



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties
under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of
All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

**List of issues and questions in relation to the sixth periodic
report of Seychelles**

Addendum

Replies of Seychelles to the list of issues and questions*

[Date received: 15 May 2019]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



1. The Republic of Seychelles acceded without any reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 5th May 1992, which entered into force on the 4th June 1992. The Optional Protocol was signed on 22nd July 2002. It was ratified on 1st March 2011 and entered into force on 1st June 2011.
2. Seychelles' initial state party report on CEDAW was overdue since June 1993 and the country submitted one report which covered a period from 1993 to 2009; thus, comprising of the initial report with the second, third, fourth and fifth periodic reports. Seychelles defended this report to the CEDAW committee in October of 2013.
3. This current report was completed through the Ministry of Family Affairs, with compilation of data and information from Government, the private sector and civil society. A local consultant drafted the final report. The process consisted of direct contact in meetings with key stakeholders and email responses from others to the consultant.
4. The CEDAW Update Report 2019 focuses primarily on the List of Issues identified in CEDAW/C/SYC/Q/6.

Reply to paragraph 1 of the list of issues

5. There have been no changes in the laws pertaining to direct and indirect discrimination by state and non-state actors in the last two years.
6. The laws are quite clear about non-discrimination, but the reality is different for wages, access to finance, participation in key sectors of the economy, especially the now-omnipresent Blue Economy and experience of violence in homes. For example, gender and sector disparity in salary for same type of work still exists.¹ It is observed that generally “there is relatively high wage inequality in the Seychelles workers most vulnerable to non-compliance of minimum wages are typically female, working in a private household, or based in the informal sector.”²
7. Discriminatory practices are ever present in employment, such as some job advertisement specifically ask for men (security guards, stevedores) or women (live-in carer, carer, domestic worker). It is to be noted that these types of actions are done openly and unchecked by either the editors or advertising sections of the newspapers in which these adverts are placed or by the relevant authorities. No-one has ever taken them to task. Perhaps, more seriously, no-one takes note or makes a formal complaint.
8. However, these issues are often mentioned in local national workshops and training seminars where gender equality is the main topic of concern. A small segment of the population is concerned that this blatant public discrimination in employment is allowed to continue.
9. The Seychelles Parliament, the National Assembly has passed an amendment to the Section 151 of the Penal Code which considered sodomy a felony, punishable with up to 14 years in prison. Fourteen Members of the National Assembly (MNAs – Seychelles parliamentarians) of a total of 28 MNAs voted in favour while the other half abstained. There were four members absent for the vote.
10. Since then, an NGO, the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Queer Seychelles (LGBTIQ) has been created and it is active with members participating in projects funded by AIDS Rights Alliance for Southern Africa (ARASA) and the Other Foundation both based in South Africa. Members have attended training workshops in South Africa.
11. LGBTIQ Sey has partnered with a number of other local NGOs, such as HIV and AIDS Support Organisation (HASO) and United for a Purpose Brigade (UPB) to conduct sensitisation

¹ Bhorat, H., Ewinyu, A. and Yu, D. (2017). “The Seychelles Labor Market”. Development Policy Research Unit Working Paper 201706. DPRU, University of Cape Town.

² Ibid. p.47.

meetings with service providers, including counsellors, health professionals, insurers and bankers. They are planning one meeting with faith-based organisations later in August 2019.

12. The stated vision of LGBTIQ Sey is “for Seychelles is to be a country where all people are accepted and affirmed, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, and LGBT people are able to live happy and healthy lives.” The mission is: “to provide an open, safe, inclusive space and community that is committed to challenging sexism, genderism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and heterosexism. We recognize that this work requires a continued process of understanding and education and addressing all forms of oppression.”³

13. LGBTIQ Sey reports that LGBTI+ persons still face discrimination both in private and public lives. They are still often marginalised and denied basic civic, political, social and economic rights. The NGO is advocating “better and more comprehensive education and training across all institutions in society to ensure that no citizen is denied their fundamental rights, regardless of sexual orientation. Adopting a human rights based approach and acknowledging that discriminating and persecuting based on sexual orientation is imperative in addressing human rights violations against LGBTI+ persons.”⁴

Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues

14. In the past two years, there have been no actions taken on the national legislation conformity with the Convention. However, the National Gender Plan of Action 2019-2023 does make specific provisions to the matter, namely to “review, amend and or repeal all discriminatory laws by 2021” and to “conduct periodic gender training for judiciary, prosecutors and law enforcement officers on special protection of vulnerable witnesses.”⁵ The work is planned to begin in 2020 with the required training for the judiciary and the police.

Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

15. There are no updates available.

Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

16. Legal aid is available for all persons wishing to have access to it and to use it. There are no special procedures in place to access legal aid for cases of complaints of gender-based violence. However, the Family Tribunal is a special court used to hear such cases.

17. As a special court, the Family Tribunal has some advantages over the courts, as its proceeding are less formal, more flexible with no strict adherence with procedural rules and evidence, being cheaper and it resolves disputes more speedily. Moreover, the members of the panel have different expertise. The Tribunal is meant to be more accessible because is it user friendly and its proceedings seeks the roots of the issues, rather than being confrontational with burdens of proof and evidence.⁶

18. The number of cases from fourth quarter 2016 and fourth quarter 2017 are presented below in Tables 1 and 2.

19. The number of registered application made under the Family Violence Act averages 100 per quarter and the total for 2017 was 423 (Table 1). There is a relatively high number of repeat

³ https://www.facebook.com/pg/LGBTISey/about/?ref=page_internal.

