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| FISHERY COUNTRY PROFILE | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations | FID/CP/SYC  November 2005 |
| PROFIL DE LA PÊCHE PAR PAYS | Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture | |
| RESUMEN INFORMATIVO SOBRE LA PESCA POR PAISES | Organización de las Naciones Unidas para la Agricultura y la Alimentación | |

THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES
GENERAL GEOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC DATA

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Area: | 444 km ² |
| Water area: | 1.3 million km ² |
| Shelf Area: | 50 000 km ² |
| Length of continental coastline: | 600 km |
| Population (2003): | 83 640 |
| GNI current (2003): | US\$ 684.8 million |
| GNI per head (2003): | US\$ 7 360 |
| Agricultural GDP (2003): | 3.3% of GDP |

FISHERIES DATA

| 2003 | Production | Imports | Exports | Stocks variation | Total Supply | Per Caput Supply |
|---|--------------------|---------|---------|------------------|--------------|------------------|
| | tonnes live weight | | | | | kg/year |
| Fish for direct human consumption | 86 869 | 87 174 | 76 457 | 0 | 4 938 | 61.0 |
| Fish for animal feed and other purposes | 92 647 | | | | | |

| | |
|--|-------|
| Estimated Employment (2005): | |
| (i) Primary sector (including aquaculture) | 2 000 |
| (ii) Secondary sector: | 3 600 |

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Gross Value of Fisheries Output (2003): | \$US 212 million |
| Trade (2003): | |
| Value of Fisheries Imports: | \$US 67.5 million |
| Value of Fisheries Exports: | \$US 210.87 million |

Fishery sector structure

The Seychelles fishery sector has three main components: artisanal fisheries, carried out by local fishers, with small, motorized boats targeting mainly demersal and semi-pelagic species; semi-industrial fishery, consisting of small (from 14 to 22 m LOA), locally-owned long-liners targeting pelagic species (mainly tuna and swordfish); and industrial fisheries, comprising foreign-owned purse seiners and large long-liners primarily targeting tuna species (yellowfin and skipjack). There is a fish processing industry, with two fish processing plants producing for both the local market and export, and a large canning factory processing an average of 350 tonne of tuna a day, mostly for the export market. Table 1 summarizes the fleets and their annual landings.

Table 1. The fleets and their annual landings.

| Vessel Type | No. of licences issued | Total catch (tonnes) | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| | | 2002 | 2003 |
| Purse seiners | 48 | 379 253 | 407 684 |
| Longliners | 415 | 6 792 | 6 273 |
| Semi-industrial vessels | 7 | 247 | 92 |
| Artisanal | 417 | 4 915 | 3 852 |

Notes: (1) As of March 2005 there were 45 licensed foreign purse seiners, of which 34 were Spanish and French (under the EU Agreement) and the remaining 11 were registered in the Seychelles (foreign-owned vessels). (2) The long-liners are Taiwanese- and Japanese-owned, generally operating on a 6-month licence.

Source: SFA Annual Report 2004

Marine subsector

Artisanal fishery

The artisanal fishery targets demersal resources, such as *Lutjanus* spp. (snappers), *Aprion virescens* (green jobfish), *Epinephelus* spp. (groupers), *Lethrinids* spp. (capitaines) and semi-demersal *Carangoides* spp. (trevally), which are found mostly on the Mahe and Amirantes plateaus. The total landings for the artisanal fishery have remained fairly constant for the last 20 years, with approximately 4 000 tonne of fish landed annually. The breakdown of the main species landed by the artisanal fishery is given in Table 2.

