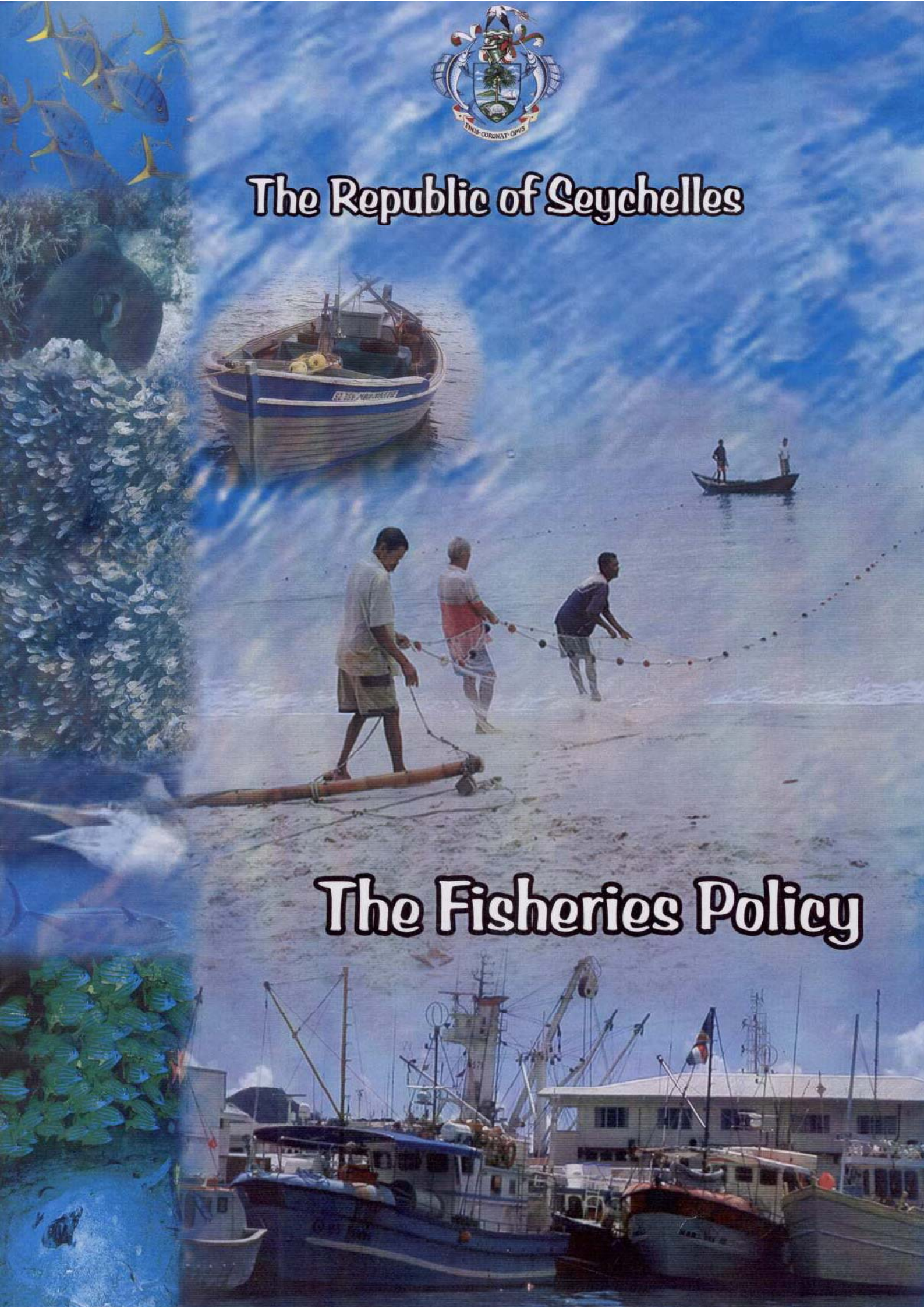




The Republic of Seychelles



The Fisheries Policy



The Republic of Seychelles

**For the Sustainable and Responsible
Development of the Fishing Industry**

**The Fisheries Policy
of
Seychelles**

2005

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Preface

“For centuries now, fishing has been a major source of food for humanity, and a provider of employment and economic benefits to those engaged in this activity. The wealth of the aquatic resources was assumed to be an unlimited gift of nature. However with increased knowledge and the dynamic development of fisheries after the second world war, this myth has faded in face of the realization that aquatic resources, although renewable, are not finite and need to be properly managed, if their contribution to the nutritional, economic, and social well-being of the growing world’s population is to be sustained.”