⁴ <https://genderlinks.org.za/news/lgbti-where-are-we-three-years-on/>.

⁵ Ministry of Family Affairs (2019) The National Gender Plan of Action 2019-2023 p.7

⁶ <http://www.socialaffairs.gov.sc/family%20tribunal.html>.

cases and the total for 2017 was 635, which indicates that the violence continued in the home, requiring second or third applications.

20. New cases totaled 342. The Family Tribunal ordered 66 evictions of the perpetrators in 2017. There were 58 (88%) men and 8 (12%) women (Table 2).

Family Violence Cases (2016/Q4-2017/Q4)

Description	2016/Q4	2017/Q1	2017/Q2	2017/Q3	2017/Q4
Registered Applications	87	93	116	119	95
Applications Not Put Before Tribunal	944	970	992	1,026	1,025
Cases-Cause Listed	275	254	261	230	232
New	82	67	94	85	96
Repeated cases	193	187	167	145	136

Source: Family Tribunal (2018), from NBS (2018)⁷

Family Violence cases-Orders of the Tribunal (2016/Q4-2017/Q4)

Orders of Tribunal		2016/Q4	2017/Q1	2017/Q2	2017/Q3	2017/Q4
Protection		74	59	95	87	106
Referral to Other Agencies:						
• Probation Services		37	28	35	26	23
• Drug / Alcohol Rehabilitation	Male	-	1	4	2	1
	Female	-	-	-	1	-
Eviction orders	Male	13	14	15	11	18
	Female	2		3	-	5
Prison sentence for breach of order	Male	4	3	3	-	4
	Female	-	-	-	-	5

Source: Family Tribunal (2018), from NBS (2018)⁸

21. For the period of 01st January 2018 to 03rd August 2019, there were 164 cases before the Family Tribunal for different stages of hearings, such as first mention, judgement, sentencing and others.⁹

Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

22. The Gender Secretariat does not have any strong institutional authority to oblige partners to undertake proposed actions for gender mainstreaming and to address gender-based violence. Instead, it seeks their cooperation through consultations, one-to-one meetings, and training sessions both locally and overseas. Housed in the Ministry of Family Affairs, the Secretariat

⁷ National Bureau of Statistics (Seychelles - 2018) Summary Crime Justice & Security Statistics, Quarter 4-2017.

⁸ Ibid. p.8.

⁹ <https://eservice.egov.sc/Judiciary/>.

has unfortunately weakened in recent months with the departure of key staff who have not yet been replaced completely. Presently, there is only one woman working there.

23. The Gender Secretariat's financial, technical and human resources are inadequate to promote the implementation of the Convention and support gender mainstreaming across all sectors and levels of the Government. It supplements its government allocated annual budget through the submissions of project proposals to various bilateral and multilateral partners, such as regional economic communities (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa - COMESA, and Southern Africa Development Community - SADC), United Nations organisations (United Nations Fund for Population Activities - UNFPA) and the African Union (AU).

24. Locally, the Gender Secretariat has managed to obtain funding from current budget to conduct a series of education and awareness sessions on gender-based violence with the general public, school children, police, counsellors and others. The sessions are conducted on all three inner islands and generally last half a day or the whole day.

Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

25. The National Gender Plan of Action 2019-2023 has been completed in April 2019. The Validation Workshop was conducted on Monday 25th March 2019, following five months (November 2018 to March 2019) of consultations with organisations in all sectors. The revised, validated and completed Plan of Action has been submitted to the Gender Secretariat for follow-up with Cabinet of Ministers' approval.

26. The National Gender Plan of Action is based on the National Gender Policy and proposes concrete actions in all fields: legal rights, constitutional rights, peace, security, social development, economic development, health, education, HIV and AIDS, Gender-Based Violence, environment protection and conservation, including actions to adapt and mitigate climate change, and media.

27. The costed proposed actions are listed in a log frame which identifies the overall objective of the Plan of Action, the gaps, the baseline data and information available, the targets, the responsible parties and the results and outcomes indicators. It serves as a clear roadmap to address present situations of gender inequality in Seychelles.

Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues

28. The National Gender Plan of Action takes into account identified institutional, legal, societal and cultural gaps in gender equality. As such the concluding observations are noted as part of the process and specific actions are proposed to address these, where possible, within the Plan's timeframe of 2019 to 2023. The CEDAW Focal Point in Seychelles is the National Gender Management Team (NGMT) under the directive of the Principal Secretary Family Affairs Department (PSFA) in the Ministry of Family Affairs.

Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

29. There are two institutions for human rights in Seychelles: the Office of the Ombudsman and the Seychelles Human Rights Commission (SHRC). Both are statutory bodies, with the latter established by the Seychelles Human Rights Commission Act 2018. The SHRC is a self-governing, neutral and independent body that is not subject to the direction or control of any person or authority. The President made the appointments after consulting the Speaker of the National Assembly and from candidates proposed by the Constitutional Appointments Authority as prescribed in Paragraph 5(1) of the Seychelles Human Rights Commission Act 2018.

