



UNITED
NATIONS

UN 47037

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**World Conference
of the United Nations
Decade for Women:
Equality, Development and Peace**

**Copenhagen, Denmark
14-30 July 1980**

Distr.
GENERAL

A/CONF.94/NR/8*
19 May 1980

ENGLISH ONLY

NATIONAL REPORT SUBMITTED BY

SEYCHELLES**

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** The designations employed, the presentation of material and the views expressed in this paper are those of the Government of Seychelles and do not necessarily reflect the practices and views of the Secretariat of the United Nations in any of these respects.

1. The Republic of Seychelles, inhabited by 62,000 people became an independent nation in 1976. The islands are presently engaged in economic development and takes a keen interest in an amelioration of the living conditions of the local population.

2. The nation's main income sources are tourism, fish, copra and cinnamon. The tourism sector has grown rapidly since the opening of the international airport in 1971. Tourism is the island's largest industry. However, a large proportion of the gross foreign exchange earned on tourism pays for the imported goods and services used by the industry.

3. Women have always played a major role in the political and social life of the country. The Government of Seychelles implemented the General Assembly's resolutions and recommendations concerning the United Nations Decade for Women. The Government established a National Women's Organisation to assure the full integration of women in national development of the country in the political, socio-economic and cultural fields.

4. Five women's organisation united to form the Seychelles Women's Association on 8th March, 1978. Women in Seychelles enjoy equal rights with men. One-third of the People's Assembly are women representatives. Women are very highly represented on all political bodies.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL SCALE INDUSTRIES :

5.1 The Seychelles Women's Association in fulfilment of one of its objectives of assisting the people, particularly women, in raising their standard of living in their own areas, has embarked upon the programme of development of small scale industries as an economic venture.

5.2 Unemployment rates at about 12% of the working women population. This is concentrated mainly in the younger age group 15-19 years old. This figure should increase steadily as the working age is growing rapidly with approximately 1,600 people reaching the age of 15 each year. The Government is giving priority to achieving the goal of full employment as soon as possible.

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5.3 Since December, 1977, a small group of women had undertaken tie-dyeing and sewing under the supervision of a local women. The building for the workshop was purchased by funds from the Seychelles Government as well as material assistance.

5.4 The efforts of the women in this regard was hampered, however, by the lack of high level technical and management skills.

5.5 In mid, 1978, one skilled women was further trained in tie/dyeing for four months in Nairobi, Kenya by the support of UNDP.

5.6 In November, 1979 the Economic Commission for Africa sponsored a study tour for two of the most skilled women, to apprentice with highly skilled West African women, in Sierra Leone and Ghana and in Nairobi, Kenya, under the Women's Task Force Volunteer programme and supported by the Voluntary Fund.

5.7 In March, this year, an expert in designing and sewing was made available by the assistance of the UN Voluntary Fund. She is doing a remarkable work in teaching the skill of basic patterns, selecting of a production to cover the local and tourist demand, introducing semi-industrial methods, tuitions of the Association's instructors in garment manufacturing and a preliminary study to develop garment manufacturing.

5.8 The pre-project activities have progressed according to plan and the project will commence in May, 1980, by assistance from the UN Voluntary Fund, Economic Commission for Africa with training component and the Seychelles Government in providing land for expansion of the workshop.

5.9 The goals of this economic venture are :-

(a) Long-term objective :

To help both individual women and families and the Government to achieve self-sufficiency.

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(b) Short-term objective :

- (i) To set up a training centre for 40 women to learn skills in tie-dyeing and sewing
- (ii) To provide tourist centres and hotels with items made by local women
- (iii) To provide a firm base for further small-scale industrial expansion on all the major islands of the country.

5.10 The project is intended to train women to engage in income-generating activities through production of tie-dye fabric and creation of attractive articles for sale to visitors to the islands. Many touristic articles are imported at present, the project is expected to encourage import substitution.

5.11 It is expected that the trainees and managers of the project will acquire skills in production, management and marketing. Products will be sold through the many hotels on the islands, as well as retail shops in the towns.

5.12 The project is considered as the first phase of a possibly expanded activity. Production centres and sales outlets may be opened on two other main islands in future.

6. DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL CRAFTS IN DISTRICTS :

6.1 In the districts, the Association is reviving the interest of the people in some of the traditional crafts whose products are still valuable in the society. The need to develop new skills and techniques in production of some articles from local raw materials cannot be overemphasized.

6.2 The Association aims at assisting women's groups to start manufacturing enterprises in order to increase the earning power of women and also to create employment avenues for more people especially in rural areas.

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7. PROGRAMMES FOR CHILDREN :

Programmes for children are closely linked with women activities.

7.1 During the International Year of the Child, the Seychelles Women's Association together with other Government Departments - Education, Health, Youth and Social Services - took an active part on the IYC Commission.

7.2 It was recognised that if concrete recommendations were to be made an awareness on the problems of children in Seychelles must be acquired. The Commission embarked on three separate but closely linked programmes.

- (a) A survey was carried out to identify some of the underlying factors in terms of health and social conditions relating to children and their nutrition and health status.
- (b) An "At Risk" register was set up. This was aimed at identifying all children at risk, because of health, nutritioned or social factors.
- (c) A seminar was organised to look into the problems of children in Seychelles in relation to the survey and at risk register.

7.3 Many recommendations and proposals have emerged at the Seminar and a National Council for Children has been established to continue the work of the Commission, directly responsible under the President's Office.

7.4 The project was sponsored by the assistance of UNICEF, Bread for the World and the Associated Country Women of the World.

8. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY :

The Seychelles Women's Association in conjunction with the Nurses Association organised health education programmes in all districts of Mahe and two other islands.

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8.1 The topics covered in these talks were infant feeding, ante-natal care, family planning, breast feeding and family nutrition.

8.2 The Seychelles Women's Association has included in its Plan of Action for this year educational programmes in all its sub-committees on health, nutrition, family planning, maternal and child health care.