



THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SEYCHELLES

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES

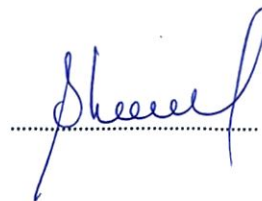
REPORT ON THE VISIT TO DEROCHES & COETIVY

SEVENTH ASSEMBLY

The Chairperson of the Committee on Government Assurances submits on behalf of the Committee its Report on its visit to Desroches & Coetivy.

Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel

Chairperson



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Hon. Nobert Loizeau

Vice Chairperson



.....

Hon. De Sheila Bastienne

Member



.....

Hon. Philippe Monthy

Member



.....

Hon. Rocky Uranie

Member

.....

Hon. Richard Labrosse

Member



.....

Hon. Wallace Cosgrow

Member

.....

REPORT ON COMMITTEE VISIT

Date: Friday 5th May, 2023

Time: 0900hrs onwards

Site: Deroches & Coetivy

Present

Committee on Government Assurances

Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel – *Chairperson*

Hon. Norbert Loizeau – *Vice Chairperson*

Hon. Philip Monthy

Hon. De Sheila Bastienne

Hon. Richard Labrosse

Hon. Rocky Uranie

Hon. Wallace Cosgrow **Absent with Apology**

Ms. Thelma Joseph – *Secretary*

Ms. Linda Gerry – *Secretary Assistant*

Mrs. Ghislaine Thelermont – *Secretary Assistant*

The IDC delegation that accompanied the members of COGA on their visit consisted of:

- a) Mr. Glennly Savy (CEO);
- b) Mr. Christian Lionnet (Deputy CEO);
- c) Mr. Justin Moustache (Agricultural Project Manager); and
- d) Mr. Michael Govinden (Public Relations Manager).

The respective Island Managers, Ms. Mariza Henriette (Desroches) and Mr. Gilbert Esparon (Coetivy) were also present for the visit.

1. Introduction

The Committee on Government Assurances, headed by its Chairperson, Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel conducted a site visit to Deroches and Coetivy on Friday 5th May 2023. The Committee investigated the progress of projects pledged by Vice President Afif and The CEO of IDC, Mr Glennly Savy in the National Assembly on the 05th October, 2021.

Deroches' Agricultural production and Coetivy's Shrimp farming were investigated.



2. Background

The Islands Development Company (IDC) is a parastatal company created by Government in 1980 and is registered under the Companies Act of 1972, with the mandate for the sustainable development of the outer islands. IDC's primary goal is to manage and administer the 14 islands that the Seychelles Government has leased to it for 99 years. IDC presently has a permanent presence on twelve islands.

The Board of Directors directs IDC, creating policies and strategies to reach goals and fulfill social responsibilities. At present, it has one subsidiary and three associated companies. IDC operates its own aviation wing to better service the islands and is also co-owner of the vessel *Enterprise II*, which it manages.



Deroches

Desroches Island is the main island of the Amirantes Islands. It is located 227 km southwest of Victoria, Seychelles. It is 5.5 km long and has a land area of 4.027 km². Along its circumference of 13 km is beaches of fine sand.

Tourism is now the main economic activity, but agricultural activities are undertaken, mainly to supply the hotel. IDC operates Guest Houses and provides staff accommodation, a Conservation Centre and logistical support to Island Conservation Society.



Four Seasons

With tourism being the number one economic driver of the island, Desroches is home to a branch of the **Four Seasons resorts**. The 5-star resort, with 71 high quality accommodations including bungalows, villas, suites, and residences – each with personal pool, beach access and private garden.



Solar Farm

One of the company's strategic objectives is to explore and introduce renewable energy projects on the islands to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, thus reducing operating costs.

Seychelles' Desroches island is consuming 90 percent less fuel thanks to the installation of a 2.5-megawatt solar farm commissioned by the **Islands Development Company** (IDC). The farm is the second-largest solar plant in Seychelles after the one on Ile de Romainville. The 2.5-megawatt solar farm was built by a South African-based distributed renewable energy company.

Mr Savy revealed that the expenditure for electricity had dropped to \$0.19 per kilowatt, in contrast to the \$0.42 when the generators were in action. The only funds that IDC expended were to construct the pillar to which the PV panels are affixed, as well as the structure that houses the equipment.