Table 2. Percentage catch composition in artisanal fisheries, 1998–2003

| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Trevally (<i>Carangoides spp</i>) | 30.0 | 30.0 | 37.0 | 30.0 | 41.6 | 33.6 |
| Red Snapper (<i>Lutjanus spp</i>) | 13.0 | 10.0 | 8.7 | 14.1 | 10.0 | 11.5 |
| Jobfish (<i>Aprion virescens</i>) | 18.0 | 17.0 | 11.6 | 16.4 | 12.4 | 15.8 |
| Emperors (<i>Lethrinus spp</i>) | 8.0 | 5.0 | 8.9 | 11.3 | 6.9 | 6.1 |
| Bonito (<i>Euthynnus spp</i>) | 1.0 | 3.0 | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.5 | 3.5 |
| Grouper (<i>Epinephelus spp</i>) | 3.0 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 2.4 |
| Others | 22.0 | 18.0 | 19.2 | 16.3 | 15.1 | 14.8 |
| Total Catch (MT) | 3,334.0 | 4,842.0 | 4,764.0 | 4,290.0 | 4,915.0 | 3,852.0 |

Source SFA Annual Report

By far the most important fishery, accounting for more than 73% of total fish landings, is the handline fishery. All types of fishing vessels are involved in this fishery, and these include:

- 280 fibreglass vessels, 5 m LOA and powered by 25–40 hp outboard engines. These boats were introduced into the Seychelles in 1977.
- 30 *Lekonomi*-type vessels, which are 6.5 m LOA fibreglass vessels equipped with an icebox and a one- or two-cylinder inboard engine.
- 91 whaler-type vessels, which are traditional clinker-constructed vessels, 9–12 m LOA, with inboard engines. These are now mostly partially decked and can accommodate a crew of 6–7 persons. Most whalers are now equipped with iceboxes and do trips of 3–6 days.
- 16 schooners, which are wooden-hull, decked vessels, usually between 10 and 13 m LOA and equipped with a three- or four-cylinder diesel inboard engine, with an icebox of 2 500–3 000 kg capacity. Schooners do trips averaging 8 days on the edge of the Mahe and Amirantes plateaus.

The other main subsector is the trap fishery, accounting for 15% of total landings. This fishery targets mostly species associated with reef and shallow coral banks. The fishery is strongly seasonal, being active when adverse weather conditions force fishermen to operate in inshore areas (sometimes inside the reefs).

There is an important net fishery, which targets mainly mackerel (*Rastrelliger spp.*) using encircling nets. All nets are licensed, and small outboard-powered vessels carry out the operation with a crew of 3–4 persons.

A potentially important small-seine fishery for small pelagics, in particular horse mackerel (*Decapterus spp.*), was identified on the Mahe plateau in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with a total biomass of 150 000 tonne and a proposed maximum sustainable yield (MSY) of 45 000. The snapper crab (*Ranina ranina*) fishery, introduced in the 1980s, is a limited fishery utilizing scoop nets on the flat sandy bottom of the Mahe plateau. The fishery involves three vessels, with annual landing averaging between 10 and 30 tonne for the last 10 years.

The lobster fishery is a seasonal fishery with an open season from the beginning of November to the end of January. Lobsters are harvested at night by skin divers using underwater lights. This fishery, however, was closed for the 2003 and 2004 seasons.

Another relatively new fishery is the sea cucumber fishery, carried out by skin and scuba divers. This is a limited-entry fishery, with only 25 licences granted to fishermen and 3 to processors and exporters.

Shark fishery, mostly by longline, has increased in importance in the last 5 years. In view of the high demand for shark fins from Far Eastern markets, the fishery has shifted from a purely bycatch fishery to a target fishery, with most fishermen keeping only the fins and discarding the carcass at sea. A shark action plan for the management of the species has been proposed and should be implemented in the near future.

Semi-industrial fishery

This fishery targets swordfish and tuna stocks found outside the Mahe plateau, but mostly within the Seychelles EEZ. The fishery started in the mid-1990s and now involves 7 vessels ranging in size from 14 to 22 m LOA each, with an average of 5–6 crew. Most vessels were constructed overseas, mostly in Sri Lanka, and are equipped with modern electronic equipment and monofilament longline spools.

