Engaging Farming Community In Watershed Management

With the issue of water scarcity affecting the Seychelles annually, protecting water sources is an ongoing battle especially for those who depend greatly on this valuable resource. A group of dedicated farmers of Val d’Endor in the Baie Lazare district in the South of Mahe Island is well acquainted with the hardship that comes with drought. They are well motivated to find solutions to tackle this pertinent issue.

The Ecosystem based Adaptation (EBA) to Climate Change project in Seychelles (EBA) has been working with the Val D’en Dor community through their watershed committee. Various community-based activities have been undertaken where farmers have volunteered to clean near rivers, wetlands and plant native trees as part of the project’s rehabilitation program.

The current river engineering philosophy of the EBA project attaches equal importance to the needs of the public and of nature. The hydrologist on the project Mr. Johan Mendez ensures that the restoration plan employs state-of-the-art natural design principles that are expected to become the basis for future watercourse restoration within the various watersheds in the country.

Since March 2017, the group of farmers has been involved in a pilot project to enhance the river banks in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2
Coral reef monitoring training helps build capacity of conservation

Coral reefs - alongside sea grass beds, mangroves, lagoons and banks - are key marine habitats in the outer islands of the Seychelles. Corals accumulate carbon and build atolls, and the health of coral reefs is thus of primary importance for the integrity and long-term future of the islands, especially against the backdrop of rising sea levels and other climate change-induced threats.

Ecological monitoring of coral reefs is critical if we are to detect changes in the health of coral reefs over time. To this end, the Island Conservation Society (ICS) conservation officers learn the theory behind coral reef monitoring from Dr David Obura. (Photo by Pep Nogues at ICS)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

one of the wetlands in the Baie Lazare district. If successful this method will be applied to other sites.

The soft river engineering solution strengthens erosion resilience and restores the river bank naturally. No foreign bodies such as plastics are introduced into the environment as the embankment is stabilized by vegetal fiber logs which are biodegradable and locally made. Once they are filled with soil the project team and the farmers place them alongside the riverbanks. This creates the perfect condition to grow native plants such as the *Rocheria melanochaetes* (Latanier Palm), *Pandanus bornei* (Vakwa Parasol), *Barringtonia racemosa* (Bois mare grand feuille). After the gunny bags disintegrate, the plant roots will be strong enough to support the riverbanks and protect the soil and water. The trees will play valuable roles in the management of the water, such as water retention, provide shade, filtration and form a sanctuary for a variety of fauna.

In addition to preserving the water, the end goal is to raise awareness that water is a valuable resource that enriches the biodiversity of the area. Water resource management is vital to promote the aesthetic value of our water, an asset that needs to be protected for future generations.

Some of the native plants already loving their new environment. (Photo by GEF/UNDP)
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

ICS has domesticated monitoring protocols to be used across the inner and outer islands of Seychelles. The monitoring protocols are drawn from the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and from a regional manual produced by the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), making the monitoring information compatible with national, regional and global datasets.

The coral reef monitoring protocol not only looks at benthic factors (coral cover versus sea grass), but also fish assemblages, macro-invertebrates (urchins, sea cucumbers etc.), coral health (bleaching or diseases) and other features. In addition to detecting long term incremental change in key reef variables, the monitoring protocol also records sudden events that could cause high coral mortality, such as coral bleaching, cyclones, or outbreaks of crown-of-thorns starfish (COTS).

A week-long training course in coral reef monitoring was held in March 2017 with the participation of six ICS conservation staff from Silhouette, Aride, Desroches and Alphonse Islands. The training consisted of both theoretical classroom sessions and practical dive sessions supported by the Underwater Centre. The training was led by Dr. David Obura, an expert in coral reef research, and his assistant Mishal Gudka.

The development of the protocol for the monitoring of coral reefs and the training was funded by the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands project, which aims to promote the conservation and sustainable use of terrestrial and marine biodiversity in the Seychelles’ outer islands by expanding the protected areas system and strengthening protected area management, supported by broad-scale ecosystem planning and sustainable land management activities to conserve ecosystem functions.