30. Both the Office of the Ombudsman and the SHRC have been allocated annual budgets for administration and operations.

Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

31. The state does not plan to adopt any temporary special measures to accelerate progress towards gender equality in representation in parliament. The reason given is that the adoption of quota is an alien concept to the political parties, and that the population may not accept such measures. The equality of men and women is a principle to which Seychelles is committed. The goal is to see the practical realization of this principle and to that end, to ensure that there is recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women irrespective of their background. (Gender & Law Manual, 2012). However, the matter is still under discussion.

Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues

Foreign Service

32. There are 19 Seychelles Foreign Service posts overseas, with 12 males and 7 females. They are listed in the table below (Table 1). Of the 7 ambassadorship, two are held by women.

Seychelles Representation Overseas

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Posts</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Total</i>
Belgium	Ambassador		1	
	Counsellor		1	2
China	Ambassador		1	
	Counsellor	1		2
Cuba	Chargé d'affaires		1	1
Ethiopia	Ambassador	1		
	Counsellor		1	2
France	Ambassador	1		
	Counsellor	1		2
India	High Commissioner	1		1
South Africa	High Commissioner		1	
	Second Secretary	1		2
	Ambassador	1		1
Switzerland	Chargé d'affaires		1	1
UAE	Ambassador	1		1
UK	High Commissioner	1		
	Principal Counsellor	1		2
USA	Ambassador	1		
	Principal Counsellor	1		2
Total:		12	7	19

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019)

33. Presently, the Designated Minister, the Chief Justice, the Governor of the Central Bank are all women.

Judiciary

34. There are generally more women employed in the judiciary sector. Of the 136 personnel at the various parts of the courts in 2017,¹⁰ such as the Registrar, the Tribunals (Employment and Family), including the Supreme and Magistrates Courts, 104 were women.¹¹ As indicated above, the Chief Justice is a woman.

Parliament

35. Political parties do have both youth and women leagues and all field female candidates during elections. As noted in the previous Report of 2017, parliamentary elections held from 8th to 10th September 2016 in which there were 20 women candidates saw the election of 7 (21.2%).

36. There are no gender quotas in Seychelles. The United Seychelles Party (US, previously Lelep / Seychelles People Progressive Front – SPPF / Seychelles People United Party – SPUP) has a quota of 35% for women participation in elections. The opposition parties do not have any set quotas.

37. There is now a lower number of women in parliament which is in sharp contrast to 2015 when the country ranked 4th in the world with 43.8% of women sitting in the National Assembly after the 2011 Parliamentary elections.

38. However, while women have equal rights to participate in political and public life and they are the mainstays of political rallies, organisations, electoral officials and party mobilisers, there are very few at the head of political parties. No political party is presently headed by a woman. Their very active involvement in political life and the election processes remains at the lower levels.

Local government

39. As of July 2019, of the 27 district administrators, 20 are women.

Cabinet of Ministers

40. In addition to the President and the Vice President, there are 10 ministers in the Cabinet of Ministers: 5 women (one of whom is the Designated Minister) and 5 men. This is a considerable increase from 2017 when female ministers amount to 31%.

Women in Management Positions in Schools

41. Women made up 88% of head teachers in primary schools and 80% of secondary school head teachers. There is 98% female managers in state schools at primary level, compared to 64% at the secondary level. Seventy-two percent of head teachers hold master's degree in educational management.

Reply to paragraph 10 of the list of issues

42. These are the proposed actions to achieve gender equality and address discriminatory gender stereotyping in education from the National Gender Plan of Action 2019-2023:

¹⁰ Judiciary of Seychelles Report 2016/2017.

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/judiciaryofseychelles/>.

- (a) Conduct a comprehensive review of education, training policies, and programmes to identify gender stereotyping;
- (b) Use evidence such as data and statistics in policy development and decision-making processes to guide actions and sustain support for gender mainstreaming activities;
- (c) Train teachers on gender responsive education;
- (d) Conduct active recruitment of women and girls for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects;
- (e) Conduct continual promotional activities in schools.

43. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has developed Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) programmes which are inclusive. Girls who are interested and who qualify for enrolment are automatically included in these. However, teenage pregnancy may interrupt their education. In spite of this, the Teenage Pregnancy Policy allows girls to return to school after delivery of their child.

44. Some, however, choose not to do so. For these girls, there are other schemes such as skills development programmes from the Department of Employment of the Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Civil Status, and others from gender-focused NGOs, e.g., Les Li Viv (which trains young mothers-to-be, Alliance of Solidarity for the Family - ASFF).

45. The National Gender Plan of Action 2019-2023 proposes a series of actions to address gender mainstreaming in the media. These include the following:

- (a) Review the Code of Conduct for the Media in Seychelles to strengthen the promotion of gender equality through the media, with special mention gender sensitivity;
- (b) Provide guidelines for the inclusion of gender, how to refer to transgender persons;
- (c) Conduct training with the media and the public on Media Code of Conduct;
- (d) Enact a media law to regulate media activities and to ensure that media houses include gender mainstreaming in their policies, procedures, activities and programming and publications;
- (e) Lobby media houses to identify women with potential, skills & interests to be trained which will enable them to head media houses;
- (f) Revise local journalism courses to mainstream gender into curriculum;
- (g) Monitor and evaluate media houses' use of male / female contributions and measures to ensure balance.

