

# **THE 7TH STATE PARTY REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

**MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

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1. **AIDS** – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
2. **AU** – Access Unit/ African Union/ Astronomical Unit.
3. **CDCU** – Cardiac Diagnostic Care Unit/ Corporate Debt Control Unit.
4. **CSF** – Children Special Fund.
5. **ECCE** – Early Childhood Care and Education
6. **HIV** – Human Immunodeficiency Virus.
7. **IMF** – International Monetary Fund.
8. **LGBTI** – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender & Inter sex.
9. **NAP** – National Action Plan.
10. **NCC** – National Children Council/ National Council of Churches.
11. **NCCP** – National Commission for Child Protection
12. **NGO** – Non-Governmental Organizations.
13. **PC** – Professional Centre
14. **PCHR** – Personal Child Health Record.
15. **PHC** – Public Health Centre
16. **PMTCT** – Prevention Mother To Child Transmission.
17. **PSCE** – Personal Social and Citizenship Education
18. **RBM** – Result Based Management.
19. **SDP** – Skills Development Programmes.
20. **SEC** – School for the Exceptional Child.
21. **SITE** – Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education.
22. **SNYA** – Seychelles National Youth Assembly.
23. **SPS** – Seychelles Prison Services.
24. **STF** – Seychelles Trust Fund.
25. **UN** – United Nations
26. **UNCRC** – United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children.
27. **VTRP** – Vocational Training and Rehabilitation.

## INTRODUCTION

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The Committee on the Rights of the Child considered the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Seychelles at its 2260th and 2261st meetings, held on 18 and 19 January 2018 . Following constructive dialogue with the Committee, Seychelles was issued its third set of Concluding Observations in February 2018.

This document constitutes the seventh periodic report, which is due by the 6th October 2022 . It was compiled in accordance with the Committee’s harmonized treaty-specific reporting guidelines adopted on 31st January 2014 . This seventh report takes up from the previous report and covers the period 2018 to 2022 . It contains measures to implement the latest Concluding Observations, and includes legislative and policy measures taken by the State to implement the provisions of the Convention with due regard to the local context, the existing legislative framework and the financial and human resources constraints, which the country as a small island developing state face. It also reflects the cultural context of the country, as Seychelles is unique in its multi ethnic makeup, with a high level of racial harmony and integration. The participation of the private sector, NGOs and the civil society in general, which continues to make important social investments in our children, is also acknowledged in the report.

## I. BACKGROUND

1. Seychelles acceded to the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child in 1990 . Following some delay in reporting, the State was able to get back on track with its 5th and 6th combined report submitted in 2017.
2. In 1992, Seychelles also acceded to the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and in 2020 submitted its first report to the AU commission on the Charter highlighting its commitment to promoting the welfare of children. The State presented and defended this report before the AU Committee on the Welfare and Rights of the Child in March 2022.
3. The State has also submitted reports under the Optional protocol to the CRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts and the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Both reports were submitted in October 2021. In addition Seychelles ratified the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the communication procedure in 2021 .
4. This seventh report contains information on important developments that have taken place in the protection and promotion of children's rights. All attempts have been made to highlight important information over the period 2018 to 2022 in keeping with the UN Guideline on state report and pursuant to the concluding observations adopted at the Committee's 2282nd meeting, held on 2 February 2018 . The content of the report reflects the contributions of key stakeholders with regard to how the country has performed in undertaking its obligations under the Convention. The report also outlines the challenges that exist in efforts to improve the situation of children throughout the country. Where relevant, mention is made of the effects of the global COVID 19 pandemic on efforts to implement the Convention.
5. This report was compiled through wide consultations with government agencies and civil society organisations involved in the implementation and promotion of children's rights. The general public including children had the opportunity to contribute to the process of finalising the report through focus group and validation sessions. The final draft was discussed at a multi-agency consultative work session, and then forwarded to the National Commission for Child Protection (NCCP) for further review. The final report was discussed and then adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers.

## CONTEXT

6. The 2020 elections saw a new political party in government after 43 years of a single party being at the helm of government. His Excellency Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan was sworn in on the 26th October 2020 as President of the Republic of Seychelles. Following this, new ministerial portfolios were established.
7. There are many agencies tasked with ensuring the welfare of children in Seychelles, with both statutory and non-statutory obligations. The Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Education continue to have responsibility for the survival and development of the child, while the Department of Social Affairs has portfolio responsibility for children's protection and the department of Family Affairs the welfare and promotion of stable families. At the time of submitting this report, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs is the designated Ministry responsible for coordinating Seychelles' response to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child on implementation of the Convention. The submission of this report is a demonstration of the Government's full commitment to the international and regional mechanisms responsible for ensuring the rights of children.
8. According to the last National Census conducted in 2010 Seychelles has a population of 90,945 out of which 28, 499(31%) were children. The latest population estimates indicate a population of 99,728 at 31st December 2021, indicating a growth rate of 0.8% over 2020 . A National Census was due in 2020 in accordance with international norms set by the United Nations Statistic Division (UNSDP), which compels countries to review their national population status every 10 years. The President's proclamation on the census was gazetted on 9th January 2020 and identified two purposes for this national exercise. The first purpose is the enumeration of persons within the country and the collection of statistics relating to them. The second purpose is the collection of statistics relating to housing and utilities, education, health, employment and household, economic activities, information and communication, security, transport and agriculture. However, the exercise itself could not take place as planned due to the uncertainties

brought about by the COVID 19 Pandemic, which also saw the country like many others across the globe in economic turmoil. The pilot census was finally carried out in November 2021 using digital means instead of the traditional paper-based data collection tool. The National Census itself which at the time of finalizing this report was in progress is expected to be completed in 2022.

9. Seychelles confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on the 14th March 2020 . The focus of the country then was shifted primordially on virus screening, implementation of quarantine measures, procuring vaccines and movement restrictions including extensive travel restrictions. The COVID 19 pandemic has had an important impact on the period under review which has been marked by uncertainty, economic hardship and a focus on managing and adapting to the evolution of the virus outbreak.

## II. GENERAL MEASURES OF IMPLEMENTATION

### A. MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE CONVENTION THROUGH INDEPENDENT MONITORING STRUCTURES

10. The Seychelles Human Rights Commission was set up under the Seychelles Human Rights Commission Act 2018 as an independent institution with broad mandate based on universal human rights norms and standards. Whilst the institution does not have a mandate specific to children, it monitors all human rights treaties, conventions and covenants and all rights under the Seychelles Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Constitution of the Republic. The Seychelles Human Rights Commission Act, 2018 in Section 14(1) b (vi) provides that “the Commission shall monitor the implementation of, and compliance with, international and regional conventions and treaties, international and regional covenants and international and regional charters relating to the objects of the Commission”. The SHRC has a monitoring unit, which has started to monitor the implementation of and compliance with the nine core UN Human Rights treaties in view that Seychelles is a party to all nine treaties.
11. The Ombudsman’s Office is now operating independently of the Seychelles Human Rights Commission. The Ombudsman’s Office currently does not have a specialised section dedicated to the rights of the child. In fact, no complaints have been registered involving child complainants in the mandate of the current Ombudsman. Its focus is on identifying and weeding out maladministration within the government structures whereas the Human Rights Commission hold a wider mandate in relation to human rights.

### B. MEASURES TO PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE CONVENTION

12. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a notable impact on planned sensitisation activities, both due to the restrictions on physical contact and the redirecting of national resources. Nonetheless, efforts in promoting children’s rights have not been lacking. The National Council for children (NCC) continues to play a major training and sensitisation role in respect to children’s rights. A special unit of the Council is dedicated to the trainings of its partners on different components of the Convention covering issues from corporal punishments, child welfare, awareness on abuse, etc. Different channels have been used to communicate and disseminate awareness of rights-based approaches. Children have been key participants, and even proponent in these efforts.
13. Between 2017 and 2020, a total of 2991, individuals participated in training on issues related to children and the Convention rights offered by NCC. Out of the 2991, 1206 were professionals already working directly with children and the rest were parents or carers and agencies interested in the rights and welfare of the child.
14. NCC has for years been behind a Child Protection Week Campaign which takes place in May/June every year. This is a platform, which reaches a wide audience. The last campaign held in June 2019 saw the participation of at least 500 individuals involved with children. Health restrictions have resulted in the campaign being put on hold until the situation improves.
15. In the year 2021, the introduction of the ‘Festival Zanafan’ resulted in the promotion of 5 UNCRC articles – Articles 19, 42, 28, 34 and 31 . Focus on articles 12, 13 and 14 have been through activities such as the celebration of the Universal day of the Child, and the TV series called ‘Konekte Zenn’ where children share their views on topical subjects.
16. The 2022 Festival Zanafan took place under the theme ‘let children be children’ and activities under its umbrella included those geared at reaching a spirit of getting together following the hardships brought by COVID-19, making new friends and learning from each other. The event addressed three main UNCRC articles setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of every child.
17. For three consecutive years since 2018, under the direction of NCC a teenager was given the opportunity to address the National Assembly about their views, concerns and needs.