The peak annual landing of the semi-industrial fleet was approximately 500 tonne, with swordfish being the predominant species (60% of the catch), followed by yellowfin and big-eye tuna. The catch is sold to the two local exporting companies, exporting mostly to the European Union (EU) (principally France, Italy and the United Kingdom). In the last two years, however, there has been a considerable decline in the catch (with landings of less than 100 tonne in 2003), due mostly to a ban on swordfish exports to the EU (in view of a high level of cadmium in swordfish).

Industrial fishery

The industrial fishery is operated by foreign-owned, licensed vessels, including some Seychelles-registered vessels, and has two main categories. The purse seine fishery (mainly French and Spanish vessels under the EU agreement) targets mostly surface-swimming tuna (skipjack and yellowfin), and the longline fishery (mainly Taiwanese and Japanese vessels) targets deep-swimming big-eye and yellowfin tuna.

The catch from purse seiners has remained stable over the last 10 years, with around 300 000 tonne of tuna caught in waters in the South-West Indian Ocean (including 15% in the Seychelles EEZ). In the last two years, however, the catch has been exceptionally high, with landings of over 359 000 tonne, the dominant species being yellowfin (Source: SFA Annual Report).

Approximately 85% of the tuna catch from purse seiners is transshipped in Port Victoria, with around 90 000 tonne being landed for processing by the Indian Ocean Tuna factory.

Inland subsector

In view of the abundant supply of marine fish and the severe shortage of fresh water, inland fisheries are negligible.

Recreational subsector

There is an important recreational fisheries subsector active mostly at weekends and in the evenings. These recreational fishers utilize mostly handline fishing techniques, targeting demersal species such as groupers, snappers and lethrins, and semi-demersal species such as carangids and sphyraenids (the later being caught only at night).

Aquaculture subsector

Although several aquaculture projects have been proposed in Seychelles, only three projects have been implemented. The availability of land and freshwater resources being a limiting factor, any aquaculture project would have to be marine-based aquaculture, i.e. mariculture. There are currently three active mariculture projects in Seychelles, all being located outside Mahé. These are the Coetivy Prawn Farm, and the Pearl Oyster Farm and the Giant Clam Farm, both located on Praslin.

The Prawn Farm

The Prawn Farm is operated by the Seychelles Marketing Board and is located on Coetivy Island, 300 km from Mahé. The farming operation started in 1989 and now occupies at least half of the island (including housing facilities for the staff), with 200 rearing ponds covering a total area of 80 ha. The main species reared is the giant black tiger prawn (*Penaeus monodon*), with brood stocks still imported from Madagascar and Mozambique. In 2003, 835 tonne of frozen prawn were exported, worth SR 37.9 million.

Pearl Oyster Farm

The Praslin Ocean Farm Ltd. was established in 1995 and is located in the National Park between Praslin and Curieuse, covering a total area of 18.7 ha. An underwater longline system (demarcated by surface buoys) is used for the production of adult oysters and the collection of spats (oyster juveniles) from the wild.

Giant Clam Farm

The Giant Clam farm, which is under the same management as the Pearl Oyster farm, was established in 1993. The clams are reared in four raceways located on land at L'Amitie, next to the Praslin airport.

Table 3 shows exports of prawns, pearl oysters, and clams from Seychelles

Table 3. Export of prawns, pearl oysters and giant clams from mariculture in the Seychelles

| Year | Frozen Prawns | | Pearls | | Giant Clams |
|------|-----------------|--------------|--------|---------|-------------|
| | Quantity (tons) | Value SR'000 | Rounds | ½ pearl | Number |
| 1992 | 14 | 338 | | | |
| 1993 | 62 | 2,750 | | | 1,100 |
| 1994 | 38 | 1,855 | | | 1,960 |
| 1995 | 128 | 6,874 | | | 1,890 |
| 1996 | 188 | 10,893 | | | 1,110 |
| 1997 | 406 | 22,664 | 170 | 600 | 730 |
| 1998 | 581 | 34,103 | 800 | 100 | 426 |
| 1999 | 159 | 7,738 | 180 | 200 | 200 |
| 2000 | 345 | 18,867 | 270 | 110 | 400 |
| 2001 | 251 | 13,238 | 15 | <10 | 200 |
| 2002 | 218 | 8,734 | - | - | 600 |
| 2003 | 835 | 37,976 | 622 | 128 | 300 |