46. The National Gender Policy is implemented and monitored by the Gender Secretariat which has been weakened recently by loss of staff and inadequate budgetary support. The National Gender Policy and the National Gender Plan of Action are seen as the sole responsibilities of many organisations which do not undertake recommended actions, as the Gender Secretariat has no authority to oblige them to do so.

Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues

47. Age-appropriate and gender-sensitive education on sexuality and women's human rights in school curricula are found in the Personal Social and Civic Education programme delivered by specialist teachers in secondary schools and by generalist teachers in primary schools. The programme is not extended to the tertiary education institutions, such as the University of Seychelles and the professional centres. However, nearly all primary and secondary schools have school-based counsellors who support the programme with one-to-one or group counselling and information sessions with students and parents. The students in tertiary

institutions have access to students' welfare officers who are usually trained social workers and they organise for guest speakers to address issues of substance use and sexuality during the terms. These sessions tend to be conducted by NGOs and Ministry of Health staff, especially the HIV and AIDS Prevention Task Force.

48. With the growing access to the Internet and social media, the Ministry of Health has a Facebook page called Sexual and Reproductive Health Seychelles. It provides information about sexual and reproductive health rights to all who visit the page.¹²

49. Furthermore, gender-focused NGOs continue to provide additional support to the school curricula. For example, in 2018 ASFF implemented a project for primary 6 students. The main activities included presentations to parents on puberty and distribution of a booklet on puberty.

50. The Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development has developed both Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Information and Communication technology (ICT) programmes, which are offered equally to boys and girls. Access and availability are thus part of the gender equality policy in education.

51. Since uptake of these courses by girls tend to be lower, then efforts have been made to encourage more girls to undertake STEM subjects and activities with the engagement of some NGOs, like SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH). SYAH is the Seychelles Chapter of a regional network of young people from Small Island Development States (SIDS) in the Atlantic, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean, and South China Sea (AIMS). The youth led NGO promotes and advances youth-led sustainable development projects. Most SYAH members are young women.

52. Moreover, the National Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation (NISTI) has also launched a STEM programme in schools since May 2019. The programme promotes Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics education among students to equip them with useful knowledge and skills for the future. Students from primary and secondary schools are introduced to concepts such as basic hands on training in computers, robotics, artificial intelligence, renewable energy, internet of things and air space management in the modern age. They also learn about new and emerging technologies, known as Frontier Technologies for the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

53. The STEM programme was initially launched in 2015 and NISTI aims to have a STEM programme through the launch of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) clubs. The aim is to have a STI club in each secondary school by 2020.

54. TVET is administered by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development. It is a two-year school-based programme at upper secondary education level (year 4 and 5). TVET is designed to motivate students through diverse delivery, and to develop and meet their own personal interests and needs. The programme, intended to provide learners with a wide range of learning opportunities to pursue their personal and social development, upgrade their literacy and numeracy skills level, develop entrepreneurial competencies, apply scientific knowledge and mobilize technological resources, are done in vocational institutions and are practically orientated. Hence students are exposed to possible careers in fisheries.

55. Women have become more involved in the "Blue Economy", especially at the managerial levels. The previous Principal Secretary of the Blue Economy Department was a woman who is now a consultant working with the same department. The Chairperson of the Board of the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA), the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) and Islands Conservation Society (ICS), all handling marine spatial planning and protected areas for allowable activities, such as fishing and extraction, are women. The Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/srhseychelles/>.

which provides funds for development of research projects and activities linked to the Blue Economy is headed by a female climate change negotiator.¹³

56. There are still few women who are boat owners. This issue has been highlighted in a recent article by the SeyCCAT.¹⁴ It notes that women are ever present in managerial positions in sectors which are considered male dominated, but they are not present in terms of ownership of companies which drive the activities in this sector. There is thus a need to ensure that girls are encouraged to consider socioeconomic activities in the Blue Economy Sector, as both employees and employers, and business owners.

57. Once women and girls have left school, mostly due to an unplanned pregnancy, there are various possibilities to pursue studies by returning to school. If they choose not to do so due to stigma and discrimination from other students and staff, then the Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning (SIDOL) and The Guy Morel Institute (TGMI) offer alternative sources of education. The former offers basic courses in all the secondary subjects usually present on the national curriculum, and some courses tailored specifically for mature students (sewing, accounting, management). The TGMI, on the other hand, focuses mainly on Certificate and Diploma courses in management, procurement, accounting and office administration.

58. These two options are presently insufficient to cater for all the needs for the girls, as they focus on very specific aspects of the national curriculum (languages, maths and sciences for SIDOL) and on a specific branch (management and administration) of the body of knowledge and skills. Indeed, the TGMI used to be the Seychelles Institute of Management.

59. SIDOL may offer all the courses in the national curriculum, but at a higher level at which the girl may have dropped out of secondary school. Still, it is possible to continue with the national curriculum for secondary education at SIDOL for a fee whereas secondary education in state schools is free.