Source, FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries.

The Government of the Republic of Seychelles believes that all natural marine resources found in its Exclusive Economic Zone are a national asset and the heritage of all its people, and should therefore be managed and developed sustainably for the benefit of the present and future generations. This document sets out the main policy principles and objectives that the Government of Seychelles envisions for the development of the fishing industry. In preparing this policy document, special consideration has been given to the coherence and compatibility with international agreements and instruments to which Seychelles is a party to.

1. INTRODUCTION

The fisheries policy of the Government of Seychelles was first drafted in 1986. At that time, both the industrial and artisanal fisheries in Seychelles were in a developmental stage and the policy reflected the needs to promote both the development and conservation of our marine resources as well as maximizing benefits.

In 1985 the number of licenses issued for the industrial tuna fishery was 49 for the purse seiners and 165 for longliners with an annual purse seine catch of 130,000 tonnes. The total catch for the industrial purse seine fishery has continued to rise and peaked at around 407, 000 tonnes in the year 2003. The artisanal fishing fleet has declined from 410 vessels in 1985 to 330 in the year 2003, however, the nature of the fleet has changed dramatically. The artisanal fleet is now entirely mechanized and consists of larger and better equipped vessels with improved safety facilities.

The total annual catch of the artisanal fishery has remained relatively constant since fisheries data has been collected, however increasing effort in terms of man-days at sea and the more accurate positioning systems currently used are a cause for concern. Lower recruitment of fish stocks and localized over-fishing has been noted in some of the fisheries data sectors. The change in both the industrial tuna fishery catch and the artisanal fleet composition is a direct reflection of the rapid rise of technological innovations to improve fishing effectiveness. In addition, the development of new fisheries and marine resource related operations such as the semi-industrial long-line fishery, crustacean fisheries and aquaculture have taken place.

From the relatively simple fisheries, in terms of gear, positioning and fish finding technologies, in the mid eighties, fishing operations have progressed significantly to include modern fishing equipment, gears and improved boat design, with the support and development of the Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA).

With respect to the goals and objectives outlined in the 1986 Fisheries Policy in relation to development, management and research, the SFA has managed to achieve

these, within the present framework of the fisheries legislation and management policies.

In the light of these, and other developments, a decision was taken to reformulate the Fisheries Policy and to bring it more in line with the changing nature of all aspects of fisheries in Seychelles. To continue maintaining the sustainability of all fisheries undertaken in Seychelles waters, increased emphasis needs to be placed on manpower development, monitoring, control and surveillance, research and management. Nevertheless the main points indicated in the past policy are still relevant and have been refined and expanded upon where necessary to reflect the move towards a fisheries policy that encompasses all present and future aspects of fisheries in Seychelles. Needless to say, this policy will be reviewed and updated whenever required to take into consideration new developments which may arise.

2. GUIDELINES AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Overall Policy Objectives

The long-term policy of the Government of Seychelles for the fishing industry is **“the promotion of sustainable and responsible fisheries development and optimisation of the benefits from this sector for the present and future generations.”**

This policy statement focuses principally on the promotion of sustainable management and responsible fishing practices, to provide food, employment, income, foreign exchange earnings, and the effective protection of the marine eco-system. It is also the government’s desire to promote gender equality and to address any potential inequalities in the continued development of the fishing industry.

2.1.1 *To promote conservation and management of marine resources in order to ensure the sustainability and long-term viability of the industry*

Marine resources conservation and management will continue to be a top priority for the Government. The State will endeavour to utilise the appropriate management tools to ensure the long-term sustainability of the resource. Where the best scientific evidence is unavailable, a precautionary approach to management will be adopted.

2.1.2 *To generate the maximum amount of employment*

The fisheries sector will continue to be developed to generate employment opportunities for the maximum number of Seychellois, either directly or indirectly. The Government will also ensure that the livelihood of fishermen and those involved in supporting activities are maintained or enhanced.

