

Republic of Seychelles

PARTNERSHIP DIALOGUE: Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine and coastal ecosystems

Thank you Madame Moderator

Co-chairs good afternoon!

Though we are one of the smallest nations in the world, Seychelles has one of the largest Exclusive Economic Zone in the world at over 1.3 million square kilometres and we form part of the Western Indian Ocean which is recognized as one of the hotspots of biodiversity, rich in coral reefs, mangrove forests and other coastal ecosystems. Our EEZ forms part of a number of key biodiversity areas of the region such as the Mozambique

Channel and Mascarene Plateau which are internationally acknowledged such as by the Convention on Biological Diversity and we have one of the Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas (EBSAs) identified in the world.

Our nation and region is highly dependent on fishing, maritime trade, tourism and other marine-related livelihood opportunities related to our Blue Economy. With this array of important ecosystems and activities, the Seychelles is part of 18 voluntary commitments submitted at this Conference targeting all levels, national, regional and international. From the 18 commitments, Seychelles has committed itself 6 national commitments amongst which the 2 main commitments in reference to the theme of this dialogue by 2020 we

will firstly have a Marine Spatial Plan that will cover the whole of our EEZ and secondly within that plan we aim protect 30% of our EEZ (approximately 400,000 sq.kilometres), from which 15% will be 'no-take areas' and the other 15% sustainable use areas, under these two commitments my government has partnered with the Nature Conservancy.

Madame Moderator, the subject of marine plastic pollution remains a concern for Seychelles and the Western Indian Ocean region, as a country we are doing our best nationally to ensure effective solid waste management but also targeted approaches towards plastic products, for example since January of this year there has been a ban on importation of plastic shopping bags, Styrofoam take away boxes

as well as other plastic utensils. As of next month, a full ban in the usage and trading of these items will come into force. On the same subject Seychelles is also partnering with the PARLEY FOR THE OCEANS initiative' PARLEY A.I.R STRATEGY which is looking at 'Avoiding' 'Intercepting' and 'Redesigning' of plastic products. However there should be more proactive action inter-regions to tackle the issue of marine litter.

To conclude, in order to implement such plans and strategies, effective and active partnerships are required to ensure that our marine and ocean ecosystems are effectively managed, conserved, restored against all threats and risks such as IUU fishing and climate change both at the national and regional and international level. At the national

level we have established the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SEYCCAT) which will support marine conservation and climate change adaptation activities as part of our innovative Debt for Nature Swap scheme as well as other approaches such as a implementation of a Blue Bond another one of our commitments targeting sustainable fisheries.

We therefore at the national and regional level we need financial and technical support through initiatives such as the Green Climate Fund, the SIDSDOCK and regional partners and organisations such as the Nairobi Convention under the Regional Seas Programme, the South Western Indian Ocean Fisheries Commission, Indian Ocean Tuna Commission and the Indian Ocean Commission to

implement particularly ecosystem-based adaptation projects and sustainable fishing practices. To conclude it must be noted that the Western Indian Ocean region has agreed on a number of core areas of joint commitments and actions toward achieving the SDG-14 targets namely;

- Regional collaboration on combatting pollution and contingency planning
- Sustainable management of shared fish resources
- Oceans and climate change: transition to a low carbon pathway
- Integrated governance

So Co-Chairs and Madame Moderator we are making an appeal to partners and supporters to join

us in the implementation of these commitments at the national level as well as at the Western Indian Ocean level.

Thank you