60. With the University of Seychelles (UniSey) now operational, there is a further possibility for life-long learning. However, there are the entry requirements and qualifications which some women and girls may not possess since they have dropped out. They will need to acquire these through SIDOL. Therefore, UniSey caters for a smaller group of people who have adequate secondary education qualifications. Even when mature students are enrolled, they are required to meet these standards first. However, UniSey is still another opportunity for the girls to continue their studies.

61. To further achieve the goal of furthering education after interruptions due to pregnancy, it is also imperative that Internet access is more affordable. Presently, it is prohibitive to use Internet for more than just browsing and watching a few videos. Unlimited access is still expensive and there have been numerous customer complaints that the packages offered do not give value for money. This is another aspect of opening up the world for all citizens if life-long learning is a national priority.

62. The National Library based in Victoria is presently closed due to a persistent fungus infection. It is important that this issue is resolved as soon as possible to give access to those with poor Internet connectivity to a wealth of reference materials and books available therein. Its closure has led to a gap in access and availability of important local information for students, scholars and the general public. This gap is particularly felt by those girls who could have used the facility to pursue their studies.

¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/SeyCCAT/>.

¹⁴ <https://seycat.org/gender-and-oceans-in-seychelles-a-mixed-bag-of-nuts/?fbclid=IwAR2Dz0qXw0tbnJac3xg4AC117mj9c1Rqx6t6V95Kn0GfrSz3DKQ4aiAnWAA>.

Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues

63. As at the end of the year 2017, an Employment Bill 2016 had been drafted and two submissions to the Cabinet of Ministers had taken place in 2017: the first one in March 2017, when the Employment Department was instructed to conduct wider consultations with the public on the proposals of review and the second one, further to the ensuing new series of public consultative meetings conducted in May 2017, in September 2017.

64. The bill is under review and an Employment Bill 2020 is expected to be ready for submission to the Cabinet of Ministers, then for presentation to the National Assembly in the course of the year 2020. No date can be estimated for the finalisation of the Employment Act.

65. The concept of equal pay for work of equal value has already been inserted in the Employment Bill, as follows: "All workers performing work which is the same, or broadly similar or different but of equal value in terms of demand such as effort, skills, responsibilities, decision-making and conditions of work, will have the right to equal treatment, in particular equal pay, by their employer and any differences must be for genuine and material reason, as determined by an objective job evaluation."

Occupational segregation

In relations to Seychellois and non-Seychellois

66. The Employment Department scrutinizes application for non-Seychellois to ensure Seychellois workers get a fair chance when it comes to recruitment. No approval is given in cases where the Employment Department has deemed that the employer did not consult the labour market as extensively as he/she should have done.

67. The Localization unit within the Employment Department is also responsible for enabling Seychellois workers to enter higher supervisory and managerial positions. This is done by placing Seychellois employees on a training programmes as understudies of non-Seychellois in higher positions.

Employment Programmes

68. The Employment Department currently runs three employment Programmes to help to provide skills and job experience for the participants in order to facilitate their entry on the labour market. These caters for all choices of training and employment by the youths regardless of gender.

My First Job Scheme

69. Especially designed for post-secondary graduates. The Scheme helps in placing them in employment faster by providing employer incentives i.e 40% refund on salary (capped at SR7,000) for one year.

70. In 2018, 312 Females and 178 Males were placed in jobs.

Skills Development Programme

71. The Skills Development Programme targets: school dropouts, single mothers, candidates that have suffered long-term unemployment, and unskilled and inexperienced jobseekers. The primary age group is from 15 to 30 years old with a training period of 6 months to 18 months depending on the area of training. For 2018, 110 females and 85 males were enrolled on the programme.

Unemployment Relief Scheme

72. This is designed to help the vulnerable groups of the society that suffer from long term unemployment, welfare assistance candidates, prisoners, drug addicts and persons living with disabilities. For 2018, 2067 participants was registered of whom 1166 were females and 901 were males. Active on the programme was 172 females and 227 males.

Discrimination

73. Employment Act Section 46A have specific provisions against discrimination in the workplace:

46A (1) Where an employer makes an employment decision against a worker on the grounds of the worker's age, gender, race, colour, nationality, language, religion, disability, HIV status, sexual orientation or political, trade union or other association, the worker may make a complaint to the Chief Executive stating all the relevant particulars.

(2) The Chief Executive shall hold an inquiry into the complaint, make a determination and communicate the determination to the worker and the employer, and where an act of discrimination is held to have been established, the determination shall include such directions to the employer as are necessary to redress the grievance complained of.

(3) An employer to whom a direction is issued under subsection (2) shall comply with the direction.

(4) For the purpose of this section -

“Worker” includes a prospective worker;

“Employer” includes a prospective employer;

“Employment decision” means any decision relating to the recruitment, conditions of employment, wages, disciplinary control or termination of employment of a worker.

Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues

74. From 01st January 2018 to 03rd August 2019, there were 1, 052 cases listed for hearing by the Employment Tribunal. There are no indications that there were cases due to dismissal or suspension linked to pregnancy. With the clearly stated entitlements for maternity and paternity leaves in the law, employers follow the said guidelines.