The solar farm on Desroches is the fourth and biggest installation on the outer islands managed by IDC.



Reef Balls

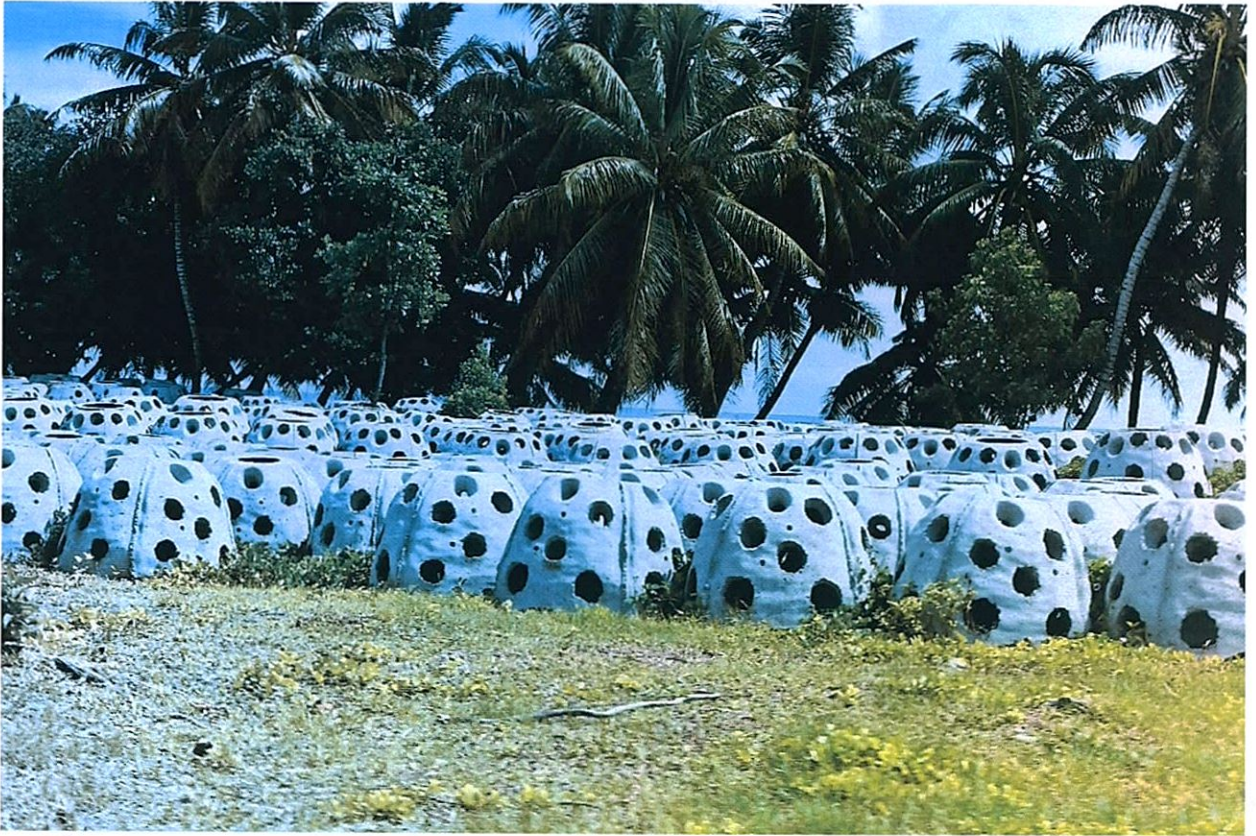
The islands of Desroches are currently facing the dangers of beach erosion, which could eventually bring the islands' existence in peril especially as they are coralline and low-lying islands. Various methods to tackle erosion have been used in the past with little to no effect. They found a company in the Maldives, that had adopted a technique called reef balls, that has had great results, Mr. Savy, the IDC chief Executive stated.

As part of their commitment to protecting Desroches Island, they are installing Reef Balls offshore to shelter the beach from erosion and help preserve the natural coral reef. A month-long deployment had commenced since 26 April 2023.