2.1.3 *To maximise revenue from fisheries and other related activities*

The Government will ensure that the maximum amount of foreign exchange is earned through the export of fish and fish products. Emphasis will be put on improving both quality and health standards. Export of canned tuna and other processed products will be further enhanced.

The Government will continue to negotiate access agreements with foreign countries or fishing companies, and ensure that the facilities and services in Port Victoria are developed and utilised to the maximum. The Government also aims to create conditions that will increase the contribution of the fisheries sector to the national wealth by increasing production and value addition to fisheries products.

2.1.4 *To promote an integrated economy*

The creation of ancillary industries and services to provide inputs to the fishing industry and the contribution of the fishery sector to other sectors of the economy such as manufacturing, tourism, agriculture will lead to a more integrated Seychelles economy. The Government will ensure that full advantage is taken of all the potential linkages and multiplier effects for further diversification of the economy. Co-operation with other Ministries, departments and other agencies will be amplified.

2.1.5 *To enhance food supply and food security*

Steps will be taken to ensure that self-sufficiency in fish is maintained and that the domestic market is at all times adequately supplied. The nutritional importance of fish consumption will be further emphasized whilst adhering to local and international food safety standards.

2.1.6 *To promote safety at sea*

Yearly, a number of fishing boats and fishermen go missing or are lost at sea for various reasons, such as the lack of financial resources to purchase modern safety equipment. Government will continue to assist

boat owners in acquiring safety equipment at affordable prices and intensify its efforts to further educate fishermen on the importance of safety at sea as well as provide necessary navigational aids (leading lights, etc..) to ensure safe navigation.

2.1.7 *To maintain Port Victoria as the major tuna landing/transshipment port in the Western Indian Ocean*

Industrial tuna fishing in the Western Indian Ocean has grown significantly over the past decade. This has resulted in Port Victoria becoming an important base for the industrial fishing fleet and has established Port Victoria as the main tuna landing/transshipment port in the region. To maintain this position the Government will continue to invest in port infrastructure and other facilities and also ensure that the services provided are efficient and cost effective. Emphasis will be placed on services and facilities aimed at encouraging more long liners to frequent Port Victoria.

3. ROLES

3.1 The Role of Government

The ultimate role of the government will be to ensure responsible and sustainable development of the fishing industry and provide the necessary infrastructure and facilities. The government will on the other hand maintain its role as a facilitator in encouraging investment in the sector and promoting trade.

The overall responsibility for the fisheries sector and its development will remain with the Ministry having the portfolio for fisheries, the Ministry for Environment and Natural Resources through the Seychelles Fishing Authority.

The Seychelles Fishing Authority, being the Government's executive arm for fisheries and marine resources matters will continue to discharge its responsibilities and functions as defined by the **Seychelles Fishing Authority (Establishment) Act, 1984**.

The Ministry responsible for fisheries will have to work in close collaboration with other ministries and government departments in an effort to better the bureaucratic and decision making process as well as improve service delivery.

3.2 The Role of the Private Sector

The private sector, NGOs and other stakeholders will continue to have an important role to play in the further development of the sector by ensuring that an enabling environment is created to boost investment, improve production, trade and commerce. Private sector collaboration will be an important element to oversee that adequate and appropriate research is carried out and the results disseminated to all stakeholders.

Constant dialogue between these parties will further encourage clear and legitimate decision-making.

3.3 The Role of International Organizations

Other countries, other international organizations and educational institutions will continue to be of increasing importance to the development of the industry through advanced research and training, cooperation and financial assistance.

4. POLICY STATEMENTS

In order to ensure the efficient development of the fishing industry as a whole and to attain the stipulated objectives, Government's policies for the sector will focus on the following major issues;

4.1 Research and Development

4.1.1 Government's policy will be to ensure that research programmes be undertaken to guarantee that the most appropriate technologies and techniques are employed, that the resources are exploited in a sustainable manner and that the long-term viability of the industry is safeguarded.

4.1.2 Further development will be directed towards the distribution of fishing effort to the offshore resources and target new and under exploited stocks taking due regards to economic viability and resource sustainability.