18. In 2021, NCC celebrated the Universal day of the Child by giving 12 children, representing each secondary school, the opportunity to lead and participate in a first live Press Conference with the President of the Republic His Excellency Mr. Ramkalawan. NCC also organised for a boy to host the 7pm news on 'Telesesel' on 19 November 2021 and on 20 November, a group of teenagers were able to take on the role of Radio Presenters on Paradise FM, a local radio channel. These activities are geared to display the potential of children and increase their participation in diverse activities.
19. There is regular and continuous coverage of children's issues in the media, especially via radio programmes and public education and awareness programmes. This includes TV programmes such as 'Konekte Zenn' and 'Bonzour Sesel' and radio programmes such as Monday evening with Queenly.

### **C. MEASURES TO CIRCULATE THE REPORT AMONG THE PUBLIC**

20. This report was widely circulated for comments before submission to the Cabinet of Ministers for adoption. It is anticipated that the report will provide a means by which the Government, NGOs and the private sector can systematically and strategically address issues highlighted as needing further attention if Seychelles is to fully comply with the obligations under the Convention.
21. One of the methodology used to circulate the report among the public is to conduct focus group sessions with children from primary and secondary schools as well as youths with disabilities. The different focus groups selected, included children from upper primary schools who have leadership roles in the schools, representation from the different student bodies and a few randomly selected students from secondary and professional centres schools, and youth with disabilities on the vocational training and rehabilitation programme. The focus groups were designed to gather the perspectives of youth on the impact of the convention implementation on everyday life and to provide recommendations for improvement.
22. In general, the majority of the participants agreed that there has been a great deal of emphasis placed on sensitizing children and adults about what the Convention entails on a national scale, particularly the increasing discussion and general emphasis on responsibilities rather than just rights.
23. Most of the older participants, however expressed concern that certain aspects of the Convention are not being fully implemented, especially where it concerned their reproductive health. The general feeling was that although adolescent reproductive health is part of the Personal, Social and Civic Education curriculum (PSCE) there is a lack of consistency and fluidness in the way it is taught. Consequently, at risks youths are engaging in anti-social behaviours reflected in the increase in teenage pregnancies, substance abuse and addictions, as well as juvenile crimes. They recommended that more prevention programmes at the community level are needed for those more at risk.
24. Youth with disabilities believe that there is no equity in the way most intervention programme is implemented and as a result, they feel left behind in many aspect. Therefore, it is imperative that such programmes should be more disability friendly.

### **D. MEASURES ADOPTED TO INTEGRATE CHILDREN RIGHTS INTO NATIONAL LEGISLATION**

25. The Seychelles Parliament registered its busiest legislative calendar in 2021; a result of the Government's effort to reform legislation and regulatory frameworks in line with the new government's agenda, to create legal frameworks where lacking and to adjust to the unprecedented economic climate brought about by COVID -19 . Whilst there has not been a lot of legislation promulgated, of which children is the main subject the following is a summary of those introduced during the period under review which contribute to strengthening the protection of children's rights. Included also are legal frameworks which were being developed during the period under review.
26. The Seychelles Child Law Reform Committee was set up in June 2020 in the aftermath of a case, R v ML and Ors where sexual offences had been committed on several girls (75 were identified in that case but the authorities reported that there was likely more). The committee worked on a reform package, which

addresses sexual offences. The package proposes the introduction of a range of new offences including, the crime of rape; sexual grooming; offences involving the use of intimate images and sexual communication with children through social media and other digital platforms; mandatory reporting; harassment offences such as catcalling and flashing; blackmail and others. It is also recommending a range of procedural laws that will safeguard child victims and witnesses from further trauma when interacting with the criminal justice system and enhanced protection for persons living with disabilities. The Committee completed its work in the year 2021 and submitted its final report to the President of the Republic. The drafting of the committee's proposal into law is being taken up by the Attorney General's Office.

27. The review of the Children Act 1982 is an ongoing process. In 2020, Corporal Punishment was banned through the Children (Amendment) Act 2020 . This review also served to designate the department responsible for children affairs as the central authority in respect of the Convention on the Protection of Children and Cooperation in Inter Country Adoption and the Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980.
28. Currently, two schedules to the Children Act are being finalized, one to introduce a working with children check mechanism to allow vetting of all persons who work directly with children and another to provide for standards and the monitoring and inspection of children homes. Work is also underway to amend the Children Act to accommodate the changes required as a consequence of the promulgation of the new Civil Code. There is also ongoing discussion to explore modernizing the Children Act further and to establish a modern child protection legislation.
29. The 'Domestic Violence Act 2020' was unanimously passed by the National Assembly in 2020 . It is an important tool to curb violence in the Domestic context. The Act sets out more stringent measures against perpetrators of domestic abuse, provides for better protection for victims and introduces new penalties with emphasis on rehabilitation. Whilst the Family Violence Act only makes provision for application for protection orders in family violence cases, the Domestic Violence Act, which is yet to come into force, provides for both the application for protection order before the Tribunal and makes domestic violence a criminal offence. In the latter case, investigation is conducted and the perpetrator is to be prosecuted before the Magistrates Court.
30. The 'Mental Health Care Act , 2020' has as its foundation the fundamental right of everyone suffering from mental illness to participate in decision making about their own health and care. It sets up a Mental Health Tribunal with powers to hear and determine mental health matters.
31. The 'Civil Code 2020', replaces the 1976 Code and aligns itself to the 1993 Constitution as well as address the present social context. Notable revisions of the Code have relevance to children rights.
32. The 'Education (Amendment) Act, 2017' aims to guarantee the rights of children and young persons to an education as conferred by the Constitution. It is guided by principles of equal opportunity to education and training. The amended Act makes provision for the strengthening and application of the special education programme for children with disabilities and introduces a ban on corporal punishment in schools.
33. On the 10th November 2021 the Seychelles national parliament passed the 'Tertiary Education Act' to provide for the organisation and development of tertiary education in Seychelles. All post secondary and professional centres fall within the tertiary education sector.
34. The right to access information is guaranteed under article 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles. The 'Access to Information Act, 2018' obliges public bodies to publish certain information pro actively and give powers to the public to request information from public bodies through a designated information officer.
35. The 'Overseas Treatment Act, 2018' provides a framework for a highly specialised overseas diagnosis and treatment programme for the citizens of Seychelles.
36. Amendments were made to the Civil Status Act in 2021 aimed at bringing about some reforms in the birth and death declarations so as to facilitate the collection of statistics that are more accurate. The

amended Act makes it possible for the civil status office to make declarations as well as receive and accept forms via electronic platforms without a person having to physically go to the office to undertake the necessary procedures. The bill also makes provisions requiring all newborns to be examined by a doctor, nurse or midwife who will then have to notify the civil status office of the birth. The details that will be necessary on the birth notification includes the child's date of birth, its name if it has already been decided at birth, details of the mother, her contact number and email address. This notification is important because these details will help the civil status office contact the parent to finalise the registration of birth. Seychellois parents who give birth abroad will also be able to register their child in a registry called 'Register of Birth Occurring Outside Seychelles'. This will only apply to Seychellois parents who received their citizenships through birth. Another important provision of the bill will also work to resolve which surname a child takes on:

- ◇ If the mother and father are married and have the same surname, then the child will also share the same surname
- ◇ If the parents of the child do not share the same surname, and the father is not registered in the birth registry, the child will assume the surname of its mother
- ◇ If the parents of the child do not share the same surname but the father is registered in the birth registry, the child will assume either surname of its parents or both surnames.

37. The 'Children Special Fund (Amendment) Notice, 2017' established the board that would oversee the management of the fund.

38. The list of hazardous work has been finalised through wide consultation with key stakeholders. The Employment Act is due to be amended to adapt the working age of children for work which the State regards as dangerous, unhealthy or likely to impair the normal development of a child or young person; exploitation and physical and moral dangers to which children and young persons are exposed. It is also proposed that thereafter the list is included in the Conditions of Employment Regulations. While the legal employment age is 15 years old, the minimum age for hazardous work is proposed to be 18 years old.

39. Most of the amendments to the Public Health Act during the period under review has been to adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic. On 20th March, when the State recorded seven cases of COVID-19, the Public Health Commissioner, under Section 25 (5) of the Public Health Act, published a Notice declaring a Public Health Emergency in Seychelles. The Order directed "all persons to comply with the directions and orders issued by the public health authorities and cooperate with the public health authorities in preventing and containing the spread of COVID-19 in Seychelles." On 30th March 2020, through additional regulations under the Public Health Act physical and social distancing and hygiene was made mandatory. This meant limited assemblies in public places. One of the first places to be impacted were the schools.

## E. MEASURES TO IMPROVE COORDINATION

40. Issues related to children rights do not belong to one ministry or entity in Seychelles. The State has adopted an integrated approach whereby rights are main-streamed within different services and programmes on offer. As such, there are multiple entities looking after the rights of children. The most obvious one is Social Services Division with the statutory mandate and responsibility to undertake investigations into cases relating to protection of children. Social Services leads a multi-sectoral committee, which allows for better coordination among child protection partners and facilitates sharing of information. The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Police all play an important role in the protection of children rights and have special mechanism in place within their organisations to ensure that issues relating to rights of children are coordinated and monitored in the best interest of children. The National Commission for Child Protection (NCCP), Inter Agency committee, Child Protection Team, Social Services Committee as well as adhoc Multi disciplinary Committees on issues of concern, and parenting programmes all continue to draw upon a wide range of top level expertise and experience. These committees also ensure that different agencies make the best use of resources and ensure that collaborative approaches result in the best services for children.