Pep Nogues, an ICS conservation officer on Alphonse, noted that “It is not often that we, who live permanently in these remote outer islands, have the opportunity to discuss matters that are affecting our reefs. This extraordinary opportunity has helped us to enhance coral reef monitoring techniques, gain confidence in coral identification and obtain a better-understanding of our complex coral reef ecosystems.”
The Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) has re-opened the doors to the Curieuse National Park’s Education and Information Centre – commonly known as the Doctor’s House, after undergoing months of major renovation.

Refurbishment of the Doctor’s House has been enabled through the support of Air Seychelles, as well as the GOS-UNDP-GEF Protected Area Finance Project. A five-year project with a total budget US$ 2.776 million, the GOS-UNDP-GEF Protected Areas Finance Project aims to explore means to achieve sustainable financing for Seychelles’ Protected Areas’ system. Aside from the park’s natural attractions, among which include the famous Coco-de-Mer tree and giant tortoise roaming the island, the Doctor’s House is undoubtedly a major attraction of the island, recounting the island’s interesting, but sad story as a refuge for leprosy sufferers (1829-1900 and 1937-1965) and showcasing its natural heritage.

Built in 1873 by Dr William MacGregor, the Doctor’s House is today recognised as a national monument and it is used as a small museum. Dr MacGregor lived there with his family until 1875, after which the house was used by the nurses and doctors caring for the leprosy patients.

Reopening of the Doctor’s House was celebrated through a ribbon-cutting ceremony that was attended by the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Mr Didier Dogley, along with representatives of various key partners and a group of student from Praslin Island.

The doors of the newly renovated Doctor’s House, which includes new displays for visitors, were officially opened by Minister Dogley together with the Air Seychelles representative, Mr Alain Renaud.

Speaking at the event, the SNPA Chairperson, Mr Selby Remy noted that the re-opening of this national monument is a “happy occasion for SNPA and we hope for Seychelles as a whole, because we are here not only for our protected area but to celebrate, appreciate a major part of our history.”

“We hope that it will continue to contribute towards our tourism industry, but we also want to explore other economic activities which allow us to collect revenue, which can then be put back towards its maintenance,” he added.

The officially opening ended with the invitees touring the newly updated Doctor’s House.
Newly released UNDP Human Development Report launched in Seychelles

The UNDP Human Development Report (HDR) for 2016, which was officially launched at a multi-stakeholder forum on 7th April, 2017, has ranked Seychelles in the 63rd position out of 188 countries and territories. Seychelles is also ranked 1st among the African countries.

In all, the new report, prepared under the theme ‘Human Development for Everyone’, has put Seychelles among those countries assessed as having ‘High Development’.

Since 1990, the HDR has been UNDP’s flagship document for assessing and guiding human development through institutional reforms, as well as analysing trends and policies. This latest series of the HDR builds on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and it is dedicated towards ensuring human development for all – now and in the future.

The new report was launched by the new Minister for Family Affairs, Jeanne Simeon in the presence of representatives of various ministries, diplomatic corps, National Assembly Members, media representatives among other relevant guests.

A copy of the 2016 HDR was presented to her by the UNDP Programme Manager in Seychelles, Mr Roland Alcindor.

Part of launching the HDR included a panel discussion, involving the Secretary of State- Ambassador Barry Faure, Ambassador for Women and Children- Dr. Erna Athanasius; Ambassador Peter Sinon and Mr. Ben Vel, who is a consultant on Social matters and actively involved in the MDGs. Among the points discussed, where Seychelles’ achievements and progress in human development, including current and future developmental challenges the country faces, especially as a small island developing state.

The panelists also touched on the issue of addressing data gaps for some of the newer indices and tying national development priorities to Agenda 2030 with a renewed focus on families.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Simeon remarked that Seychelles has made many advancements in improving human development for its people over the years, but similar to many other countries, there are still a number of people who remains vulnerable and are living below an adequate standard of living and, thus, calling for greater commitment from government and the community to bridge the divide to ensure the inclusion of everyone.

The report also gives several recommendations, which government will be considered and will take corrective measures and addressed them in national policies so as to overcome the challenges it faces and to continuously improve human development.
Seychelles youth marched for preservation of protected areas

Let’s preserve our protected areas!
This was one of the messages echoed by a group of young people from both primary and secondary levels from several schools in Seychelles as they marched across Victoria to commemorate the country’s National Protected Area Day, marked annually on January 31. The chosen theme for this year’s celebration was “Protected Areas for Healthy Ecosystems.”