Source: SFA Annual Report

Overall policy objectives

The long-term policy objectives of the Government of Seychelles for the fishing industry are “the promotion of sustainable fisheries development and optimizing the benefits from the fisheries sector for the present and future generations”.

The policy statement focuses mainly on the following objectives:

- To promote the conservation and management of marine resources to ensure the long-term viability of the industry.
- To generate the maximum amount of employment.
- To maximize revenue from fisheries and related activities.
- To maximize foreign exchange earnings.
- To promote the maximum linkage with the sectors.
- To promote safety at sea.
- To maintain Port Victoria as the major tuna landing and transshipment port in the Western Indian Ocean.

Measures and institutional arrangements

Technical measures

- Closed seasons have been introduced for the lobster fishery, with fishing prohibited from the beginning of February to the end of October. In addition, a minimum carapace length at capture has been set for each lobster species, and the capture of berried females is prohibited.
- There is a restricted fishing period for the mackerel gillnet fishery, with no fishing allowed at night, i.e. from 16:00 to 05:00.
- There are protected fishing areas along the reef for all three main granitic islands, where fishing with nets is prohibited.
- Marine Parks have been set up, mainly around the granitic islands, where all fishing activity is prohibited.
- Mesh sizes have been established for fish traps, with a minimum mesh size of 40 mm diameter.
- Restricted zones have been set for foreign fishing vessels, prohibiting fishing activity within 3 km from the 200-m isobath.

Input controls

- The number of licences granted to foreign purse seiners has been capped at around 50.
- Catching of sharks with nets is prohibited, and in the new proposed shark management plans all vessels with an LOA >24 m must keep the fins attached to the carcass.
- Demersal trawling and use of spearguns are prohibited in Seychelles waters.
- Live fish fishery for export has been prohibited.
- Mother ship ventures (with dories) are prohibited on the Mahe and Amirantes plateaus, and restricted to only some offshore banks in the Southern Islands. This in effect makes such ventures economically unviable.
- The number of licenses for the sea-cucumber fishery and lobster fishery has been capped at 25.

Output controls

A sea cucumber management plan has recently (August 2005) been drafted with the assistance of FAO. The fishery is based on a shared quota system for the four major species, with a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) set for each species. The TAC for the sea cucumber fishery is 425 tonne/year, divided equally among all licence holders. The individual quotas are, however, transferable, subject to the authorization of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA).

Economic incentives

Local fishers benefit from soft loans from the Development Bank of the Seychelles (DBS) for purchase of new fishing boats and engines. Since 1995, interest-free loans have been available to fishermen under the Youth Enterprise Scheme (YES) to purchase their own boats and engines, up to a value of SR 50 000. Licensed fishermen also benefit from cheaper fuel through a fuel voucher scheme, where a rebate is offered on every litre of diesel or petrol purchased for commercial fishing operations. Local fishing companies involved in the

semi-industrial fishery targeting tuna and swordfish also benefited from various concessions under the former Investment Promotion Act (IPA), including duty-free fuel, and trades tax exemption on imports of bait and fishing material. In early 2005, the IPA was replaced by the Agriculture and Fisheries (Incentives) Act, 2005, which provides further duty exemptions and rebates for fuel and for imports of bait, fishing material and equipment, as well as exemption on Business Tax for boat owners with a profit of SR 240 000 or less, and 15% tax on profits exceeding that.