- 4.1.3 Efforts will be directed towards the participation of the fishing community in the development of the outer islands as a viable fishing area with a view to optimizing economic benefits.
- 4.1.4 Government undertakes to promote further research on the socio-economic impact on fishing communities and the country as a whole in order to ensure that the management measures do not have any negative effects on the livelihoods of the fishing communities.
- 4.1.5 Aquaculture research and development will focus on consolidating the actual production and facilitate development in new breeding techniques for suitable species.

4.2 Resource Management

- 4.2.1 The Government will adopt a conservation and management policy based on the best scientific evidence available, and in the absence of such information, management decisions will favour a precautionary approach to promote the objectives of sustainability and the optimization of benefits.
- 4.2.2 To ensure better management of its fisheries, the Government will increasingly adopt ecosystem-based approaches to management of resources, combined with operational management plans for each fishery or resource, for example the trap and shark fisheries. Management measures whenever required and where appropriate will be put in place for the recreational and sport fishery.
- 4.2.3 With regards to shared/highly migratory fish stocks the Government will actively encourage co-operation with other States in the region and distant water fishing nations harvesting these stocks as well as participate in management bodies to ensure the long-term sustainability of these stocks.

4.3 Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS)

4.3.1 The Government will intensify its effort to ensure that the marine resources within its Exclusive Economic Zone are exploited in accordance with national laws and regulations and to guarantee that vessels flying the Seychelles' flag at all times adhere to international laws and management regulations.

4.4 International Agreements and Co-operation

4.4.1 The Government will continue to grant fishing rights to other distant water fishing nations to fish in its Exclusive Economic Zone taking into account the state of the stock and economic returns.

4.4.2 The State will intensify its effort for more fruitful and beneficial co-operation with other States, international agencies, financial institutions and educational establishments for the smoother development of the fishing industry.

4.5 Legislative Framework

4.5.1 The Government will as and when necessary enact laws and regulations for the better protection and management of the marine resources and will ensure that national regulations are in accordance with international laws.

4.6 Institutional Framework

4.6.1 Close consultation and co-operation with all relevant parties and stakeholders is required in a bid to ensure clear and legitimate decision-making as well as efficient service delivery. Functions and responsibilities between management bodies in line with their roles will be clearly defined and formulated.

4.7 Investment

- 4.7.1 The Government will ensure that the necessary fiscal and monetary measures and mechanisms are put in place with the aim of facilitating access to investment funds and will encourage export oriented investment.
- 4.7.2 The Government also realizes that uncontrolled investment and certain subsidies may have adverse impacts on the fisheries resources leading to over-capitalization and excess capacity in the fishery. It will therefore take appropriate measures to ensure that new investments in the fishing industry do not have negative impacts on resource conservation.
- 4.7.3 There will be active encouragement of joint ventures between local and foreign entrepreneurs in order to develop the national tuna harvesting capability and in other areas, (including aquaculture), with the capacity to gain significant social and economic benefits.
- 4.7.4 However, investment in the artisanal fishery will be reserved only for local investors. To this regard the State will maintain its policy of acting as a facilitator in encouraging investment in all the sub-sectors of the industry and in all related activities.

4.8 Trade and Commerce

- 4.8.1 The Government will aim at adopting a trade regime in fish and fish products that is in accordance with international laws and which takes due regards to resource sustainability and human health.
- 4.8.2 The Government will support the use of information technology and access to the information superhighway so as to enable local companies to explore potential new markets and conduct business transactions on-line.

4.8.3 To further increase the national potential to earn more foreign exchange, means will be explored to increase the added-value of local marine products, identify niche markets and promote new products.

4.9 Infrastructure Development

4.9.1 Infrastructure development will continue to be a priority for the government in its quest to maintain Port Victoria as the main tuna landing/transshipment port in the region. This will be done in close partnership between the public and private sectors through the Seychelles Ports Authority.

4.9.2 The State will encourage every effort to improve efficiency and productivity as well as the quality of services in Port Victoria.

4.9.3 The Government will pursue its effort to provide the necessary infrastructure and shore base facilities to facilitate further development of the fisheries sub-sectors by making available the required resources.

4.10 Employment, Human Resource Development and Training

4.10.1 The Government will continue to encourage training of young people to join the fishing industry and devise means to improve working conditions and the income earning capacity of artisanal fishermen so as to encourage more young people to take up fishing as a career.