75. Seychelles gives 16 weeks paid maternity leave and 2 weeks paid paternity leave, 7 days paid medical leave for sick child, a Day Care Scheme, public day care facilities at district level. The Ministry of Local Government facilitates the operations of the day care centres, while the child care facilities are overseen by the Institute of Early Childhood Development (IECD), and finally, antenatal and postnatal parenting sessions are run by the Social Affairs Department (SAD) and the Maternal Health Unit of Ministry of Health.

76. In theory, women and men have equal access to finance for their businesses. “By law, women have equal access to credit as men. In practice, women have not reported experiencing gender-based discrimination in accessing credit.” (Morna, Lowe, et al., 2016).¹⁵

77. However, small and medium enterprises operated by women do mention in training sessions and workshop on business start-up that access to credit is difficult in spite of the commercial banks such as Barclays, Mauritius Commercial Bank, and Baroda amongst others, and the

¹⁵ <https://www.genderindex.org/wp-content/uploads/files/datasheets/2019/SC.pdf>.

Seychelles Credit Union (SCU), the Seychelles Commercial Bank (SCB) and the Development Bank of Seychelles (DBS). The difficulties seem to lie with the following:

- (a) Formulation of a clear business plan to support the request for credit;
- (b) The requests for collaterals, such as mortgages of land and house, life insurances, guarantees and percentage of loans requested as deposit;
- (c) Non-support from family members and partners who encourage them to seek employment rather than start a business.

78. Civil society organisations and government agencies are aware of these issues and they have developed support programmes, especially training, financing and business incubators. The Enterprise Seychelles Agency (ESA) formerly the Small Enterprise Promotion Agency (SEnPA) provides women entrepreneurs with technical advice and assistance, and NGOs such as Women in Action and Solidarity Organisation (WASO), Association of Women Entrepreneurs (SAWE), and Entreprenre au Féminin Ocean Indien Seychelles Chapter (EFOIS) provide training. A more recent training session funded by UNESCO was for EFOIS to work with women farmers to assist them to develop climate-smart agricultural tools and practices.

Reply to paragraph 20 of the list of issues

79. Modern contraceptives are available freely in all health centres and in special family planning clinics integrated in health centres. Pharmacies are allowed to sell condoms and gels, but they are not allowed to sell medicines requiring a doctor's prescriptions.

80. The age of access to contraceptives without parental consent remains 18 years. However, for vulnerable and at-risk youth such as those engaged in sex work and/or problematic drug use, the doctors can prescribe without parental consent as the situation is considered as a health priority for the child.

Reply to paragraph 21 of the list of issues

Article 148 of the Penal Code

81. The matter is under consideration and there are no further updates.

Access to high-quality services for the management of complications arising from unsafe abortions

82. Management of complications arising from unsafe abortions is undertaken by the network of the Ministry of Health's district health centres and the Seychelles Hospital according to national and WHO guidelines. Incomplete and septic abortions are treated at the Seychelles Hospital, where there are better facilities for management. In 2017, there were 521 cases of incomplete abortions reported. The younger age group (19 to 25 years) was mostly affected with 214 cases (41%). There were also 143 cases (27%) in the category, others, whereby 74 (14%) cases were missed abortions.

83. It is possible that unsafe abortions are done due to rejection from the National Board for Termination of Pregnancies (TOP). It is of note that there has been a slight decrease of 12.8% and 13.3% percent in the number of requests made to the Board and the number of approved cases respectively in 2017, compared to 2016. In 2017, of the 129 requests for TOPs, 85 (65.9%) were approved. In 2016, of the 148 requests, 98 (66.2%) were approved. It is unclear what actions the women took when their requests were rejected by the Board.

Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues

84. The National Domestic Violence Bill has been adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of 07th August 2019, and will now be sent to the Attorney-General's Office for proceeding to the National Assembly (parliament) for debate and approval.

85. The Ministry of Family Affairs and Social Services and partners such as the National Council for Children (NCC) have been holding ongoing consultative meetings on the matter. These meetings are planned for all districts, and they have started in June during the Child Protection Week on the inner islands of Praslin and La Digue. Corporal punishment will be banned in private homes, daycare centres and children's homes, becoming an offence, and perpetrators will face penalties under the Children Act amended for this purpose. The ministry also wants to repeal the section of the law which allows for reasonable chastisement by parents align it with the country's Penal Code, which prohibits any form of physical violence against another person.

86. Once the consultative meetings are completed, the plan will be presented to the Cabinet of Ministers and then presented to the National Assembly for approval.

Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues

87. See par. 85.

88. The situation regarding rapes and sexual assault reached parliament on Tuesday 16th July 2019. The Designated Minister responsible for Internal Affairs revealed that since 01st January 2019 until mentioned date, there were 66 cases of sexual assaults in the country. Thirty-five cases are at the Attorney-General's Office for further processing for presentations to the courts; in 4 other cases, the police was waiting for the medical report and 3 cases were with the perusing officer who was analysing them for sufficient evidence for prosecution. There were 3 cases where the accused were not yet identified, and 17 other cases which were pending investigation. All cases were of women and girls being sexually assaulted by males.

89. As for domestic violence cases before the Family Tribunal, there were 405 applications in 2018, of which 207 were cases of violence between partners and spouses, compared to 198 which were cases of violence between other family members. The Tribunal gave 317 protection orders, 37 eviction orders and 8 prison sentences for breach of orders (Table 2).

