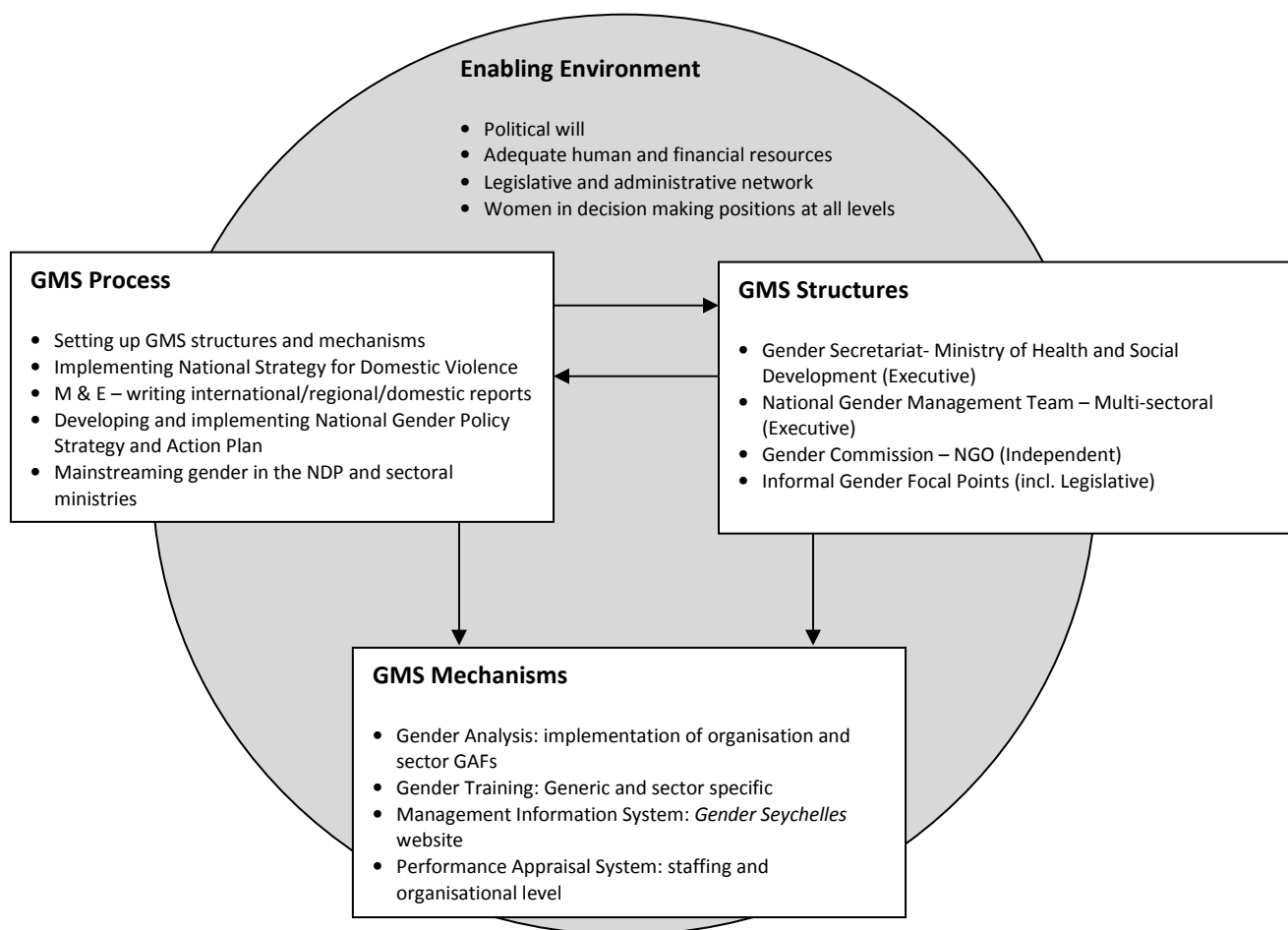


Seychelles Response to DAW Questionnaire

Regional Study of National Mechanisms for Gender Equality

Question 1: Provide information on all bodies recognised as national mechanisms for gender equality.