41. In 2017, a Suitability Check Panel was established with representative of different child protection stakeholders to vet people who work with children in child minding settings.
42. Referral through the Risk Assessment Framework continues as part of the daily activity of child protection service providers. Steady referral continue to be recorded. Statistics show that two routes of referral are most common from other agencies to Social Services or from Social Services to the Ministry responsible for land and housing.
43. The Social Services Division continues to ensure that services are targeted and close to the community. Working with key stakeholders is at the core of the services provided. However, human resource remains a significant challenge for the Ministry with social workers often leaving the service due to burn out. The limitations in specialized services and professionals to support casework persists.
44. The National Council for Children (NCC) is also a key partner and stakeholder in child protection. Its Training and Research Section works collaboratively with the Ministry of Education by providing targeted and focused awareness raising sessions on issues concerning children or teachers, parents and children. The Therapy section works more closely with the Ministry of Social Affairs and offers psychological and counselling sessions to parents, caregivers and children through the referral process.
45. The Council is also responsible for the effective running of a Government funded Children's Care Home, the President's Village.
46. The National Commission for Child Protection continues to advise the Government on matters important to the promotion and protection of children rights. Perhaps the Commissions' most important quality is the potential to speed up action through its high-level representative whenever there is a need. During the period under review, the Commission appraised itself of the UN Committee's Concluding Observations for Seychelles, oversaw the process of submission of the initial and Combined progress report on the implementation of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, contributed to the efforts to domesticate the Convention and oversaw the process of compiling this 7th report to the UN Committee. The Commission also advised the Government to set up a Child law Reform Committee following the R vs ML & Ors case (2019) whereby three men, including a police officer, pleaded guilty and was convicted on charges stemming from the sexual abuse of 75 girls ranging in age from 12 to 18 over a period of seven years.
47. Assessment, analysis and evaluation are essential processes to monitor progress, record achievement and measure impact. The multi-sectoral nature of the National Action Plan for ECCE implies that monitoring and evaluation have to occur at different levels and across a wide range of groups and institutions. The assessment has two components:
  - i. A formal evaluation is conducted at the end of the two-year duration of the National Plan.
  - ii. A progress report is produced at the end of the first year of implementation following collection of evidence and consultation with all Ministries through surveillance visits. The report is presented at the High-Level ECCE Policy Committee for discussion and endorsement purposes.
  - iii. The final report and the review sessions are the measures that provide the Ministry/Sector with critical information on the extent, to which the projects and programmes are implemented, areas for improvement and attention to attain the intended outcomes at the end of the implementation phase.
48. The National ECCE Action Plans was conceived as a means of initiating action that would extend on previous plans and show enhanced qualitative changes at the level of the sectors but also at a more general level. As part of the wider scope of the ECCE Framework, it has provided a way of focusing on ECCE policies and programmes, detailing best practices and promoting positive attitudes to the importance of the holistic development of children. A wide array of projects have been designed and implemented resulting in a rich field of experience that has shaped the responsibilities of participating sectors and expanded

their roles in ECCE provisions. Some noteworthy achievements in recent plans include; the setting up of a resting day lounge for nursing mothers in Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU), implementing the Tooth Brushing Programme for children in crèche, introducing the Personal Child Health Record (PCHR) Booklet, upgrading the interviewing facilities to provide a safe, supportive and comfortable waiting and interview room for child service users at Social Services, and developing a framework for the Monitoring Standards in Children Care Homes.

49. The fifth edition of the National ECCE Action Plan 2021-2022 reaffirms the State's commitment to ensure the holistic development of children. It uses as guiding document the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation priorities and the sustainable development goals and features projects by the key stakeholders; Education, Health, Local Government and Community affairs, Social Affairs and the Institute for Early Childhood Care and Development.
50. The Education Sector Medium Term strategy 2018-2022 and Beyond provides an overarching framework that consolidates relevant policies, plans and initiatives into one common, comprehensive and widely shared education and human resource strategy geared to propel the development of education and human resource in accordance to a newly adopted structure.
51. The Strategic Plan for the Ministry of Education for the period 2021-2024 outlines the strategic direction of the Ministry of Education to all stakeholders in education over the next three (3) years. The plan builds on previous successes and addresses current challenges. It provides a basis for the implementation of the Results-Based Management (RBM) Policy. It proposes a new approach to organising education in order to improve synergy across the system. The focus is on developing a cost-effective and long-term educational system that pushes students to excel through a course of study that allows for their full development as future citizens of the country. Technology-enabled learning is a critical component of this endeavor, and one of the tools that will move the educational modernisation process forward.
52. The Judiciary of Seychelles strategic Plan 2021- 2025 establishes eight areas of focus: streamlining court processes, innovating case administration system, revamping the legal aid scheme, encouraging better employee relations, repositioning the judiciary's public image, upgrading public infrastructure, engaging local partners, securing greater financial autonomy.

## F. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

53. The Government has reinforced its implementation of Programme Performance Based Budgeting linking funding to results. This coupled with the Government's adoption of Results-Based Management (RBM) policy focused on improving the allocative and operational efficiency of the public-sector is expected to with time increase the focus on results, ensure high standard of service delivery and improve coordination amongst Government entities.
54. The Government's efforts to grow its social sector services at the required pace, have been restricted and exacerbated by the global pandemic which resulted in a downturned national economy and widening resource gap. Being unable to generate revenue substantially the Government has opted to realign its macroeconomic fundamentals through a comprehensive reform programme bolstered by an IMF Standby Arrangement. A direct result has been reduction in budget allocation as the Government put in place stringent measures to reduce government expenditure and maintain public sector salaries.
55. The ECCE Trust fund was launched in 2011 and aims to mobilise resources for the development of ECCE. The government makes an annual contribution to the fund and other contributions are from private sector businesses and individuals. A 9-member board of trustee manages the fund. E.g of projects funded
56. The Children Special Fund (CSF), a fund created under the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) consisting of funds from the government-consolidated fund and from private donors. A review of this scheme was carried out in 2018 in line with the government principles of transparency and accountability. Following this review a 5-member board was appointed to manage the funds. Different categories of applications for individuals and organisations wishing to receive funding from the fund have been introduced. Applications need to be for purposes of educational, social, medical value or community

projects that will benefit children. The new application process requires applicants to attach supporting documents for consideration by the board.

**57.** Between the years 2017 to 2021, the State has maintained a contribution of SCR 7,000,000 per annum to the Children Special Fund. However, a sharp drop in actual expenditure can be observed as from the year 2020 coinciding with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**58.** The Department of Youth and Sports manages the Sports Trust Fund (STF).The fund provides sport equipments to sport animators working with 8 years old and above.

## II. DEFINITION OF THE CHILD

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### A. DEFINITION OF THE CHILD UNDER SEYCHELLES LAW

59. At the time of compiling this report there was a draft bill being discussed by stakeholders to increase the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 7 years of age. It is noteworthy that under section 94(1) of the Children Act, Cap. 28, no child under 14 years of age can be sentenced to a term of imprisonment.
60. There has been no change in other legal minimum ages within the period.

## III. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

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### A. NON-DISCRIMINATION

61. Extensive work has been undertaken from 2011 to review the Civil Code and it was finally acceded to in 2020. The new Code was drafted with the aim of introducing more fairness, justice and equality in all that a person can do from birth to death. Consequential amendments remain to outstanding in some acts including the Children Act.
62. Although the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles, the supreme law of the land ensures that there is little scope for discrimination, cultural values and paradigms continue to marginalise and alienate certain groups. Although topics which were previously very taboo are increasingly talked about, overcoming the barriers in perceptions remain a challenge and discrimination often happens under the radar of legislation and entrenched in perceptions and attitude. Work continues to be necessary to address discrimination in all its forms. With the Seychelles Human Rights Commission now operational work is ongoing to educate all stakeholders.
63. Following the decriminalizing of same sex relations, the Government permitted the registration of the first LGBTI NGO in Seychelles, which has been included in government consultations on policy issues, including work on the national HIV/ AIDS strategy and a school anti-bullying policy. In March 2022, the NGO launched a campaign to promote respect, equal treatment and acceptance. As part of this campaign a series of public service announcements are being aired on television and radio channels. The organisation's chairperson in his interview to the press labelled 'Seychelles as a tolerant society and a wonderful place to live' but emphasised the importance of continuous education efforts. The campaign sheds light on sexism and racism and promotes tolerance and acceptance.
64. Additionally, the status of legitimacy and illegitimacy in reference to children has been abolished in the newly promulgated Civil Code to comply with the equality of rights provisions in the Constitution.
65. Enrolment in Technical and Vocational Education fields in Professional Centres (PCs) at post-secondary level is open to all, both males and females. Despite promotional attempts by those institutions to encourage more girls in joining the technical fields in the past, the enrolment figures of females in comparison to males remain low in some fields such as agriculture, technology and maritime. However, more females are enrolled in PCs at post-secondary level.
66. A targeted Vocational Training and Rehabilitation (VTRP) programme was introduced in 2022 for youths with disabilities with a vision to help youths with disabilities prepare for and find an employment or some form of meaningful activity that will enable them to integrate into mainstream society, become independent and contribute to the economy of the country. The programme is different from the sheltered workshop format that was previously implemented. It uses individual needs, abilities and orientations, to tailor skills development and employment programmes and bridge the existing gap between learning and the needs of the labour market. The VTRP also developed and implemented various training courses to strengthen the skills of persons with disabilities, to enable them to become active members of the society. The VTRP envisages in expending in labour demand-oriented areas to compliment the availability of skills on the labour market in identified areas.