4.10.2 The Maritime Training Centre will continue to provide training of a high standard in order to meet the various needs of the country's developing fishing industry and satisfy the employment policies of the Government. The Seychelles Fishing Authority, within the framework of the fishing agreement with the European Union will also continue to train as many of its staff as possible to the highest level.

4.10.3 The Seychelles Fishing Authority in conjunction with other Ministries and agencies will continue to show keen interest in the general welfare of fishermen and will ensure that working conditions for Seychellois on foreign fishing vessels are fair and in accordance with national regulations.



5. STRATEGIES

5.1 Research and Development

5.1.1 The Government in collaboration with local and international partners will take appropriate measures to ensure that research is conducted into all aspects of fisheries including biological research, ecology, technology, environmental science, economics, social science, aquaculture and nutritional science.

5.1.2 The Government will also ensure the availability of research facilities and provide appropriate training, staffing, institutional building and financial resources to conduct research.

5.1.3 The Seychelles Fishing Authority will continue to ensure that data generated by research are analyzed and that the results of such analyses are published, respecting confidentiality. These information will be distributed in a timely and readily understood fashion, in order to ensure that the best scientific evidence is made available as a contribution to fisheries conservation, management and development.

5.1.4 The Government will promote responsible research and development of aquaculture and ensure that this development is ecologically sustainable, and allows the rational use of resources shared by aquaculture and other activities. Aquaculture will be promoted with the aim of minimizing adverse environmental changes and related economic and social consequences.

5.2 Resource Management

5.2.1 The Government will promote the use of satellite imagery and geographical information systems as an aid for fisheries research, decision-making and management as well as promote responsible fishing prac-

tices through appropriate use of information technologies and technical know-how.

- 5.2.2 The Seychelles Fishing Authority will develop appropriate operational resource management plans for the different fisheries with the active participation of all stakeholders.
- 5.2.3 Research activities in support of fishery conservation and management as well as research on marine resources and on the effects of climatic, environmental and socio-economic factors will be actively promoted.
- 5.2.4 The Government will encourage co-operation where appropriate and beneficial with international and regional organisations in the management of highly migratory stocks and/or shared stocks.
- 5.2.5 The Government shall within its respective competence and capacities establish mechanisms for fisheries monitoring, enforcement aspects and surveillance to ensure compliance with conservation and management measures and legislation, as well as those adopted by regional or international organizations or arrangements.

5.3 Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS)

- 5.3.1 Further steps will be taken to improve the monitoring, control and surveillance activities in order to ensure sustainable and responsible utilization of the marine resources.
- 5.3.2 Action will be taken to ensure that monitoring, control and surveillance as well as law enforcement are reinforced to become more effective and at an adequate level through the provision of sufficient budgetary allocation, capacity building and training.
- 5.3.3 The participation in regional or international MCS initiatives to ensure

sustainable and responsible utilization of shared and/or highly migratory stocks and compliance with international law will be enhanced.

5.4 International Agreements and Co-operation

5.4.1 International co-operation at bilateral and international levels will be reinforced in order to enhance fisheries management nationally and also within the Indian Ocean region. This cooperation will include monitoring, control and surveillance, scientific research, trade and development.

5.4.2 The Government shall continue to sign fishing agreements with other countries and fishing entities giving due regards to the sustainability of the stocks and grant licenses to foreign fishing vessels until such time the country is capable of harvesting the tuna resources in its EEZ.

5.5 Legislative Framework

5.5.1 There shall be an effective legal and administrative framework at the national level for fisheries resource conservation and management.

5.5.2 The Government will ensure that laws and regulations provide for sanctions applicable in respect of violations. In the event of non-compliance, sanctions shall in addition, allow for refusal, withdrawal or suspension of authorization to fish.

5.6 Institutional Framework

5.6.1 Measure will be taken to put in place institutional structures that will minimise bureaucracy and improve timeliness and effectiveness of service delivery. The Government will also ensure that user groups and stakeholders have adequate opportunities to raise their concerns and actively take part in decision making.

5.6.2 It is important that there are clear distinctions between the responsibilities related to policy decisions, administration, MCS, research and scientific advice, to the consultation process with resource user groups and other stakeholders in order to allow for more transparency and accountability in management decisions.

5.6.3 Attention will be given towards the reinforcement of institutional capacity building by making available adequate resources.