Fisher communities

There are no distinct fishermen communities in Seychelles and no fishing village as such. The fishermen are dispersed throughout the three main granitic islands.

Post-harvest use

Fish utilization and markets

Most of the catch is consumed fresh, and is sold in the district markets; the most important is Victoria, the capital.

High quality species (Serranidae and Lutjanidae) are usually sold to the main export and fish processing companies to be sold to the hotels or exported fresh on ice to Reunion and Europe. Only in times of glut are fish frozen, to be subsequently distributed, mostly for the lower end of the market.

There are currently 6 ice plants on Mahe, producing an average of 35–40 tonne of ice per day, and one on Praslin, producing 3 tonne/day. Due to the increase in fishing effort and the effect of large semi-industrial vessels entering the fishery, there is currently a constant shortage of ice, and SFA is addressing the problem. One processing company has two cold stores, with a total capacity of 600 tonne, whilst the other has a smaller cold store, of 40 tonne. In addition, there are two registered fishmongers that use freezer containers to store fish to be sold, mostly for the hotel trade and certain public institutions.

There are limited fish processing activities, such as smoking of marlin and sailfish, mostly for the hotel market. Some vessels fishing in the southern groups of islands undertake longer trips and seasonally salt fish for sale in the main islands. There is also a limited shark fishery, with vessels targeting sharks mostly for their fins, which are usually exported to the Far East for a premium price. In addition, in the last five years, an important sea cucumber fishery has developed, with the final salted product exported to the Far East.

The landings from the semi-industrial long-liner fishery – mainly swordfish (60%) and tuna (40%) – are exported fresh on ice, mostly to the EU (France, Italy and the United Kingdom), with some to Japan. In the last two years, however, there has been a considerable decline in the catch, which can be attributed to less fishing effort following the ban on swordfish exports to the EU.

In the industrial purse seine tuna fishery, the majority of the catch is transshipped to refrigerated vessels destined for Europe, Mauritius, Puerto Rico and Thailand. In 2003, 359 000 tonne of tuna was transshipped at Port Victoria, including 90 000 tonne delivered to the canning factory for processing.

In 2003, the export of fish and fish products accounted for 92% percent of Seychelles domestic exports, with the principal markets being France, Germany, Japan, Mauritius, Reunion and the United Kingdom.

Fishery sector performance

Economic role of fisheries in the national economy

Fishing has traditionally played an important part in the life of Seychellois people, and the fisheries sector has had a major role in the socio-economic development of the country. It provides important revenue from export and foreign exchange earnings, as well as being an invaluable source of animal protein. With the emergence in the mid-1980s of Port Victoria as the principal tuna transshipment port in the region, and the development of the Indian Ocean Tuna canning factory, becoming the largest national employer in the late 1990s, the fisheries sector has established itself as one of the key sectors in the Seychelles economy, even surpassing tourism in foreign exchange earnings. Indeed, figures from the Central Bank indicate that the gross inflow from fisheries in 2003 was SR 3 357 billion, or 12.5% more than earnings from tourism. Exports of fish and fish products in 2003 accounted for more than 92% of domestic export (Table 4).

Table 4. Quantity and value of export of fish and fish products in 2002 and 2003

| | 2002 | | 2003 | | % change | |
|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------------|-------------|--------------|
| | MT | SR, 000 | MT | SR, 000 | MT | SR, 000 |
| Fresh and frozen fish | 477.00 | 18 176.00 | 689.00 | 27 648.00 | 44.44 | 52.11 |
| Canned tuna | 34 791.00 | 843 670.00 | 35 757.00 | 1 023 142.00 | 2.78 | 21.27 |
| Frozen Prawns | 218.00 | 8 734.00 | 835.00 | 37 976.00 | 283.03 | 334.81 |
| Other processed fish | 2 713.00 | 47 259.00 | 1 724.00 | 27 853.00 | - 36.45 | - 41.06 |
| Dried shark fins & sea cucumber | 39.00 | 2 134.00 | 247.00 | 1 919.00 | 533.33 | -10.07 |
| Others | - | - | 9.00 | 108.00 | - | - |
| TOTAL | 32 238.00 | 919 973.00 | 39 261.00 | 1 118 646.00 | 2.68 | 21.60 |
| Total domestic export | | 959 609.00 | | 1 216 000.00 | | |
| % of domestics exports | | 95.87 | | 91.99 | | |