Gender Management System (GMS) in Seychelles



Gender Secretariat

The National Gender Machinery is currently led by the Gender Secretariat, a unit within the Social Development Department of the Ministry of Health and Social Development, as the ministry holding the portfolio responsibility for gender. The Secretariat receives a budget from the government and some funding from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The role of the unit is to act as the permanent lead agency within the Gender Management System (GMS),

with the purpose of improving the quality of life of all Seychellois by promoting gender equality and equity for a just and sustainable society. The goal of the Secretariat is to facilitate gender mainstreaming in all policies, programmes, and activities of the government, the private sector and civil society.

The key functions of the Gender Secretariat are to:

- Initiate, strengthen and institutionalise the GMS;
- Be responsible for the overall co-ordination and monitoring of the GMS;
- Play a strategic and catalytic advocacy role, by introducing critical gender concerns into the policies, plans, programmes at all levels;
- Develop national policy guidelines for gender mainstreaming;
- Ensure that key targets and indicators on the status of women and men are set, agreed upon and met;
- Lead the overall monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the gender mainstreaming process;
- Manage the flow of information on gender issues and communicating policy changes and results; and
- Facilitate capacity building for gender mainstreaming.

Since 2005 the Gender Secretariat has:

- Developed a gender mainstreaming approach, adapted from the Commonwealth GMS approach.
- Initiated the first stage of a nationwide gender situational analysis through the National Gender Steering Committee.
- Launched the Domestic Violence National Survey and published sections of the findings.
- Organised capacity building programmes in collaboration with partners on:
 - Gender mainstreaming and good governance;
 - Gender analysis and planning;
 - Gender-sensitive indicators; and
 - Strategic communications planning.
- Held a series of senior-level gender sensitisation forums with local partners and stakeholders.
- Reported on the implementation of the AU Solemn Declaration.
- Formulated the National Strategy for Domestic Violence 2008-2012.
- Collaborated in a series of human rights training for the Police on the rights of women.
- Conducted a situational analysis of the current institutional response to domestic violence.
- Launched the Gender Seychelles website (www.genderseychelles.gov.sc).
- Organised commemoration activities for International Women's Day and 16 Days of Activism.
- Supported the ADB study on Gender Socialisation and Boy's Achievement in Primary and Secondary School.

