms sometimes lasting up to five days, alternated with prolonged periods of drought. Rainstorms in particular disrupt agricultural production on slopes as well as on lowlands where floods are common, and they lead to loss of cultivated soils through soil erosion. After the five-day tropical storm *Felleng* struck in January 2013, FAO helped more than 150 small commercial farmers restore their livelihoods. Further technical assistance is currently being provided through a TCP aiming to ensure that Government staff are well equipped to advise farmers on improved soil and water management techniques; land drainage and flood defence measures for the coastal plains; and soil and water conservation measures for steeply sloping land. By adopting these measures, farmers will also be able to access longer leases to land. The initiative is also expected to recommend policy changes on length of land tenure to take into account improvements made in drainage and conservation of soil and water resources.

## Human nutrition and health

Around 80 percent of food consumed in Seychelles is currently imported from distant markets and at a high costs. Furthermore, many affordable imported foods contain a high percentage of sugar, and over the past 20 years this has contributed to an increase in obesity, which affects about 60 percent of the country's adult population and more than 20 percent of children. Obesity can also lead to cardiovascular diseases, hypertension and diabetes, which are the main causes of death and morbidity in Seychelles.

To help address the situation, FAO is assisting the country in the implementation of a multi-sectoral food and nutrition security project that also envisages the development of a national multi-sectoral nutrition policy. At the same time, another FAO project aims to provide a coherent and practical regulatory and legislative framework to support implementation of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy (NFNSP).

## Agricultural investment planning

As a member of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the African Union and also the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Seychelles is involved in regional initiatives designed to enhance regional food and nutrition security, regional integration and cross-border trade.

In this context, FAO has assisted in the formulation of the Seychelles National Agricultural Investment Plan (SNAIP), in collaboration with COMESA and NEPAD. Launched at a Round Table meeting in November 2015, the plan is based on five programmatic areas and amounts to a total of US\$108 million. In addition, a new strategic framework, the Agriculture Sector Development Study (ASDS) has been developed. Launched in February 2016, the ASDS also contains five programmatic areas, amounting to US\$20 million.

## Global knowledge transfer

Seychelles has always been a keen advocate of mutual cooperation among developing countries – formalized under FAO's South-South Cooperation (SCC) programme.

The country has built up a broad network for the exchange of expertise and technologies in agriculture and fisheries sectors in particular.

A firm partnership was established with Cuba and India from the outset, while formal bilateral agreements have also been concluded with several other countries, including Mauritius, Reunion, Egypt, Israel, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Thailand, Philippines and China.

In addition to capacity building, SSC arrangements have included the transfer of germplasm to support improved production of tropical root crops, fruit and vegetables in Seychelles.