A reef ball is a designed artificial reef module that mimics the structure and function of a natural reef made with special concrete additives with a pH like seawater. This assures compatibility with marine environments and enhances its attractiveness to colonising organisms.

"The balls have to be placed in an exact pattern and that is why the company made a comprehensive study of the coastline before the laying works begun, as they needed to find the perfect placement and number of balls to install to ensure maximum effectiveness,

The balls not only protect the coastline but also reduce the strength of the current and waves crashing on the beach and, therefore, reduce erosion. The project to install 800 reef balls on Desroches is expected to be completed by December 2023.



ICS

The ICS Conservation Centre was established in 2009. Desroches Island Conservation Centre located in the Creole village. The main objectives are to protect the marine and terrestrial environments, to rehabilitate, monitor and research the environment, to educate staff and guests and to make sure Desroches Island is an environmental rehabilitation success through a partnership of ecotourism and conservation. ICS employed a full-time Conservation Officer and other conservation staff. Every visitor to the island is invited to call in to the Island Conservation Centre in the village to meet the staff, learn more about their work first-hand and visit the nearby Aldabra Giant Tortoise sanctuary.



Agricultural Production Research

Desroches is an agricultural research hub, where experiments are being conducted on various varieties of plants. IDC has tested a variety of crops on the island, some of which have proved to be immensely successful. The outcomes of the trials will be operationalized on Coëtivy on a much bigger scale.

The project has already started bearing fruits as IDC now supplies vegetables and free-range eggs to hotels, and demand for such products are ever-increasing from other establishments.

(IDC) says that it is still going ahead with its agriculture programme on the outer island of Coëtivy despite some issues with prospective farmers.





The plan was for farmers to come to the island and start production of various agricultural products, but after some disagreements related to leasing of the land that they would farm on, there was no movement on that front.

The Islands Development Company (IDC) is making progress on several projects some of which will benefit the country at large, and others which are vital towards the company's expansion.

Thus far, trials to determine the types of vegetables better suited for production on the island have been conducted on Desroches island since it is largely like Coetivy. An Israeli company contracted to carry out the first phase are set to start the second phase, comprising the costing exercise, and finalising the technical details and elements, as well as infrastructure system for IDC to utilise to maximise production. They considered numerous elements on the island and have concluded that it is very satisfactory for large-scale agriculture, with some under shade houses, making use of tunnels or open-air agriculture," Mr Savy stated.

IDC has managed to, through the project, produce around 300 to 400 kilogrammes of tomatoes on just a few beds, during the Northwest monsoon season, when it is particularly humid and rainy.

As it aims to develop its agricultural production over 200-hectares, it will take around 5 years before IDC can reach capacity. A significant proportion of the space will also be dedicated to the production of animal feed, with crops such as corn which can be converted to animal feed for livestock and pork production.

Coëtivy

Coëtivy lies 290 kilometres south of Victoria. Excluding the raised limestone islands of Aldabra and Assomption, Coëtivy is the largest coral island of Seychelles at 931 hectares. It is a long and narrow island, 9 kilometres by 0.25 to 1.6 kilometres stretching in an NNE to SSW direction. It was formed on the east side of an almost rectangular shoal rising from a depth of 2.5 kilometres and measuring about 180 sq kilometres.

Coëtivy has been dedicated primarily to agriculture and aquaculture and any future tourism development will have to co-exist. The 931-hectare island is a mere 290 km from Mahe, reachable in an hour by plane or twenty-four hours by boat, making it feasible for large scale agriculture production. IDC alone cannot develop the whole 400 hectares of land set aside for agricultural development on Coëtivy. It has thus started to engage with the various local Farmers' Associations to invite them to form part of this programme. Discussions will intensify in that line.

In the meantime, work to clear the agricultural land of undergrowth has started. IDC itself will engage in cultivating some cash crops such as vanilla, onion, ginger, and garlic. Alongside agriculture there will also be some broilers and layers as well as livestock which will be a source of fertiliser for crops. There are also advanced plans to reintroduce some aquaculture on Coëtivy, such as shrimp, sea cucumber and sea urchin. For that, IDC will have to rehabilitate some ponds left behind by SMB. With the return of Mr. Justin Moustache to IDC as Agricultural Project Manager, this development is already showing signs of future success.