## B. BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD

67. Acting in the best interests of the child remains a key principle underpinning legislation and practices concerning children in the State.
68. The State has ensured that the best interest principle is outlined extensively in the Civil Code 2020 . The principle is explained as follows:
- ◇ The general principle that a delay in determining the question is likely to prejudice the well being of the child
  - ◇ Such wishes and feelings of the child as may be ascertained considering the child’s age and understanding
  - ◇ The likely effect on the child of any change in the child’s circumstances
  - ◇ The child’s age, gender, background and any characteristic of the child which the court or tribunal considers relevant
  - ◇ Any harm which the child has suffered or is at the risk of suffering
  - ◇ The capacity of each of the child’s parents, and any other person in relation to whom the court or tribunal considers the question to be relevant of meeting the child’s needs
  - ◇ The range of powers available to the court or tribunal in the proceedings in question
69. The best interest principle is commonly cited in Family Tribunal orders and is a primary consideration of the Seychelles Court in all matters that involve children.
70. Cases involving children are given priority in court so as not to prejudice the well-being of the child. However the COVID-19 pandemic upended the courts causing frequent closures. Once reopened management of cases had to be adapted to limit contact. Cases in general including cases involving children have faced delays.
71. The Family Tribunal hears the highest volume of cases in the judiciary. The operations of the Tribunal was adversely affected by the COVID 19 pandemic. During restrictions, sittings were limited to once a week (compared to the usual three) and only for urgent matters. This has resulted in back log. Nonetheless 540 cases were filed in 2020 and 588 cases were disposed. A reduction in registered applications was obvious in 2021 . For example, a decline of 48% registered applications for children related cases were recorded from the third quarter to the 4th Quarter of 2021 . In the aforementioned cases, the number of new cases-cause listed decreased by 42% for this quarter. A sharp increase ( 26% of registered application) has been observed in the first quarter of 2022 which coincides
72. The Case Administration System (CCASS) has been implemented in the Family Tribunal enabling more transparent and efficient management of cases.
73. Significant progress has been made in regards to infrastructures of the Judiciary. As of November 2020, the Magistrates Court and its Tribunals have obtained its own building. Each court has its own support staff to ensure more efficiency. This has created a better environment for the Family Tribunal operation and its associated services.
74. The Juvenile Court is created under the Children Act. To avoid backlogs and ease the Magistrate Cause list Juvenile cases are now being heard in the Supreme Court.

## C. RESPECT FOR THE VIEWS OF THE CHILD

75. Inclusive education embraces the concept of active participation of students in decision-making. All



schools have structures in place including the School Management and Student Forum that allows children to voice their views and participate in decision-making.

76. The 17th Cohort of the Seychelles National Youth Assembly (SNYA) was launched in June 2020 . This is a programme promoting youth empowerment and participation in national development. The SNYA has now adopted an election process based on democratic principles. Students from the age of 14 to 17 years are eligible to participate in the electoral process for their representative member to the SNYA. Student from the age of 18 years is not included as they are already eligible to participate in the National Electoral process. Youth Members debate current issues. This platform is essentially a non-political educational forum, which provides its members with the opportunity to nurture their knowledge, develop their leadership skill as well as to develop their research and oratory skills. First launched in 2003 SNYA has moulded over 500 young leaders, many of whom have progressed into politics as member of the Seychelles Parliament and occupied other high-level posts in Government.
77. The print and the broadcast media continue to showcase specific programmes for children and other programmes focusing on issues that are of relevance to children and young people. Media coverage is given to children-specific events and annual activities such as Children’s Day, school opening etc. During the school closure within the first year of the pandemic use of the national broadcast media was made to teach children and pass on child friendly information to sensitise children on different issues.

#### **D. THE RIGHT TO LIFE, SURVIVAL AND DEVELOPMENT**

78. Promoting children’s health is essential for improving the population’s health. As such, policies to prevent child health problems and support the family have always been considered as wise investments. Carefully designed policies to empower families, to look at population issues, allocate housing, and financial assistance, and policies to promote child health are some of the main policies promoting the right to life survival and development. Currently, a review of the housing policy and social welfare assistance framework is being undertaken to ensure that it targets those who are most in need.
79. Children in Seychelles between the ages 12 -17 started to receive their COVID- 19 Vaccination in September 2021 following a brief sensitisation period. Parents were asked to sign a form of consent and it is only those children who have received parental or guardian consent who were able to take the Vaccine.
80. COVID-19 vaccination coverage among total population, by July 2022 was at 67% of the eligible adolescent population. Vaccination drives continue on all the Islands of state ensuring easy access to all adolescent who have received the appropriate consent.

## IV. CIVIL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

### A. RIGHT TO A NAME, NATIONALITY AND IDENTITY

- 81.** In August 2021 amendments to the Civil Status Act was approved in the form of the Civil Status (Amendment) Act 2021 . The Bill's primary objective is to reform the laws on the registration of births and deaths in Seychelles so as to generate more reliable statistics. As such the Bill obliges the Ministry responsible for Civil status to register or accept statements applications, forms, documents and other information through electronic means. With respect to registration of birth the proposed law introduces a requirement that every newborn be examined by a medical practitioner, nurse or midwife who will then notify the Civil Status Office. This is significant because it allows the identification of any child who has not been registered ensuring that no child remains unregistered and to ensure that every birth registered in Seychelles actually took place in Seychelles
- 82.** The Amendment goes further to allow a Civil Status Officer to enter the name of any man as the father of a child born to an unmarried mother on the application of the parents or on receipt of an approved DNA test result allowing paternity matters to be settled in a more efficient cost saving manner. Additionally it creates a Register of Births Occurring Outside Seychelles for persons whom at the time of the birth the child qualifies as a Citizen of Seychelles in accordance with the applicable laws.
- 83.** Notably, acknowledged births has increased from 65% in 2020 to 66% in 2021 contributing positively to the right of the child for an identity.

### B. PRESERVATION OF THE CHILD'S IDENTITY

- 84.** The adoption laws, whilst safeguarding absolute confidentiality for the sake of the parties concerned do not expressly provide the adopted child with the legal right to establish links with his/her biological parents. In view of the size of the country and in the interest of ensuring stable families following adoption, close adoption, is provided for by law. However, this does not prevent adoptive parents themselves from disclosing information about the biological parents and for the adoptive child to establish link after reaching the age of majority.

### C. FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

- 85.** Traditionally, freedom of expression has in many instances been interpreted as an affront to adult authority or traditional approaches to parenting. Focus group discussions held with children groups have found that children in many cases in their family lives still feel that their views and opinions are not adequately respected or acknowledged.
- 86.** The State continues to enable, revamp and galvanise various bodies to tap into children's rich vein of dynamism and creativeness through platforms such as the Seychelles National Youth Assembly. The assembly seeks to channel the concerns of youths to policy makers. The Committee on Youth and Media of the National Parliament has established ties with the youth Assembly so as to be able to better formulate work in which the concerns of children and youths are integrated.
- 87.** An annual youth festival provide the opportunity and encouragement for children to display talent express themselves and self develop. Despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Youth Council has ensured that the festival takes place albeit on a smaller scale.
- 88.** A large group of youths participated in the national celebration on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of Seychelles Independence and National Day. Over 200 youths came together in a performance of a fusion of national dances celebrating their identities.

## D. FREEDOM OF THOUGHT CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION

89. It is the parents who guide schools on the religion or spiritual practice the child is to follow so as to ensure children are enrolled on the right spiritual programmes. In view, that spiritual teaching in schools is of catholic faith, students who do not follow the catholic faith can choose not to attend these classes.

## E. PROTECTION OF PRIVACY (ART. 10)

90. Following past concerns about the portrayal of children living in children's care homes in the media, a media policy was developed in 2017. The policy puts much emphasis on the right to privacy and provides a guideline to media professional to carry out their work with due consideration for the best interest of the child. Implementation has been successful following sensitisation of all stakeholders.

## F. PROTECTION AGAINST CHILD ABUSE AND TORTURE

91. Seychelles featured in the Global Report on Preventing Violence against Children 2020 . This report outlines the extent to which governments around the world are taking evidence-based actions to achieve these targets, and it provides a baseline against which governments can monitor their progress over the course of the next decade. Evident from the report is the need to expand data collected in this area. There is also a clear indication of the lacuna in support services for victims especially mental health services and rehabilitation services for perpetrators.

92. Family violence remains a concern for service providers. Whilst available statistics at the Family Tribunal shows that, the number of registered applications decreased by 6% in the last quarter of 2021, a sharp increase can be observed in the first quarter of 2022 of 38%.

93. In 2020, corporal punishment was abolished in Seychelles. The Children (Amendment) Act 2020 inserts a new section 70B which states that no child shall be subjected to corporal punishment. A person can be liable to a fine of SCR 25,000 or to imprisonment or both if such offence is committed. The act also repeals subsection 7 from section 70, which recognizes "the right of a parent, guardian, teacher or other person having the lawful control or charge of a child to administer proper punishment to him if that punishment does not contravene subsection (1)."

## V. FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ALTERNATIVE CARE

94. At the time of compiling this report there were a total of 72 children in care homes with President's village holding the highest number of children in care.