Source: SFA Annual Report

Besides the canning factory and the prawn farm, which together employ around 4 000 workers, representing 10% of formal employment, other people directly employed in the local fishing industry as of March 2005 amounted to around 1 750 fulltime fishermen, representing 5% of formal employment.

The fisheries sector has a strong multiplier effect in that it provides employment to many people involved in the marketing, processing and sale of fish and fish products. The sector also generates a number of jobs in ancillary activities, including trap manufacture; net mending; boat building and repair; and marine engine repair. The fishing sector also has close links with other sectors of the economy, such as tourism, services, processing and manufacture, agricultural production, craft, etc.

In the case of Seychelles, fishery does not play an important role in maintaining the local population at the place of birth in view of the small size of the country and the fact that fishermen move around. They are generally based at the main fishing port and the capital, Victoria.

Fishery sector development

Constraints

The fishing industry in Seychelles must overcome a range of problems and constraints that impede smooth development of this sector. One such constraint is high capital investment and operating costs relative to the low return on investment. In addition, the financial cost associated with the investment, such as high interest rates on loans and cost of insurance, represents a major hurdle to the individual investor. However, some resourceful entrepreneurs have been able to overcome these constraints to run viable ventures.

Another major constraint is the lack of an experienced and reliable labour force, which hampers the smooth development of the sector. Despite the efforts of the Maritime Training Centre (MTC) to train young people

for the industry, success has been negligible, with most graduates ending up in jobs outside the fishing industry. Thus, of a total of 150 students graduating from MTC between 1999 and 2004, only 19 are currently known to be working in marine-related fields. The labour supply constraint affects not only the artisanal fishery but also the industrial fishery, as they are unable to recruit fishermen to meet the quota for Seychellois seamen required to work on the industrial tuna fleet.

The labour problem is further aggravated by a recruitment factor affecting the artisanal fishing sector, resulting in an ageing manpower base. This problem needs to be addressed and MTC should play a leading role in this respect.

Although the situation for ice production has improved recently, with the construction of ice plants at Anse La Mouche and Anse Royale, the tsunami disaster caused a temporary disruption in ice production. Fortunately this coincided with a reduction in fishing effort due to the damage suffered by certain fishing vessels. A further major problem facing the industry is the periodic lack of fishing material and bait due to seasonal demand. This can have a serious impact on the performance of the industry as vessels have to wait longer in port awaiting supplies.

Finally, people have the tendency to regard fishing as a low-status job, normally preferring to enter other professions. This adverse public perception has serious repercussions for the development of the fisheries sector.

Development prospects – strategies and research programmes

Although further research and fishing trials may reveal new or unexploited resources, in general the opportunity for a large increase in the landings of demersal fish is moderate. There is potential for cautious further exploitation of the demersal resources in deeper waters at the edge of the plateaus and on small offshore banks beyond the Mahé and Amirantes plateaus.

Related to this, improvement in returns in the fishing sector requires more efficient post-harvest handling and quality control, thus maximizing export value. More investment by the private sector in fish processing facilities that meet internationally accepted standards of hygiene and quality control would also lead to an increased utilization rate and improved earnings. This would have a direct positive effect on the purchasing power of fishermen and contribute to improving the national employment situation.

Concerning research and development requirements, there is a need for new research surveys on snapper and grouper; on small pelagic fish stocks, including sardines, anchovies and horse mackerel; and deep-water demersal species, including *Decapterus* spp.