Other messages that were sent out by the young participants, who were accompanied by written and verbal slogans, included the importance of protected areas and the call to protect our forests, oceans, mangroves and the species that live in these areas, especially those inhabiting our protected areas. The schools also had the opportunity to each present a sketch calling attention to an environmental concern.

The march was organised by the GOS-UNDP-GEF Outer Islands Project and the GOS-UNDP-GEF Protected Area Finance Project jointly with the Department of Environmental Education and the Public Education and Community Outreach of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC). The aim was to promote and create awareness of the importance of protected areas, especially their roles in ensuring healthy ecosystems.

The procession, which started at the Department of Environment in Mont Fleuri and ended the National Arts Gallery in Victoria, was led by Principal Secretary for Environment, Mr Alain Decommarmond and the Chief Executive Officer, Mr Flavien Joubert. It also had the participation of MEECC staff and teachers, as well as participants from several other environmental agencies and NGO’s.

At the National Art Gallery where the two GOS-UNDP-GEF projects had set up an exhibition on Protected Areas, the enthuse participants of the march were joined by the Minister of Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Mr Didier Dogley along with other invitees, which included National Assembly Members from a number of districts.

It was Minister Dogley who officially launched the exhibition open. In his opening remarks, the Minister pointed out that “the world is at a crossroad where we are approaching the sixth global extinction of biodiversity”.

One of the best strategy for combating biodiversity loss, and protecting the ecosystems of species is through Protected Areas, and thus why these demarcated sites for conservation are vital to the world and Seychelles, added the Minister.

The Minister also remarked that many people do not fully understand the importance of Protected Areas, generating awareness on the importance of these sites of ecological importance and ecosystem-value is therefore key.

He went on by encouraging the young participants to keep advocating for
Seychelles’ protected areas, to become custodians of these invaluable sites.

Minister Dogley also announced that Seychelles anticipates to have its Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill, which will put in place the legal framework for biodiversity conservation, this year after being presented to the National Assembly.

Following his address, Minister Dogley was presented with a copy of the latest edition of the Wildlife Magazine, which focuses primarily on Seychelles’ Outer Islands and protected areas. This edition of the magazine was supported by the GOS-Outer Islands Project.

After the official opening, Minister Dogley along with other invitees were invited to tour the exhibition, which the projects had organised with the support of the various agencies involved in the management Seychelles protected areas and conservation, including Seychelles Islands Foundation, Island Conservation Society, Plant Conservation Action Group, Marine Conservation Society and Green Island Conservation, to name but a few.

Seychelles participated in the Ministerial SDG4 Regional Forum for Eastern Africa to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

The Ministry of Education of Tanzania, UNESCO and the SDG 4 co-conveners (UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNWOMEN and ILO) organized the Ministerial SDG4 Regional Forum for Eastern Africa as a follow-up to national consultations held under the leadership of the Ministries of Education in 13 countries (Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda). The forum was an opportunity for countries to share their national SDG4 roadmaps with their policy priorities in support to national education strategic plans.

Over 150 participants, the two-days forum featured discussions among common emerging areas, innovative
One of the most efficient and cost-effective ways of using solar energy is to produce and store hot water. During recent electricity baseline studies, undertaken by the GOS-UNDP-GEF Resource Efficiency Project, it was found that 21% of household electricity costs is related to water heating. One good alternative of reducing household’s energy use is the installation of solar water heating (SWH) system, which can reduce the costs of generating hot water by up to 75% (Source: Solahart), potentially saving on the country’s fuel consumption.

Another benefit of SWH systems is that emit none of the pollutants and greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, nitrous oxides, sulphur oxides – produced when fossil fuels are burned, since it is fuelled by the sun.

Seychelles has very good conditions for the application of this technology – it has a significant number of hours per year of direct solar radiation and has a warm climate throughout the year, which results in the systems operating with low thermal losses (i.e., with better efficiency). It is thus a promising technology for households, including businesses such as guest houses, self-caterings and hotels, in Seychelles.

Hands-on training helps strengthens solar water heating initiative in Seychelles

In line with efforts to promote this technology, a Solar Water Heating Endorsement Initiative (SWHEI) has been set up by the Seychelles Energy Commission, with the support of the GOS-UNDP-GEF Resource Efficiency project. The initiative aims to strengthen the Seychelles market of SWH products and services. The SWHEI aims at increasing the installed solar thermal power in the country, as well as, obtaining SWH installations of higher efficiency and better quality.