5.7 Investment

5.7.1 There will continue to be active encouragement and facilitation of fisheries related investments provided these satisfy Government's objectives for fisheries development.

5.7.2 The Government, through the Seychelles Fishing Authority, will ensure that any fisheries related investment does not compromise the sustainable and responsible use of marine resources.

5.7.3 The Government, through the relevant ministries and departments, will endeavour to create an enabling environment to further encourage and promote private investment in processing, value addition and commercialising of fisheries products.

5.8 Trade and Commerce

5.8.1 Attention will be given to ensure that international trade in fish and fishery products does not compromise the sustainable development of fisheries and responsible utilisation of the marine resources.

5.8.2 The Government will pursue a trade policy in fish and fish products in accordance with internationally agreed trade rules, in particular the principles, rights and obligations established in the Agreement on the application of **Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Measures (SPS)**, the

Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES), the agreement on **Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)** etc.

5.8.3 Laws, regulations and administrative procedures applicable to international trade in fish and fish products shall be revised and updated whenever necessary so as to be more effective, transparent, easy to implement and without prejudice.

5.8.4 Measures will be taken to encourage new initiatives in market research and product development, marketing and distribution channels in a bid to increase the earning potential of the fisheries products.

5.9 Infrastructure Development

5.9.1 The Government will actively support initiatives to improve port services and increase labour productivity to reduce turnaround time in port. The Government will also investigate the possibility of making the Port Victoria a 24 hour operational port.

5.9.2 There will be consultation with other parties to constantly review the tariff structure for port services in an attempt to be more flexible and encourage maximum use of the port..

5.9.3 Private sector initiatives or joint ventures for the provisions of shore based facilities and services will be highly encouraged.

5.9.4 The Government will give urgent attention and will identify funds either locally or abroad, for the development and improvement of the existing port infrastructure, services and facilities, identify locations for the development of a new port and the development of shore -based installations for the benefit of local fishers.

5.10 Human Resources Development

- 5.10.1 The Seychelles Fishing Authority in conjunction with the Ministry responsible for Manpower will identify the long-term manpower and training requirements with regard to fishing and fisheries related activities.
- 5.10.2 The Government shall provide opportunities for formal and informal training in all fisheries related matters and would include technical and administrative, support personnel, in fish processing as well as in quality control and standards.



6 SUMMARY OF ISSUES, POLICY OPTIONS AND CONCERNED STAKEHOLDERS

ISSUES	POLICY OPTIONS	IMPLEMENTATING AGENCIES AND CONCERNED STAKEHOLDERS
Research and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take appropriate measures to ensure that research is conducted into all aspects of fisheries. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible Environment, Ministry responsible Foreign Affairs, Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation, Private Sector.
Resource Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop appropriate operational resource management plans for the different fisheries. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Environment.
Monitoring, Control and Surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve monitoring, control and surveillance activities. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs, Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation, Ministry responsible for Environment, Coast Guard.
International Agreements and Co-operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reaffirm intention to reinforce international cooperation at a bilateral and international level. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs, Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation.
Legislative Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that an effective legal and administrative framework is established at the national level for fisheries resources conservation and management. - Ensure that laws and regulations provide for sanctions applicable in respect of violation. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs, Attorney General's Office.
Institutional framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Put in place institutional structures that will minimise bureaucracy and improve timeliness and effectiveness of service delivery. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Foreign Affairs, Attorney General's Office.
Investment, Trade and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Endeavour to create an enabling environment to further encourage and promote private investment in processing, value addition and the commercialisation of fisheries products. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Trade and Commerce, Ministry responsible for Economic Planning, Ministry responsible for Finance, Private Sector.
Infrastructure Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support initiatives to improve port services, port infrastructure and increase labour productivity. - Encourage private initiatives for the provision of shore-based facilities to complement its effort. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for Transport, Ministry responsible for Land Use , Ministry responsible for Environment, Private Sector.
Human Resources Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify long-term manpower and training requirement with regards to fishing and related activities. - Provide opportunities for formal and informal training in all fisheries related matters. 	Ministry responsible for Fisheries, Ministry responsible for manpower development, Ministry responsible for Public Administration, Ministry responsible for Education.

PAST PRESENT FUTURE