95. Regulations for standards of care in Children's Care Homes and an Inspection and Monitoring Framework is in the process of being developed. The representatives from the Social Affairs Department are conducting consultative meetings with external Stakeholders, to finalise the Regulation. It is expected that the first formal monitoring under the approved regulations would be in November 2022 . In the meantime, Social Services and the children home management continues to work closely to ensure that the needs of children in the care of the state are met and their rights upheld. Discussion for a Memorandum of Understanding between Social Services and the Roman Catholic Diocese (the owner of the majority of the children care homes) have been finalized to establish the parameters for this relationship with the best interest of children as the paramount concern.

96. Social workers carry out visits to children care homes and to foster parents regularly. Re-integration plan for children in alternative care is constantly reviewed and discussed with biological families where applicable for eventual reunification.

97. The problems and issues involving families are complex and multifaceted, and addressing them successfully requires a flexible and multi sectoral approach. NGO's previously very active in promoting stable families have been less visible during this period in consonance with the onset of COVID-19 .

## B. THE RIGHT TO FAMILY LIFE

- 98.** One thousand five hundred and fifty-five (1,550) marriages were registered in 2021, of which only 10% were by residents. In the same year, 152 divorces were registered.
- 99.** Antenatal services in PHC centres reported 12,354 visits in 2021 where 1355 (11%) were new visits and 10,999 (89%) were repeat visits. The visits reported are for PHC facilities only and excludes ANC visits to Seychelles Hospital which caters for only high risk cases.
- 100.** The antenatal and the post delivery parenting education sessions carried out in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health aims to empower parents to deliver their responsibilities as parents effectively. This programme has become an important part of the Maternal and Child Health Package aimed at equipping parents with the skills to run a stable and nurturing environment in the home. During the period 2016-2021, over 500 parenting sessions were conducted with several expected parents. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the programme had to be put on hold in 2021 to adhere to public health safety measures. The Social Affairs Department plans to relaunch the programme mid 2022 depending on how the COVID-19 situation progresses.
- 101.** Family support sessions to assist parents who find it difficult to cope with their child or children's behaviour had reduced as the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 took centre stage. However, the need remains and the Social Affairs Department is planning for its re-enforcement in the districts in the second half of 2022 as the public health measures are lifted.
- 102.** Monthly parenting sessions are held by NCC for parents and carers who are willing to learn how to better communicate and discipline their children without the use of corporal punishments. Every year an average number of 800 parents attend the training modules offered. However, NCC experienced a significant drop in the number of attendees over the last two years due to COVID restrictions.
- 103.** NCC has also been instrumental in advocating for more involvement of fathers in the family life, by creating men's group and activities that encourages them to participate more actively in the school life of their children. Whilst the Family Affairs Department supports a men's group whose focus is on promoting positive image of boys and men.
- 104.** On 15 May 2022, the Family Affairs Department through its Research and Policy Planning Section launched an advocacy campaign under the theme "Mon Fanmiy, Mon leker" which translate into 'My Family, My Heart'. This campaign targets schoolchildren with the purpose of promoting family values and placing renewed emphasis on the importance of families. Students participated actively in the campaign launch.
- 105.** In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on the commemoration of International Father's Day to promote paternal bonds and the positive influence of fathers in society. For the occasion in 2022, the Minister responsible for Family Affairs harped on the need to not only celebrate the fathers who are playing a positive role in their children's lives whether together or separated from their children but to also recognise that there are far too many that are discouraged and struggling to find their way.
- 106.** Despite the State's effort to support the family through different programmes and services, the breakdown of families remains significant. The statistics of the Family Tribunal on access, custody and maintenance tells a worrying story. Records show that in the period from the last quarter of 2020 to the last quarter of 2022, 299 orders of custody, 279 orders of access and 243 orders of maintenance were delivered by the Family Tribunal.

## C. FAMILY REUNIFICATION AND CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT

- 107.** The primary focus of work done with children and families is to support and empower the family to be able to take care of its members. The Director for Social Services is empowered by the Children Act to intervene in situations where children are deemed to require protection. Alternative placement for the child/ children where the need arise is always explored with family members first and institutions only considered as a last resort.
- 108.** Seychelles continues to have only one state owned residential home for children who require alternative care and protection; the President's Village. Other such services are offered by the Catholic Church to compliment the one offered by government. Children admitted to these institutions are done through a Family Tribunal Order and are admitted under a care plan. In such cases the children receive regular visits from the social worker who also keeps in close contact with the counsellor and management of the institution. Parental contact is encouraged.
- 109.** The Children Act 1982 makes provision for a foster care programme. The Social Services Division regulates this service. Potential foster parents undergo a rigorous vetting process to ensure that the children will be safe in their care. Foster parents receive an allowance per child. At the time of finalizing this report there were five foster parents on this programme. From the previous pool of foster parents, four has moved to adoption. There has also been some movement outside the foster parent registry.
- 110.** There has been a remarkable reduction in the number of adoption from the year **2019**. Records show that there was only two adoptions recorded for the year 2021.
- 111.** Whilst every effort is made to ensure the reintegration of children in care there remains gaps in addressing the challenges relating to those who have reached adulthood and needs an alternative accommodation. Social Services continues to lobby for a half way home to improve the transition from care to out of care integration.

## VI. HEALTH AND WELFARE

### A. HEALTH CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES

- 112.** Primary health care remains is offered free in the Seychelles. The Government invests a considerable amount of money in the health sector. In 2020, 11% of total national budget was allocated to the Health Sector. Total health expenditure as a percent of nominal Gross Domestic Product increased from 3.8% in 2013 to 6 % in 2020.
- 113.** Work on several health projects had to be stalled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the Ministry of Health managed to collaborate with the Ministry of Education to review the School Nutrition Policy. Work has also began to develop a National Nutrition policy to address obesity in the country.
- 114.** Despite several interruptions in the school calendar due to the COVID-19 situation, school health nurses had a total of 4317 sessions with students in 2021 . This is far less than figures reported in 2020 and 2019.
- 115.** Response to the outbreak of the COVID -19 pandemic resulted in the closure in certain services to re-deploy resource in the fight against COVID, diverting attention from routine public health. In particular there has been public complaints about the ban on visits which meant that mothers in some instances had to give birth without a family member. Resumption of services has been gradual since the second quarter of 2022.
- 116.** There is ongoing national discussion on access to contraceptives by sexually active children. The Youth and Sports Department is facilitating a debate to collect the views of the youths, parents and other partners.
- 117.** The importance of maternal and child health is well recognized and emphasized in national health policies and strategies. There were 1,665 births registered in 2021 compared to 1,554 births in 2020.
- 118.** The Total Fertility Rate in 2021 is 2.5, showing an increase over that of 2020 which was 2.3 . The total number of infant deaths (death to babies aged less than one year) for 2021 was 18 . The infant mortality rate is 10.8 per thousand live births compared to 11.6 in 2020.
- 119.** Programmes aimed at promoting the health of children and women are well established, and their impact is evident in the low maternal and infant mortality rates, virtually universal immunization coverage and low under nutrition. It is also recognized that promotion of maternal and child health requires a multi sectoral approach. Close collaboration exists between the health and education sector in the provision of the school health programme. Similarly, close working relationships exist between health workers and social workers in the decentralized community health services. At central level, a number of inter-ministerial organs exist to review policy and strategy issues and facilitate coordination.
- 120.** School meals are provided in all state schools. Improving the nutritional quality of school meals, and making them attractive to children and young people, is an on going focus for the Ministry. The Ministries of Health and Education actively collaborate on the school nutrition programme to promote healthy choices in food and beverage promoted by the commercial sector. Recently as part of government measures to address the gaps in income, school meals are to be provided for free to all primary children.
- 121.** The Ministry of Health continues to promote health through a variety of mechanisms, from provision of preventive and promotive services to public education campaigns, and social and mass media engagement. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to rapid expansion of risk communication capacity within the Ministry of Health, with far better inter sectoral coordination and health communication – a platform that the Ministry plans to leverage on in future for broader health promotion.
- 122.** With the gradual transition in approach to COVID-19, from strict control towards ‘living with COVID’, many promotive and preventive health services are resuming or rescaling operations back towards pre-COVID times. A review and revamp of the HOON campaign is planned, with subsequent resumption of activities.

- 123.** The following are the themes adopted by the Ministry of Health during the period under review under different activities took place to promote healthy living :
- 124.** Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) services for HIV were introduced in 2001 and guidelines have evolved over the years in line with global recommendations. All pregnant women attending antenatal clinics are offered HIV testing using a routine opt-out approach, and all women eventually accept to be tested. All pregnant women infected with HIV are managed at the Communicable Disease Control Unit (CDCU) and currently all HIV-infected pregnant women are eligible for Anti-Retro-viral Therapy (ART) (Option B+) and HIV-exposed infants receive appropriate ARV prophylaxis for free. The Clinical Laboratory in the Ministry of Health does early infant diagnosis (EID) of HIV locally. All women living with HIV (WLHIV) have access to sexual reproductive health services including family planning.
- 125.** A total of 215 HIV positive pregnancies were reported from 1988 to December 2021, of which 193 (90%) benefited from the PMTCT program since its introduction in 2001, from mono-therapy to tri-therapy to date. Prior to the introduction of PMTCT, 7 out of the 27 babies born from HIV positive mothers were infected with HIV representing a mother to child transmission rate of 26% compared to 14 out of the 188 babies since the introduction of PMTCT program representing a mother to child transmission rate of 7%. Of these, 2 babies were diagnosed HIV positive at 9 months old after birth though their mothers tested HIV negative throughout their pregnancies.
- 126.** From 2012-2021, 133 pregnant women infected with HIV were reported by the CDCU, some of the women were newly diagnosed, whereas a few pregnancies occurred in women known to be living with HIV. Partner testing is offered for partners of pregnant women, however, uptake of testing by partners is very low, at around 5% reported in 2019.