90. Other actions undertaken by the Family Tribunal include referrals to other agencies such as the Agency for the Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation (APDAR) for drug and alcohol treatment and rehabilitation and Probation Services for relationship and couple counselling.

Registered applications for domestic violence at the Family Tribunal

<i>Registered applications</i>	405
Spouses / ex-partners	207
Male	21
Female	186
Other family members	198
Male	35
Female	163
Orders of the tribunal	
Protection	317
Referral to other agencies	46
Probation	40

<i>Registered applications</i>	405
Drug & alcohol rehabilitation	6
Male	6
Female	-
Eviction	37
Male	35
Female	2
Prison for breach of orders	8
Male	8
Female	

Source: Family Tribunal (2019)

91. The Gender-Based Violence (GBV) study has been completed and the results have been published. The study reveals that both men and women in Seychelles suffer from GBV with more than half of the women (58%) and 43% of the men having experienced some form of GBV. The study, the first of its kind in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to comprehensively analyse Gender-Based Violence as experienced and perpetrated by both women and men, showed that violence is quite pervasive in Seychellois society with “78% of women and 79% of men who participated in the study confirmed that they have experienced some form of abuse before they reached 18 years”.¹⁶ One hundred and seventy-two women and 155 men out of the study’s 1,560 participants have reported having experienced physical intimate partner violence. Of note, the study showed that both women (31%) and men (40%) perpetrated violence and 40% of both women and men indicated that they had also committed violence against an intimate partner.

92. Other studies followed the GBV Survey. For example, one, “Measuring the Economic Cost of Violence Against Women and Girls”, found that there was an estimate of \$17.3 million or 1.2% of Seychelles’ Gross Domestic Product (GDP) economic loss as a result of violence against women and girls. The study factored in the cost of health care, the justice system, social services as well as the loss of earnings and productivity in the country’s economy.

Reply to paragraph 13 of the list of issues

Plans to adopt a comprehensive law on gender-based violence against women and girls

93. There are no further updates. The action is under review. The Domestic Violence Bill, as previously indicated, has not yet been sent to parliament.

Information on the training programmes for judges, prosecutors, police and law enforcement officers

94. There are no further updates.

Information on assistance provided to women and girls, victims of gender-based violence

95. The only official shelter for women who have experienced GBV has opened in Seychelles, as a hidden refuge against such dangerous and potentially life-threatening situations. The client can stay for a maximum 72 hours and is not permitted to bring any children. The facility is funded by the EU and is operated by the Citizens Engagement Platform of Seychelles (CEPS). The EU representative noted that “Gender equality is a core component of our foreign policy. This is why the European Union is funding activities to protect vulnerable women, including

¹⁶ Ministry of Family Affairs Gender-Based Violence Study Report 2016.

women who have suffered gender-based violence and women using drugs. Today, I am proud that through the EU funding the first ever centre for women victims of violence was inaugurated."

96. An NGO, called Brother Dudes Sovereign Supporters, also operate two "unofficial" shelters for women in vulnerable situations, including for GBV. They provide additional support such as collecting the women and their children from where they are at the time of calling for help, assist the women to find housing and employment. They accept women and their children for longer periods compared to the EU-funded shelter.

Reply to paragraph 23 of the list of issues

97. The revision exercise of the Civil Code of Seychelles began in 2013 and proceeded with a series of committee meetings, all of which were open to public consultations. The Civil Code Bill 2018 was gazetted on 13th July 2018. The main provisions addressed in the revision are the following: equalising the rights of children, sharing of property in '*en ménage*' relationship, rights of co-owners and the ability to dispose freely of property on death among others. The revised Code is expected to provide for the civil rights of Seychellois in modern form and appropriately reflect and protect current social institutions.

98. The Civil Code Bill 2018 makes provision to address the dissolution of "*en ménage*" relationships and inheritance. The Bill is purported to reflect "*a thoroughgoing (sic) revision and modernising of the Code*".¹⁷ It contains a proposal "*that, on the termination of stable and long-term en ménage relationships, property will be shared between the parties*".¹⁸ Another proposal is to introduce testamentary freedom in place of the fixed heirship system.

99. Women have the same rights and responsibilities for children born out of wedlock. The disputes about custody and maintenance are addressed by Probation Services for negotiations and when these break down, by the Family Tribunal. In 2017, the Family Tribunal granted access to 244 parents, of whom 198 (81%) were fathers. However, on the other side custody was granted to more women than men; of the 310 parents who were granted custody in 2017, 266 (86%) were women.

Reply to paragraph 14 of the list of issues

100. The National Coordinating Committee on Trafficking in Persons did not receive any information of reported cases of trafficking of women and girls. The police has not initiated any case under the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2014 in respect to any allegations of trafficking of women or girls domestically. The major challenge is that police officers are not linking exploitation of prostitution with the offence of trafficking in person.

101. The only conviction and sentence of a perpetrator was in October 2018. A male perpetrator (agent), of Bangladeshi origin, was convicted on 4 counts of labour trafficking of 4 Bangladeshi nationals. He was sentenced to 3 years imprisonment on all 4 counts and a fine of SR100,000 on each count. The prison sentences are to run concurrently. Total of only 3 years imprisonment. Each of the 4 victims are to be paid SR50,000 from the fine of SR400,000. (SR200,000 for compensation and SR200,000 to the state). In default of paying the fine, the perpetrator will serve 6 months imprisonment after he has completed his 3 year sentence.

