

Statement delivered by
Mr Keven Nancy
Principal Secretary for Agriculture of Seychelles
on the occasion of the 44th Session of the FAO Conference (28 June – 4 July 2025)
2 July 2025

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

It is an honour and a privilege for me to speak on behalf of the Republic of Seychelles at this esteemed 44th Session of the FAO Conference. Allow me first to extend our deep appreciation to FAO for organizing this important gathering and for its continued leadership in shaping global priorities on food and agriculture.

The FAO Conference is an essential forum where Members come together to review progress, discuss common challenges, and chart a collaborative pathway in the pursuit of a more food-secure, resilient, and inclusive world. We are proud to be part of this global dialogue.

Chairperson, I must acknowledge that I arrived slightly later than anticipated to this Conference, as I was attending the Seychelles Agriculture and Food Fair 2025, held annually as part of our Independence Day celebrations, which is on the 29th of June. This event underscores the deep cultural and economic importance of agriculture to the people of Seychelles, despite the many challenges we face.

As a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), Seychelles faces unique and compounded vulnerabilities. These include:

The adverse impacts of climate change, including rising sea levels, and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns;

Limited arable land and fragile ecosystems;

High dependency on food imports – currently we are importing more than 85 percent of our food;

Exposure to global geopolitical tensions and economic shocks that disrupt supply chains and inflate food prices.

In this context, achieving food and nutrition security is not only a national development priority – it is a matter of sovereignty and resilience.

The theme of this year's conference, "Promoting innovation to ensure food security", could not be more timely. Innovation is not a luxury for Seychelles, it is a necessity.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment (MACCE) has established a clear vision for a sustainable, productive, and resilient agricultural sector. As outlined in the MACCE Strategic Plan 2025–2030, our mission is to foster a thriving environment driven by clean energy and sustainable food systems.

The strategic goals guiding our efforts include:

Sustainably increasing local food production and consumption to reduce dependence on imports and strengthening national food security;

Promoting value-added and diversified agricultural activities to create jobs, empower rural communities, and boost GDP contributions;

Investing in biosecurity capabilities to protect our ecosystems and agricultural sector from pests and diseases in an increasingly interconnected world.

These goals align seamlessly with the FAO's Four Betters – and with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

Seychelles also recognizes the enormous potential of the Blue Economy. With an Exclusive Economic Zone of over 1.3 million square kilometers, our marine resources are central to both our national identity and our food system.

Fisheries remain one of our most important sectors, contributing significantly to employment, exports, and protein intake. Sustainable management of marine ecosystems and the expansion of aquaculture are integral in our efforts to reduce pressure on wild stocks, diversify food sources, and enhance nutritional outcomes.

Seychelles deeply values its collaboration with FAO. We are currently engaging with FAO under several key programmes and initiatives:

1. Joint efforts to address rising obesity and non-communicable diseases in Seychelles. Alarming, over 60 percent of our population is classified as overweight or obese. The promotion of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food education is critical in reversing this trend.
2. Participation in the FAO African Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Support Programme, which recognizes the shared challenges of SIDS and promotes regional cooperation and knowledge exchange.

Seychelles is committed to agro-processing and value addition, especially for high-potential sectors such as beekeeping and aquaculture. These initiatives not only diversify our economy but also create opportunities for youth, women, and smallholder farmers.

We are also investing in digital tools, smart agriculture, and climate-resilient technologies, while strengthening institutional capacity to better support our farmers and fishers.

Moreover, the Seychelles National Development Strategy 2024–2028 reaffirms agriculture as a key development pillar, emphasizing the need to increase local production, reduce food loss and waste, and build integrated value chains. Seychelles firmly believes that with the right policies, partnerships, and support mechanisms, small island states can become models of sustainability and innovation. We must continue to invest in the people, promote inclusive agricultural transformation, and protect our natural resources for future generations.

By putting in place the enabling environment – through policy reform, institutional strengthening, and investing in innovation – our farmers, fishers, and food producers can rise to the occasion and contribute meaningfully to national and regional food and nutrition security.

In this spirit, Seychelles reaffirms its commitment to the goals and programmes of FAO and stands ready to deepen collaboration with fellow Members and partners to build a more sustainable, and a food secured world, leaving no one behind.

I thank you.