## **B. CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

- 127.** During the period under review, children aged 1 to 8 years have continued to benefit from special assistive devices such as special plates and spoons, dycem mats, long handle reach-er and disco seat to name a few as part of the health sector ECCE project to be used at home and in school. This is part of the states' commitment to facilitate access by children with disabilities to quality special aids. A satisfaction survey on use of the assistive devices provided under this project was implemented in 2018 of which 18 parents and 16 teachers participated. Findings showed that the level of parents' awareness of special aids and the special aids project was high. It was also evident that parents showed interest in their children's development by following their progress and by promoting a greater sense of independence for the children at home. Teachers seemed to express the view that all efforts were being made at school to provide an environment where interaction between both children with and without disabilities was facilitated. This was particularly because all therapeutic services were welcomed and accommodated on site.
- 128.** As part of National Action Plan 2021-2022 Early childhood care and education(NAP) the Ministry of Health is conducting a project titled Gadget and Screen use amongst Children in centre based services (less than 5 years old children attending daycare). The aim of this project is to assess the type and level of exposure to gadgets and screens amongst children below 5 years. We have used parental questionnaires and observation in daycare. The expected outcome is Baseline data on screen viewing amongst children in centre-based services in Seychelles for policy and sensitization programs.
- 129.** The Ministry of Health and its partners ensures assessment of all persons with disabilities to determine their medical, social, educational and vocational abilities in order to organize and provide appropriate services and ensure their full integration in the community.
- 130.** Attendant care is provided by the State for those families with a child with severe disabilities to be able to attend mainstream school.
- 131.** Parents who have to stay at home to look after their severely disabled child/children are provided for by the state under the Home Carer's Scheme. The State is encouraging private sector investment in respite care programmes.

- 132.** Affordable housing under the government housing policy is provided on a case-by-case basis by the Minister for Habitat, Lands, Infrastructure. Where the applicant is a person with disabilities, the house is modified to suit the persons needs at no additional cost to the home owner(s) and it is ensured that the unit allocated in at ground floor level.
- 133.** Through the Disabled Trust Fund under the aegis of the Family Department a person living with a disability can obtain financial support to renovate their home.
- 134.** There is inadequate availability of integrated publicly funded day care provision for children with disabilities. Children who do not attend school still have little to no access to day care facilities and therefore little opportunities to tap into their potentials.
- 135.** Despite improvements over the years, some general services for children, including leisure, play and recreational facilities continue not to cater for children with disabilities. The lack of access for wheelchair users and people with other physical disabilities to many public buildings, public transport systems, shops and restaurants further serves to hinder participation in the mainstream.

### C. BREASTFEEDING

- 136.** In 2017, the rate of exclusive breastfeeding at 6 weeks was 44% . A recent study shows that there has been a remarkable drop in exclusive breastfeeding before six month to only 28.2% of infants whilst the target for Seychelles national strategic plan 2025 is to reach at least 50%.
- 137.** As a measure to keep the importance of breastfeeding on the agenda, the Ministry of Health commemorates World Breastfeeding Week annually. This provides a platform for the government, health system, workplaces and communities to be informed, educated and empowered to build up their capacity to provide and sustain breastfeeding in friendly environments for mothers.
- 138.** In the year 2021 particular focus was placed on the promotion of exclusive breast individual sensitization sessions of midwives and nurses during supervisory visits on the newly developed guidelines for management of pregnant women, mothers and new-born's, including breastfeeding and postnatal care during COVID-19.

### D. ADOLESCENT HEALTH

- 139.** The Youth Health Centre continues to provide a range of referral services. The Youth Health Centre conducts outreach activities, including life skill training sessions on communication and negotiating safer sex practices, and conducting HIV/AIDS screening for in and out of school youths. The Centre provides free access to sexual and reproductive health services, which include contraception, diagnosis, treatment and referrals. The Social Affairs Department has also integrated sexual and reproductive health education within its sensitisation programmes for its clients.
- 140.** The rate of teenage pregnancies in the country remains a major concern. The availability of sexuality education in the school curriculum under the Personal, Social and Citizenship Education (PSCE) programme and other programmes such as the Youth Health Centre has done little to curb the trend. The National Bureau of Statistics and Civil Status shows that from 2015 to June 2020, 24 girls under 15 years old had given birth, and in the same period (2015 to June 2020), 1,120 girls/women aged 15 to 19 years old, had given birth. Findings also indicate that 27% of teenage pregnancies end up in abortions. Seychelles is rated the highest abortion rate in the SADC region, especially among women of reproductive age, with 22% to 26% of all pregnancies ending in abortion. While teenage pregnancy between 12 - 19 years has remained around 13% over the past 5 years, the mean age of first pregnancy among teenagers is 15 years.
- 141.** A special committee (The Committee on Communicable Diseases, HIV/Aids and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights) has been formed to give this concern priority. The Committee organised in June 2022 its first round table discussion to engage, influence and advocate for policy change on access to Sexual Reproductive Health Services by young women and girls including safe abortion in Seychelles in a bid



to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies.

- 142.** A 2019 report on Sexual Reproductive Health in Seychelles by the WHO, show that the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR), has been dropping over the past few years. This may have an effect on the ability of couples to practice family planning and prevent unwanted pregnancies. Parental/ guardian consent remains a requirement for the provision of contraceptives to minors (<18 years of age).
- 143.** While there is a push by key policy makers to improve policy in this area, there continues to be a need for more targeted education of the youth and even to engage parents and other members of the community to be on board for these changes to become a reality. In practice this may mean facilitating access to contraception and condoms for teenagers in the hope of diminishing the incidence of unsafe abortions, as well as unwanted teenage pregnancies and transmission of HIV/AIDS.

## **E. STANDARD OF LIVING**

- 144.** The welfare system in Seychelles is designed to ensure that every member of society is protected against both losses of income and extra needs whether through old age, disability, illness, unemployment or single parenthood. There are a range of interrelated benefits, some of which exist to compensate for loss of earnings, some in partial recognition of particular costs such as those associated with disability or children, and others designed to prevent parents and children falling below a minimum prescribed income level whether in or out of work. Children are specifically targeted through means-tested allowances. In theory, the structures exist to provide every child, whether or not the parents are working with an adequate standard of living to ensure their proper development.
- 145.** The Agency for Social Protection provides the following benefits and approved schemes that have an impact on the welfare of children. Benefits;1) Abandoned/Orphan benefit are for children who have lost/ or been abandoned by both parents2) Semi-orphan benefit is assistance given upon the death of one parent3) Disability benefit a person is eligible when he/she cannot undertake unemployment because of long-term illness or a disability Their dependent would qualify for dependant benefit 4) Invalidity benefit a person is partially or incapable of work due to illness/disability stemming from sickness. Similar to disability benefit their dependant qualify for dependant benefit and rates are the same 5) Sickness benefit; a child whose parent/guardian is a beneficiary of this category of benefit also qualifies as a dependent that period of time.
- 146.** Approved schemes are as follows;1) Post-secondary bursary is a universal assistance given to all students attending post-secondary institutions in Seychelles, 2) SPTC Travel concession, the government subsidizes bus fare for primary and secondary students, making travel by bus free for them. 3) Specialized child treatment, is provided for approved overseas-specialised treatment for children. 4) Dedicated fund for school, the provision of school snacks and lunch, uniforms and other miscellaneous items such as stationary to crèche, primary and secondary state school children whose parents do not have the means to provide these items. 5) Home care programme, a caregiver is paid in the household to assist children who needs special care either from a disability/illness with their daily living activities, the caregiver is assisted with an allowance SCR 5, 772 . 6) Foster care, allowance for foster caregivers/foster parent until completion of post-secondary, the rate is Sr1, 500 for foster parent and SCR 1, 300 for foster. 7) Day care assistance is to assist with day care cost for child up to 4 years of age who are not in crèche, parents/ guardian must be in employment to qualify and the rate is SCR500 per child. 8) Travel subsidy, post-secondary student on Mahe who reside on Praslin or La Digue qualify for two ferry tickets per month. 9) Child minder registered with IECD who are taking care of children between 6 to 10 children are assisted with SCR5, 050 on a monthly basis.
- 147.** Government has recently announced a number of measures to temporarily address income poverty, relieve schoolchildren and other vulnerable groups in the country. The measures are temporary as the government continues to monitor the economic situation and the global crisis to be able to determine a permanent package.
- 148.** Access to adequate housing is a prerequisite for the healthy development of a child. Without it, a child's right of access to education, health and health care and social development are at risk of being

seriously undermined. Seychelles' Constitution guarantees "the right of every citizen to adequate and decent shelter conducive to health and well-being » and undertakes either directly or with the cooperation of public and private organizations to facilitate the effective realization of this right (art. 34). The Government policy on housing recognizes the need to address housing within a wider social context than merely the provision of physical shelter. It recognizes, among other things, the need to provide a suitable environment for the physical, emotional and social development of children, the empowering of women and the needs of equitable access to acceptable housing conditions directed towards increasing home ownership coupled with improvement in the provision of low cost accommodation.