SFA is the principal authority for fisheries research in Seychelles. It has acquired a 21-m research vessel and has several ongoing research projects, including research on stock assessment; on fish aggregation; collection of biological data for the most valuable commercial species; on improving fishing techniques for the semi-industrial longline fishery; and on how to minimize predation from false killer whales.

Research is planned on deep-water resources (funded by the EU Agreements); on small-boat fishery species utilized for longline fishery; and possibly for local fishmeal manufacture.

In addition, collection of catch data and sampling for surface tuna is being pursued in cooperation with a French research institute (IRD) and the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

Foreign Aid

The Seychelles is currently receiving aid from several sources, particularly from the European Union and Japan. According to the commercial fishing agreement for tuna fishing signed between the Seychelles and the EU, a sum of € 1.4 million has been allocated every year for scientific research and fisheries development. Funds were also allocated by the EU in 2001 to provide assistance for the purchase of three semi-industrial long-liners for the monofilament tuna fishery. Japan has, in the last 20 years, provided six grant-aid projects with an average value of US\$ 5.0 million. These have been used to build ice plants, fishing quays and fishing port infrastructure, and to provide research and fishing vessels, as well as fishing equipment and engines for the development of the industry. The present ongoing project involves carrying out repairs to the fishing port facilities damaged by the recent tsunami disaster, and refurbishment of all ice plants built with grant aid since 1987.

FAO has also provided technical assistance to draft a management plan for the inshore fishery and to advise on legislation for the fishery. FAO has been assisting the Government of the Republic of Seychelles to update its legislation for vessels registered locally and flying flags of convenience, and on the responsibility of the Flag State.

The major objective of all foreign aid is to assist in the development of the local fishing industry so as to improve the volume of fish landings and the quality of the catch, and hence the fishers' income.

Fishery Sector Institutions

The Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources is the body responsible for all fisheries matters in Seychelles. The Ministry's main concern is to set policy guidelines, which are then implemented by SFA, which acts as the Executive Agency. The other important stakeholder involved in the fisheries sector is a private body, the Fishing Boat Owner's Association (FBOA). The main function of FBOA is to create a pro-active dialogue with the government authorities to improve transparency and alleviate many of the existing constraints between SFA and the fishing community. This is fundamental for future sustainable development of the fisheries sector. SFA can be contacted at <management@sfa.sc>.

General legal framework

The main legislation controlling fisheries in Seychelles comprises:

The Maritime Zone Act (1977). This Act proclaimed Seychelles as a sovereign state and established and defined the Seychelles EEZ, the baselines, the continental shelf, the territorial waters, the historic waters, etc.

The Fisheries Act (1987). This Act defined all the fisheries regulation concerning both local and foreign fishery. It established the major fisheries management measures, the fishing licensing procedures and fines for breaches of the licence regulations.

The Licences (Fisheries) Regulations (1987). This defines the various categories of fisheries licence, the conditions of the licence and the various fees for both local and foreign licences.

The Seychelles Fishing Authority (Establishment) Act (1984). This (in Article 5) defines the main functions of SFA as:

- To promote, organize and develop fishing industries and fisheries resources in Seychelles.
- To assist in the formulation of policy with respect to fishing development and fisheries resources.
- To conduct negotiations, engage in meetings, seminars or discussions with regard to fishing or fisheries and the establishment or operations of fishing industries, whether at a national or international level, on behalf of the Republic.
- To identify the human resources training requirements of Seychelles with regard to fishing and fishing industries.

SFA is therefore the only national fisheries organization, with a mandate to perform management, planning, development, scientific and training functions, as well regulatory functions, involving:

- Conducting surveillance in collaboration with the Coast Guard in relation to fishing operations in the Seychelles' EEZ.
- Monitoring the catch of all fishing vessels.
- Carrying out scientific and development research.