102. Given that there were no identified female victims of trafficking, no measures were taken for issuance of temporary residence permits nor referral for support services. Some male identified victims are being provided with accommodation and meals.

¹⁷ https://seylli.org/sc/legislation/bill/Bill_%20Civil%20Code%20-Final%20for%20Gazette.pdf.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Reply to paragraph 22 of the list of issues

103. Gender mainstreaming is now a mainstay in all projects and programmes developed in national disaster relief and management. For example, committees set up to manage watershed areas to mitigate potential disasters linked to either drought or flooding already have a strong gender balance, including an active youth participation through collaboration with school-based wildlife clubs, the schools themselves, and the University of Seychelles.

104. The projects developed with the watershed committees will include training and support. The primary focus of these committees are to act as stewards of the water resources within their watersheds through active involvement in policy and planning decisions, and coordination of local community participation in watershed management field activities.

105. However, there is a gender and youth imbalance between the heads of programmes for disaster management and implementers on the ground (mostly young women), there is a strong need to incorporate practical and meaningful gender and youth related actions in the implementation processes.

106. The following can be done:

(a) Empower women and youth by involving them in all national programmes on environment: policy development, policy and legislation review, planning processes, capacity building activities and monitoring and evaluation;

(b) Gender and youth-focused NGOs and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) need to be present in meetings, seminars, workshops and discussion groups that are addressing environment issues at macro-level;

(c) Grants should be allocated to NGOs and CBOs to undertake and participate in all proposed disaster prevention and management related activities;

(d) There should be sensitisation campaigns that specifically target women and youth, either through the gender and youth-focused NGOs and CBOs or as individuals, if they are not so affiliated to encourage them to take on responsibilities including engagement and negotiations with the relevant authorities; it is important to let them understand that their voices are essential for disaster preparedness and management.

(e) Gender and youth-focused NGOs and CBOs will be involved in project implementation and capacity development at national and district levels.

107. The Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and its development partner, UNDP, are now using the recommendations from CEDAW Reports, SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and various national obligations (from the National Gender Policy). All programmes and projects must now adopt the following principles in day-to-day management and implementation of the project:

(a) No use of gender and youth stereotypes and stereotype-laden languages in daily interactions, communications and informal and formal project documents;

(b) Respect in tone and in treatment for all members of the project team at national and district levels

(c) No use of language or behaviour denoting bias and disrespect for the individual based on gender, age, race, sexual orientation, religion and other any other forms of affiliations.

(d) All projects must promote gender and youth mainstreaming and capacity building within their project staff to improve understanding of gender issues, and must appoint a designated focal point for gender issues to support development, implementation, monitoring and strategy on gender mainstreaming internally and externally.

108. There are no further updates from the reports in 2016 when the representatives from the Seychelles Agricultural Authority (SAA), Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) and other relevant organisations such as the Division of Risk and Disaster Management (DRDM) responsible for monitoring or contributing to national food security to discuss the progress achieved and some of the challenges faced by the Seychelles Vulnerability Assessment Committee (VAC).

Annex: Abbreviations and acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ALDEC	Adult Learning and Distance Education Centre
APSHF	Association for the Promotion of Solid and Humane Families
ARASA	AIDS & Rights Alliance for Southern Africa
ASFF	Alliance of Solidarity for the Family
AU	African Union
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CDCU	Communicable Disease Control Unit
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CEPS	Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DA	District Administrator
DBS	Development Bank of Seychelles
DRDM	Department of Risk and Disaster Management
EU	European Union
FBO	Faith Based Organisation
FSW	Female Sex Workers
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HASO	HIV and AIDS Support Organisation
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IBBS	Integrated Behavioural and Biological Surveillance Survey
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
LGBTI Sey	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex Seychelles
LUNGOS	Liaison Unit for Non-Governmental Organisation
MNA	Member of the National Assembly
MoH	Ministry of Health
NCC	National Council for Children
NCCC	National Climate Change Committee
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGMT	National Gender Management Team

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NISTI	National Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation
NSB	National Statistics Bureau
PEP	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PLHIV	Person Living With HIV
PoA	Plan of Action
PS	Principal Secretary (CEOs of government ministries or departments)
PSFA	Principal Secretary of the Family Affairs Department
PSCE	Personal, Social and Civic Education
PSI	Post-Secondary Institution
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAHTC	Seychelles Agriculture and Horticulture Training Centre
SBC	Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation
SEnPA	Small Enterprise Promotion Agency
SIDOL	Seychelles Institute of Distance and Open Learning
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SNP	Seychelles National Party
SPPF	Seychelles People's Progressive Front
SPTC	Seychelles Public Transport Corporation
SCR	Seychelles Rupee
STA	Seychelles Tourism Academy
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
S4S	Sustainability for Seychelles
TGMI	The Guy Morel Institute
TOP	Termination of Pregnancy
TOR	Terms of Reference
TOT	Training of Trainers
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
VAW	Violence against Women
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing

WASO Women in Action and Solidarity Organisation
WHO World Health Organisation
YHC Youth Health Centre