**149.** The quality of houses in Seychelles is considered high, providing the necessary facilities that enhance good family life. Most are adequate for current family sizes, allow for the necessary privacy for family members including growing children and adolescents, and have adequate land for a small home garden although demand has always been higher than availability. Access to housing is based on needs as determined by the concerned government department. The number of children in the family is one of the criteria used in the selection process.

## VIII. EDUCATION, LEISURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

### A. EDUCATION, INCLUDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND GUIDANCE

**150.** The Ministry of Education continues to benefit from one of the highest portions of the national budget.

**151.** Since the first cases of Covid-19 were reported in the country in March 2020, a Task Force, comprising representatives of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health, was formed to provide guidance and oversight to educational institutions to reduce transmission of the virus and provide psychosocial support while mitigating the impact on learning. All educational institutions were required to put in place learning continuity plans. Different schooling modalities, including full remote learning, full in-person learning, and a hybrid modality with the majority of children attending school in person on alternate weeks, have been used depending on the level of community transmission. All schools have resumed full in-person learning since March 2022. Efforts to support remote learning included the use of virtual learning platforms, sharing of content through electronic messaging, transmission of recorded lessons on television, and provision of hard copy 'learning packs'. Challenges have been inadequate internet service and equipment for some families as well as educators, limitations in proficiency to use remote learning options, availability of parental support for a number of reasons, and staffing disruptions due to Covid-19 illness and quarantine measures. Adapting to the situation at hand has also brought new opportunities with some learners excelling in academics. However, it is recognized that children have been differentially impacted by the disruptions to their schooling and the extent of learning loss will likely become apparent in the coming years.

**152.** Ministry of Education employs attendance officers who follow-up on children who do not attend school. When students drop out, and despite all efforts are unable to resume mainstream education they are encouraged to join skills development programmes.

**153.** The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs also makes provision for the training and development of school dropout through the Skills Development Programme (SDP) being administered by the Employment Department.

**154.** The SDP, first introduced in 2010 and reviewed in 2016 provides on-the-job training for young unskilled and inexperienced job seekers. It targets those aged 15-18 years old who have dropped out of school or have not been accepted by a post-secondary training institution. The Government contributes a percentage of the participants' allowance which is payable by the hosting organization. Likewise, SDP has provided opportunities for young people to acquire skills and knowledge in a particular trade of their choice. The participants on the programme are not engaged in any form of child labour. Monitoring by Employment officers are done on a regular basis.

**155.** Almost all children including children with disabilities are admitted to either mainstream schools or special schools/centres. The vast majority of children attend mainstream public or private schools, with children in special schools/centres making up less than 0.01% of the student population. Children who are not registered for school by their parents are actively sought out and supported to register for school, in collaboration with health and social services. Efforts are ongoing to make schools more accessible, through advocacy, the provision of human and material resources, educational programmes, and physical infrastructure.

**156.** The Inclusive Education Policy was introduced in February 2015. Since, access to the mainstream schools has improved and the physical adaptation to school facilities is being made as the need arises. More children with disabilities continue to be integrated into mainstream. Nonetheless, it is recognised there is a need to revise the curriculum within the schools to ensure that persons living with disabilities can learn in an environment which is accommodated to its needs.

**157.** Children with medical conditions are encouraged to keep coming to school, even on part time basis or when they are well enough to do so. In certain cases, schools provide school work to students who are in hospital or at home due to medical concerns. However, this is currently not mandatory or systematic.

- 158.** An assessment is conducted for all children referred for admission to the School for the Exceptional Child (SEC). This is coordinated by the School Psychology Service and includes input from parents, school personnel and in the majority of cases health personnel. Part time inclusion in mainstream school and SEC is implemented for some students. Children’s experience and progress in different school settings are considered in decision-making. The aim of these processes is to choose the school placement option that is in the best interest of the child given the current available education services.
- 159.** It is the practice that most children who exhibit delays in their development or are diagnosed with a disability are initially admitted to mainstream schools, in some cases with a one to one ‘carer’ (aide), identified by the parents and funded by the Agency for Social Protection. For the past three years, 4 to 6 children per year have been admitted straight to special schools when they became eligible for crèche enrolment. This includes children with Severe congenital medical conditions and multiple disabilities, and some with sensory difficulties, Down Syndrome, and Autism Spectrum Disorder. Some of the students in mainstream schools are later admitted either part time or full time to the School for the Exceptional Child as the mainstream school programme becomes less flexible, academic and social demands increase, and the staff to student ratio increases. Part-time attendance in mainstream schools and School for the Exceptional Child is applied for some students.
- 160.** Effort is ongoing to ensure that Special Education Needs Coordinator within mainstream schools with their specialist room to support students with diverse educational needs to access the school programme.
- 161.** Access arrangements for students can be made for both National and International exams. Some arrangements that have been made include increase in font size for students with visual impairments, extra time, and assignment of a scribe.
- 162.** Assistive devices such as Braille machines, screen reading software, modified furniture, and communication boards have been requested to support students in mainstream and special schools.
- 163.** An SEN module is included in initial teacher training at the Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education (SITE).
- 164.** In 2016 a framework was introduced with the purpose of determining the suitability of childminders. Since, 466 childminders and assistant childminders from Mahe, Praslin and La Digue have been vetted through this mechanism. In 2022, efforts are underway to enlarge this framework and provide for it under an appropriate legislative structure. The first draft of the proposed regulations are being reviewed by stakeholders in a series of working sessions. It is expected that suitability screening for all persons having direct contact with children in child related work will start in the first quarter of 2023.

## **B. LEISURE, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES**

- 165.** Responsibility for ensuring play opportunities, whether through provision of facilities and services or through creating safe environments for free play, are spread between government departments. Much provision also comes through the voluntary and private sector.
- 166.** In 2021 an Act was promulgated, ‘The Seychelles National Institute for Culture, Heritage and Arts Act 2021’ to provide for the establishment of the Seychelles National Institute for Culture, Heritage and the Arts as an institution of policy making on culture, heritage and the arts for the Seychelles. The Institute discharge the executive and administrative functions of Government by administering all existing laws relating to culture, heritage and the arts replacing the department of Culture. At the ceremony to launch the Institute the President of the Republic noted that the preservation of the Seychellois was at the top of his Government’s agenda. He said ‘my wish is that we safeguard our culture and further develop it. But first, we as Seychellois we need to value our own culture, and where we come from. Let this unite us as a country,’
- 167.** Many creative activities are organized at school level for children. Children also have free access to the archives and museums, the Natural History Museum being particularly popular with the children. The Government is committed to encouraging children and young people to develop forms of expression

in all areas, as such the Conservatoire of Music and Dance has programmes for children. In recent years there has also been positive strides by the private sector to make available activities and programmes that provide children at a fee opportunities to participate in different platforms for development and expression of talent.

**168.** In Seychelles responsibility for sports falls within the brief of the National Sports Council. The Ministry responsible for sports has responsibility for giving direction to maximize community participation and contribution in local government administration and development; for coordinating youth activities and for mass enjoyment of and pursuit of excellence in sports.

**169.** The Department of Local Government is also responsible for the upkeep of a number of social and leisure facilities at both district and national level, such as children's playgrounds, playing fields, multi-purpose courts, youth centres, and community centres. All these facilities play an important role in the development of young people and children of Seychelles. In recent months there has been many pop up activities in the districts through collaborations between the local government department and that of sport to promote sports like table tennis and traditional hobbies like kite making and flying which have been welcomed by children.

## X. SPECIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

### A. CHILDREN IN SITUATIONS OF EMERGENCIES

- 170.** Seychelles is a state party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. There are no records of children refugee in Seychelles.
- 171.** Seychelles is a party to the optional protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict since 2010 . It submitted its very first report addressing the obligations under this optional protocol in 2021.

### B. CHILDREN IN CONFLICT WITH THE LAW

- 172.** In Seychelles, the age of criminal responsibility is 12 however, a child of 7 to 11 years deemed to be capable of discernment can also be held criminally responsible. Currently, there is a draft bill being discussed by stakeholders to increase this minimum age. Seychelles has no record of any child held criminally responsible between the ages of 7 to 12 for the past decades .
- 173.** It is noteworthy that under section 94(1) of the Children Act, Cap. 28, no child under 14 years of age can be sentenced to a term of imprisonment.
- 174.** At the end of reporting for the period under review here were two male child convicted to prison.
- 175.** The law makes available several measures that protect the privacy of juvenile offenders. The Juvenile Court sits in chambers or on different days and times from those at which ordinary sittings are held (sect. 93);Persons under 18 years of age are to be kept away from adult offenders unless jointly charged with adult offenders (sect. 93 (4))
- 176.** Other safeguards include that no child shall be prosecuted for any offence except for murder or on the instructions of the Attorney-General (sect. 92); no child under 14 years of age shall be sentenced to imprisonment (sect. 92 (1)); and no young person shall be sentenced to imprisonment if he can suitably be dealt with in any other way provided for under the Act, for example probation, fine, committal to a place of detention or certified institution, or to the care of a relative or other person (sect. 95 (1))
- 177.** Pre-trial detention is a last resort in the case of juveniles. The procedure is to release juvenile offenders with a warning into the custody of a parent or guardian until the trial takes place. There is no Juvenile Detention Centre at the moment hence all efforts are made to return the child to his or her family.
- 178.** The law provides for charges against a child or young person to be heard by the Juvenile Court unless the child is charged jointly with an adult.
- 179.** Primary responsibility in Seychelles for services to the Juvenile Court rests with the Probation section currently based in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Probation officers are authorized by the Children’s Act (sect. 8) to make a report to the court in criminal cases involving accused under the age of 18, with a view to providing information on the character and environment of the child and the causes and circumstances contributing to the delinquency. The intention of the Act is to try to ensure that custodial sentences are more appropriately targeted at the serious or violent offender, with petty offenders maintained within the community as far as possible, thereby ensuring that imprisonment for young people would be used as a last resort. Recently the chief Justice has also directed that Social Services attend Juvenile Court session to be able to address concerns that arise and assist the court with information where relevant .