The project for agricultural development on Coëtivy island is thus far advancing well, and progressing into its second phase, chief executive Glenny Savy revealed to the media last week. Plans are underway to build houses for broilers on Desroches. These will be premium semi free-range

chicken which will mainly target the tourism establishments. Production on Coetivy will be on a larger scale targeting 1000 – 1300 tons of chicken annually.

Israeli Consultants: Studies which concentrated on ground water availability on Coetivy for large scale crop production is complete. Results show that underground water is abundantly available on the island for large scale agriculture. The experts also tested the soil and results show that the parameters are good for large scale production. The project is now in the surveying phase. The Israeli experts will now submit the survey results to explain the techniques that they will use to planting of crops such as onions, ginger and garlic, maize which will be used in animal feed, among others. A presentation will be made to IDC.

Broiler meat: IDC intends to produce 100 tons yearly.

Pork production: This will be done on a commercial basis.

Chicken hatchery: There will be a chicken hatchery for the day-old chicks, which IDC will need on its farm. There are also plans to introduce parent stock to cut down on imports. All chicken will be produced on the island on a high standard to guarantee the best quality and taste.

Goat and cattle production: Goats and some cattle will be raised on the island.

Waste water: All waste water will be treated and recycled prior to its use in irrigation.

Barge: A barge will service the island on weekly/10-day basis to bring agricultural inputs to Coetivy and transport bring fresh produce to Mahé.

Local farmers: IDC will invite local farmers from the main islands to engage in agricultural activities on Coetivy and learn the techniques being used. They can then bring the know-how and technology to their farms.

Job opportunities: Job opportunities will be available for farmers on the Coetivy farm.

Agricultural School: IDC will have a school of excellence on Coetivy for practical and theoretical exposure in the agricultural field.

Prawn farm

In 2020, IDC took the decision to refurbish nine of the old SMB ponds located in the north of the Coetivy for shrimp production. IDC's intention was to revive the local prawn farming industry and to undertake the project in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

For the first phase of the project, only six out of the nine ponds that have been rehabilitated will be used to produce 2 species: the white shrimp (*L. vannamei*) and the black tiger prawn (*Penaeus monodon*) exclusively for the local market.

IDC is trying out a biofloc system with the ponds which entails water recycling. Hence, two ponds have been reserved as settlement ponds. The 9th pond has been earmarked as an experimental pond, but a decision is yet to be taken on the type of species that will be grown in that pond.

In December 2021, IDC started the trial period and stocked a first pond with 150,000 white shrimp post-larvae (PLs). The PLs were imported from a reputable company in Singapore. This first trial culminated in the harvest in April 2023 of 2.1 tonnes of shrimps. There were a lot of interest from the retailers, hotels, restaurants, and the public. This high demand indicates that prawn farming is a viable business.

Following the success of this low-density trial, IDC stocked a second pond with 330,000 PLs (high density) in April 2023 and is analysing the performance of this culture. The next harvest is expected in July 2023.

A shipment of 240,000 monodon PLs, was also imported from Singapore. However, given that the black tiger prawns are more susceptible to stress, there was a high rate of mortality with that consignment.

Given the challenges experienced with the monodon shipment and the cost of freight, IDC has taken the decision to renovate an old SMB hatchery located in the centre of the island to supply the farm with PLs. This project is expected to be completed before the end of 2023.