To further support the initiative, all suppliers and installers of SWH were invited to a training course which took place from January 18 to 26, 2017. This
Training was conducted in two parts, starting with theoretical learning, and followed by a hands-on practical training with a SWH system, sponsored by Solahart Industries, Ltd. The participants sat exams on the final day so as to be eligible for certification, and eventually be endorsed and registered with the Seychelles Energy Commission. The course will be offered in the future as part of the Seychelles Institute of Technology (SIT) advanced certificate in plumbing. It will also provide short training courses for in-service persons, as well as to those who may be interested in venturing into such energy related business.

Seychelles conducts Expanded Programme on Immunisation Surveillance and Programme Review

Four World Health Organisation (WHO) Consultants from the WHO Inter-country Support Team for East and Southern Africa (IST-ESA), Headquarters and Kenya and Zimbabwe Country offices were in the country recently to assist with the conduct of the country’s Comprehensive Immunization program integrated with in-depth Surveillance review. In adherence to WHO standards, all countries are expected to carry out such a review every 5 years as a way to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the EPI programme.

The WHO Consultants under the leadership of Dr Messeret Eshetu from IST-ESA spent ten days on the field, visiting all 15 health facilities, reviewing documents, interviewing policy makers, Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) nurses, Surveillance Focal Points and parents, as well as observing a number of vaccination sessions at the various health facilities. At the debriefing session with the Minister of Health Honourable Jean-Paul Adam, Dr Eshetu congratulated the country for achieving and sustaining targets way beyond those set out in the Global Vaccine Action Plan. Dr. Eshetu commended the country for its robust health system where universal health coverage is achieved and for sustaining high immunization coverage of antigens for major Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) targeted for eradication and elimination by the program. Dr Eshetu indicated however that the main review components which the team found to need further improvements are with regards to the use of standards for reporting and documenting surveillance indicators for targeted diseases for elimination particularly fever and rash surveillance as well as better management of the country’s Human Resource capacity. As a way forward, WHO will continue to work with the Ministry of Health so that is continues to sustain its current health achievements. WHO will also assist with the updating, dissemination and capacity building of health workers on the surveillance guidelines for VPDs. A road map for implementation has been developed to facilitate this process.
The Government of Seychelles has called for a scale up of mental health services so as to contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, endorsed at the United Nations General Assembly in 2015. This appeal was made at the launching of the World Health Day 2017 ceremony under the theme “Depression: Let’s talk”, which took place at the Headquarters of the Ministry of Health, Victoria, Seychelles on April 7th. In his opening remarks, the guest of honor Minister of Health Honorable Jean-Paul Adam said that all stakeholders also need to work together to find solutions to improve the legal, social and financial protection for individuals, families and communities adversely affected by depression and its consequences.

“Today we have the opportunity to support one another, let us renew our commitment to fight against the stigma that is still associated with mental illness. As a nation it is our duty to support all those battling with depression and any other mental illness; as the custodian of health and well-being of our people, our ministry is determined to pursue every conceivable path within the confines of our resources to ensure that we continue with the modernization of the mental health services”.

During the ceremony, the WHO Liaison Officer ai, Dr. Humphrey Karamagi also read the statement of the WHO Regional Director, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti to mark World Health Day. In her message, the Regional Director called on countries to support mental health programmes by allocating adequate human and financial resources to respond to this growing burden and to follow steps identified in The Brazzaville Declaration on Non-Communicable Diseases to include mental health in their national health development agenda. On behalf of the Regional Director, Dr Karamagi reaffirmed WHO’s commitment to supporting the country to address mental illness as an important public health problem. “Depression is preventable and treatable if diagnosed early. Let’s talk about it”, he concluded.

A series of week-long activities followed the launching ceremony all with the objective of bringing light to the issue of depression and mental illness. These included Regional Director’s message in the printed media, Minister’s message on national TV, certificate giving ceremony for staff members who have followed short trainings in Depression, Exhibition on Mental Health, ‘Walk for Mental Health’ from Wellness Centre to Victoria, Well-being day with massages, laughing clinics, stress relieving techniques and counselling on offer, mini symposium on depression and participation of various Mental Health experts in various radio and TV programmes.