### C. REFORMATION, FAMILY REINTEGRATION AND SOCIAL REHABILITATION

- 180.** The Prison Act 19 (20 states that “the Commissioner may permit a child of a female prisoner to be detained with her in a prison if the child is being breast-fed by her and is less than 18 months in age.

**181.** The Seychelles Prison Service (SPS) makes provision for the following:

- ◇ Prisoners on work programme are privileged to get fortnight visits at the prison (instead of 1 monthly)
- ◇ Prisoners can get special visit with their children (access) during the weekend at the prison, upon request of the psychosocial Support Unit.
- ◇ Prisoners can request for home visit and such privilege is considered upon good behaviour of the prisoners.

#### **D. CHILDREN IN SITUATION OF EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**

**182.** The number of child abuse cases reported remains a concern for the authorities. In the last 4 years social services recorded 246 cases in the year 2018, 282 cases in the year 2019, 387 cases in the year 2020 and 314 cases in the year 2021 . Of growing concern is the continued increase in reported cases of sexual abuse on children. Within the past 4 years 2020 was a record year with 168 sexual abuse cases reported. Child neglect is also of particular concern for the authorities with a 51% increase in reported cases in the year 2021 . Despite the strides made in data collection and efforts made to encourage reporting, abuse remains hard to detect.

**183.** The state has recorded no report of child labour.

**184.** Regulation 22 of the Conditions of Employment Regulations, 1991, as amended in 2006, imposes certain restrictions for employment of people under 18 .

**185.** These are:

- ◇ the prohibition of their employment in hotels, guest-houses, boarding houses, any places where tourists are accommodated, restaurants, shops, bars, nightclubs, dance halls, discotheques or similar places of entertainment or on ships or aircraft's, unless special written permission is granted by the Department of Employment, after careful examination of the circumstances of the case, or unless this employment falls under a training scheme approved by the Minister in writing,
- ◇ the prohibition of their employment between the hours of 10 pm and 5 a.m. unless special written permission is granted by a competent officer after careful examination of the circumstances of the case, and
- ◇ the strict prohibition of their employment in gaming houses or casinos (a prohibition which even extends to workers up to the age of 21).

**186.** These indicates that the law provides for the types of work where children under the age of 18 cannot be employed in accordance with ILO Conventions No.182, though further provisions, which may include the list of hazardous work which has been drafted with the assistance of the ILO, and will be considered in the review of the Employment Act.

**187.** Both alcohol and drugs are controlled by statute in Seychelles. The sale of alcohol to children under the age of 18 is illegal and the Children's Act (sect. 72) makes it an offence for anyone to give or allow a child liquor in a quantity that might be detrimental to the child's health. The Act also makes it illegal for a person to give or sell, a child or allow him/her to use or take any dangerous drug as defined in the Dangerous Drugs Act.

**188.** Children are recognized as a particular vulnerable group amidst the scourge of substance abuse in Seychelles. The government's effort to tackle substance abuse is relentless.

**189.** The state is committed to ensuring that those responsible for the offences against children are prosecuted. In a landmark case in 2020, three men, including a police officer, pleaded guilty and was convicted on charges stemming from the sexual abuse of 75 girls ranging in age from 12 to 18 over a period of seven

years. This has been followed by *R v Julie* (2021), a case of similar nature where a 21-year-old man was convicted for 14 years on his own plea of guilty. These cases have brought to light the complex legal environment that is the internet.

- 190.** The state recognises that there is a small group of children who are involved with begging. This is often related to the drug issue.
- 191.** Significant progress has been made in the area of trafficking in persons. The state in recognition of the need to intensify prevention and national response to trafficking in general adopted national Labour migration Policy and updated its national Action Plan against Human Trafficking 2019 – 2021 with the support of the International Organisation for Labour Migration (IOM) and the Southern African Development Community. A regional dialogue hosted by the Seychelles was organised with the support of IOM and the Indian Ocean Commission in acknowledgment of the need for all regional partners to work together to be able to make progress in the fight against trafficking.
- 192.** Whilst reported cases involve primarily labour exploitation of foreign nationals, the provisions have also been used to try and convict perpetrators of sexual offences.
- 193.** The helpline continues to be one of the most important referral mechanisms for the local child protection system. A new three-digit toll free line has been launched in 2021 endorsed by all the three-Telecom company in the country. The line is named by the Social Services Division and continues to be promoted. An assessment of its use was conducted earlier this year. The assessment showed that since the introduction of the three-digit number there has been an increase in the number of reported cases through the helpline. It was also identified that more adults are using the helpline rather than the children themselves. The Social Services plans to continue with its awareness raising activities to increase visibility and to encourage children to use the helpline.
- 194.** The Family Affairs Department commissioned in the year 2021 an Inventory of Domestic Violence Agencies. The purpose of this inventory was to identify the gaps that need addressing for the successful implementation of the New Domestic Violence Act, 2020. The inventory has identified a list of gaps including the need to establish a comprehensive care system for victims of domestic violence, including measures to ensure their access to free legal aid, medical and psychological support, shelters, and counselling and rehabilitation services.
- 195.** As part of the reform of child laws the Child Law reform Committee has recommended, a Sex Offender Registry to be maintained by the State.



## **X. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHILD**

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**196.** An approach of putting emphasis on both rights and responsibilities is commonly applied by all service providers. By letting children know both their rights and responsibilities they are also being provided with the opportunity ask questions, express their feelings and participate and speak up when they feel their rights are being violated.

## **XI. RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS**

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**197.** During the period under review, Seychelles has ratified the Optional Protocol on the Communications procedure confirming its commitment to compliance with children rights.

ANNEX

CHILDREN SPECIAL FUND

YEAR	APPROVED BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENDITURE
2017	7,000,000.00	5,250,000.00
2018	7,000,000.00	3,703,291.80
2019	7,000,000.00	6,892,807.00
2020	7,000,000.00	2,966,550.45
2021	7,000,000.00	754,497.39
2022	7,000,000.00	

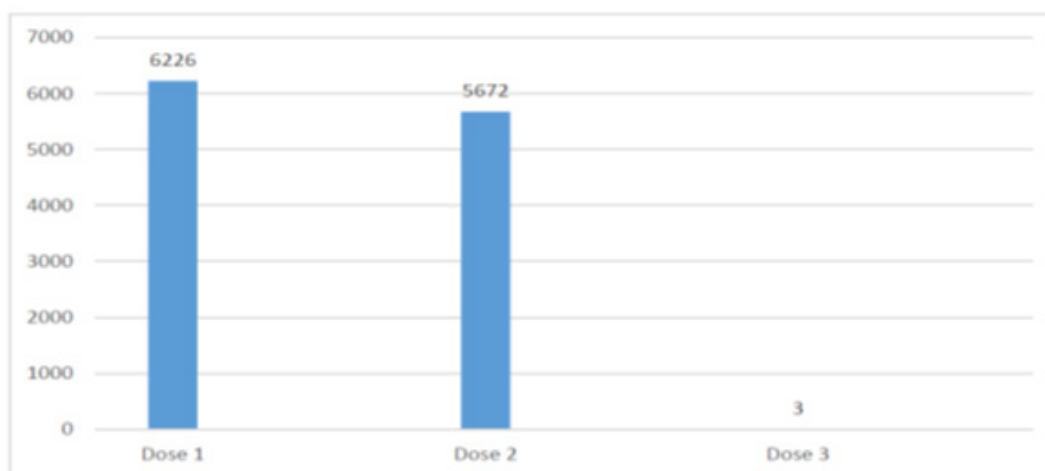
Enrolment		
	Females	Males
Health, Business, Arts, Teaching and Tourism	78%	22%
Agriculture Technology and Maritime	17%	83%
Overall enrolment % of Females to Males: 57% to 43% in PCs		

Covid-19 vaccination coverage among total population, as at July 09, 2022

Vaccine Dose (all brands)	Uptake (cumulative)	Total Population	Coverage
<b>Dose 1</b>	85,179	99,258*	86%
<b>Completed (Dose 1 &amp; 2)</b>	80,926	99,258	82%
<b>Dose 3 (Booster)</b>	40,288	99,258	41%
<b>Dose 4</b>	3,074	99,258	3%

\*National Bureau of Statistics, Statistical Bulletin, Mid-Year Estimates 2021

Uptake of COVID vaccination amongst adolescent (12-17 years)



Note: All adolescents received Pfizer vaccine

Table 1: Enrolment of Students in Special Schools/Centres

School/Centre	Gender		No of students (March 2022)
	M	F	
School for the Exceptional Child	64	38	102
Centre for the Deaf Children (Located at Mont Fleuri)	0	5	11
Praslin Centre for the Exceptional Child (Located within Baie Ste Anne Primary School)	3	2	5