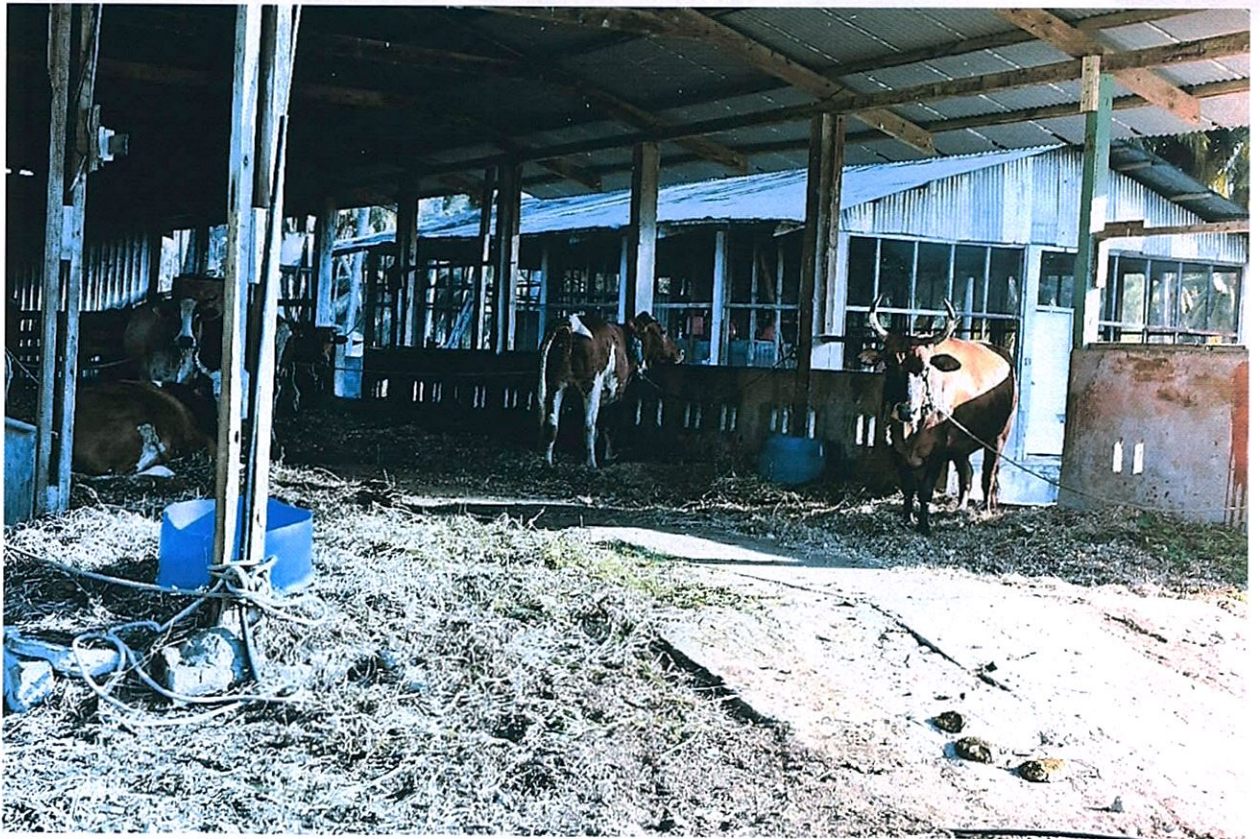
IDC intends to continue with its trials throughout 2023 and aims to achieve its full production capacity early in 2024 once its hatchery has been set up.

The old SMB processing plant is also being renovated to process the prawns on Coetivy.

IDC is self-financing the prawn project and is also exploring the possibility for future expansion of the prawn farm for exports.







3. Recommendations

The Committee recommend that the government provide crucial support to the Island Development Company (IDC) in order to enable them to pursue their various developmental projects and Strongly propose that the IDC should actively market their services and products to the local population, thereby encouraging more Seychellois to visit the islands.

The IDC plays a crucial role in the overall development and maintenance of the islands, with their initiatives consistently promoting economic growth, environmental sustainability, and the preservation of our unique natural heritage. Given the significance of their work, it is imperative that the government provide the necessary support to ensure that their projects can be carried out effectively and efficiently.

Furthermore, the committee would like to emphasize the importance of marketing the IDC's services and products to the local population. In order to encourage more Seychellois to explore and appreciate the beauty of our islands, it is essential that the IDC engages in targeted marketing campaigns tailored specifically to the domestic market. By creating awareness of the various offerings available on the islands, such as eco-tourism activities, cultural experiences, and locally-produced goods, the IDC can stimulate local interest and foster a sense of pride in our own natural treasures.

To effectively achieve this, the IDC must work in collaboration with local travel agencies, media outlets, and community leaders to spread the message of the unique experiences available on the islands. This can be accomplished through social media campaigns, informative brochures, and organizing cultural events on the islands themselves. Additionally, offering discounted rates and special packages exclusively for Seychellois citizens would significantly incentivize local visits and promote a stronger sense of ownership and connection to the islands.