The Government of Seychelles has welcomed the arrival of the new World Health Organisation Liaison Officer (WLO), Dr. Bhupinder Aulakh into office. On her arrival into office, accompanied by the outgoing acting WLO Dr Humphrey Karamagi, Dr Aulakh paid a courtesy call to the Minister of Health and Senior Management on April 18th. It was the Minister of Health Honorable Jean-Paul Adam who officially welcomed Dr Aulakh into office, expressing the gratitude of the Government of Seychelles to the continuous technical and financial support provided by the organisation.

On April 18th, Dr. Bhupinder Aulakh was welcomed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maison Quéal de Quinssy, Mont Fleuri by the Seychelles’ Foreign Secretary, Ambassador Claude Morel.
Whilst Ambassador Morel reaffirmed the commitments of Seychelles to maintain the momentum of working closely with the WHO, Dr Aulakh commended the country for its successes in the Health sector and envisaged a fruitful collaboration to address the different health challenges.

Dr. Aulakh who becomes the fourth WLO to Seychelles since the opening of the WHO Office in the country in 1986, is from Punjab, India and she was formerly Secretary for Health & Family Welfare and Women & Child Development, Government of Uttarakhand State, India. She replaces Dr. Humphrey Karamagi, who was the Acting WHO Liaison Officer since October 2015. The Seychelles WHO office also welcomes Dr. Aulakh into office and looks forward to attaining more health developments for the country under her leadership.

**Upcoming Events:**

**APRIL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 April</td>
<td>International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 April</td>
<td>World Health Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 April</td>
<td>International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 April</td>
<td>International Mother Earth Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 April</td>
<td>World Book and Copyright Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 April</td>
<td>Africa Malaria Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 April</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 May</td>
<td>World Press Freedom Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 May</td>
<td>International Day of the Midwife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 May</td>
<td>International Day of Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 May</td>
<td>World Telecommunication Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 May</td>
<td>International Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 May</td>
<td>International Day for Biological Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 May</td>
<td>International Day to End Obstetric Fistula</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 May</td>
<td>Africa Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 May</td>
<td>International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 May</td>
<td>World Non-Tobacco Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 June</td>
<td>International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 June</td>
<td>World Environment Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 June</td>
<td>World Oceans Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 June</td>
<td>World Day Against Child Labour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 June</td>
<td>Day of the African Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 June</td>
<td>World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 June</td>
<td>World Refugee Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 June</td>
<td>International Day of Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 June</td>
<td>Public Service Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 June</td>
<td>International Day in Support of Victims of Torture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 June</td>
<td>International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
17 Sustainable Development Goals to Transform our World by 2030

** ****
2016 CERTIFICATE of EXCELLENCE

tripadvisor

UNITED NATIONS VISITOR’S SERVICE

FOR THE CONSISTENT ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGH RATINGS FROM TRAVELERS

Contact the Visitors’ Service:
Telephone: 020 762 2034
Email: un.tours@unon.org
Facebook: United Nations Visitors’ Service, Nairobi
Twitter: @unvisitorsnbi

Mondays to Thursdays
8:00 AM to 2:00 PM
Fridays
8:00 AM to 12:00 PM
KNOW YOUR UNITED NATIONS - It’s your Organization

EVERY DAY

the United Nations works to tackle global challenges and:

1. Provides food to millions of people in many countries
2. Vaccinates the world’s children, saving millions lives a year
3. Assists millions of refugees and people fleeing war, famine or persecution
4. Combats climate change; heads a campaign to end leaded fuel use in many nations
5. Keeps peace with peacekeepers in more than 12 operations on 4 continents
6. Fights poverty, helping millions of rural poor achieve better lives
7. Protects and promotes human rights on site and through some 80 treaties/declarations
8. Mobilizes US$ billions in humanitarian aid to help people affected by emergencies
9. Advances democracy, assisting many countries a year with their elections
10. Promotes maternal health, saving the lives of millions of women a year

For more information please visit: www.un.org

This Newsletter is compiled, edited, designed and published by the UN Information Centre (UNIC) for Kenya, Uganda and The Seychelles

For more information contact: UNIC,
P. O. Box 67578-00100 Nairobi, Kenya.
Tel: +254-20-76221102, E-mail: nairobi.unic@unon.org
United Nations Information Centre Nairobi @unicnairobi