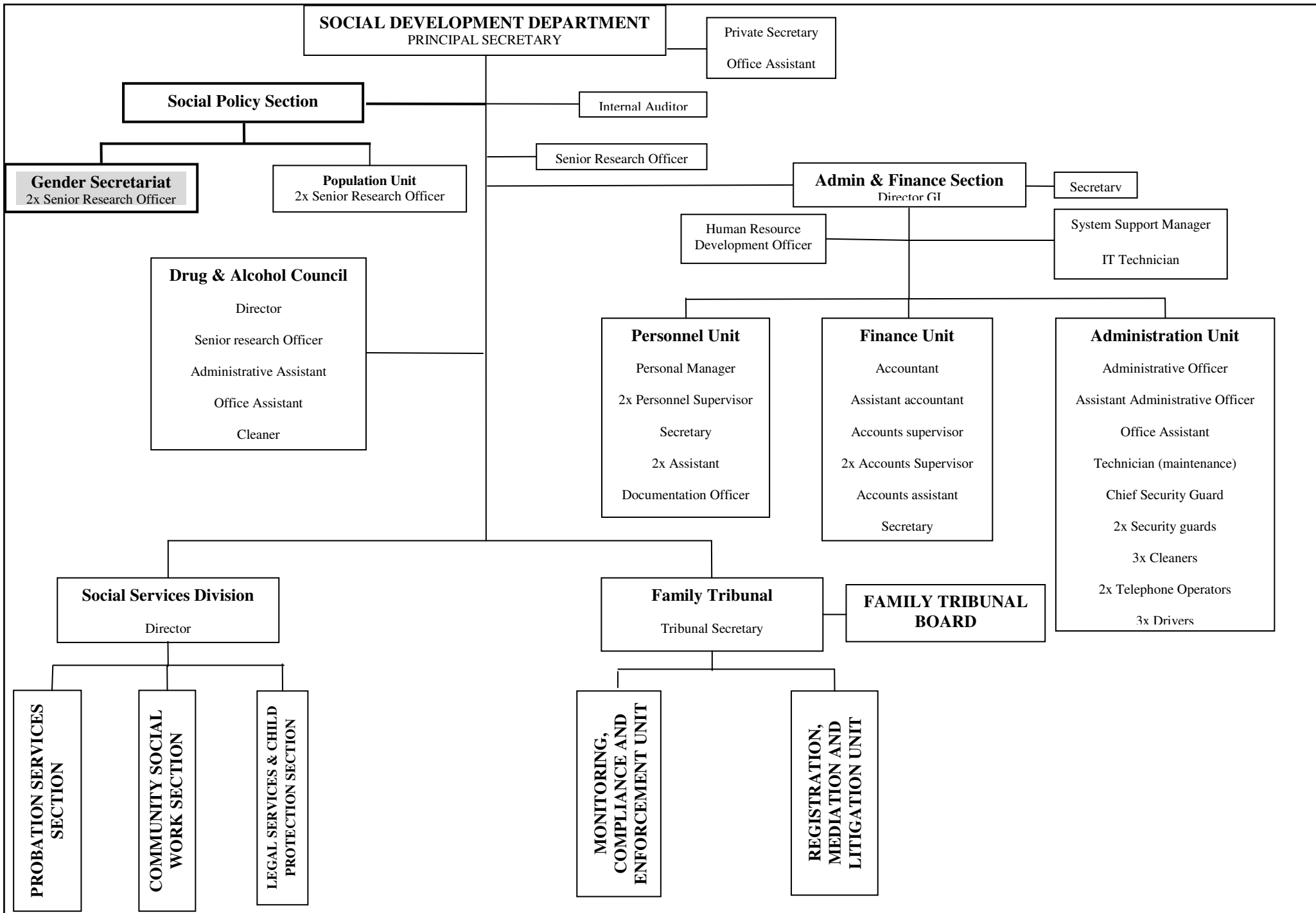
- Supported the institutionalisation of other GMS structures (National Gender Steering Committee and National Gender Management Team).

The main activities of the Gender Secretariat for 2009-10 are to:

- Start work on developing the National Gender Policy/strategy/PoA, with technical support of NGMT.
- Advocate, facilitate and monitor the implementation of National Strategy on Domestic Violence.
- Report on the implementation of CEDAW since 1993-2006.
- Report on the Beijing Platform of Action + 15 review.
- Finalize the findings of the in-depth analysis of the Domestic Violence National Survey.
- Develop the Domestic Violence Risk Indicator Framework.
- Strengthen the Gender Management Information System, by maintaining the Gender Seychelles website and through networking.
- Commemorate gender related international days.
- Assist the department in any other business.
- Act as Secretary to the NGMT

The Gender Secretariat which is presently staffed by 2 fulltime Senior Research Officers is multiplying its efforts to ensure that gender has its place on the national agenda. However its current size and limited resources pose serious challenges to the effective operation of the unit. The unit has a heavy workload, with only two Officers to meet the demands. A lack of technical capacity further aggravates this situation, as only one of the Officers has received some academic training in gender (one taught module at BSc and MSc level and MSc dissertation) whilst the other Officer is learning on the job.

As the role of the Gender Secretariat is only to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender, stakeholder ownership of the process is critical for successful implementation. To date there has been limited commitment from the different sectors, which has been related to the absence of a national policy on gender, lack of clear gender sensitive terms of reference of organisations and personnel, lack of gender budgeting, a misconception about the role of the Gender Secretariat and a popular perception that “there are no gender problems in Seychelles”. As mentioned below the National Gender Management Team has just been launched. It is hoped that this new structure will be able to support the work of the Gender Secretariat and provide technical expertise on how to address some of the challenges of mainstreaming gender in Seychelles.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

Private Secretary
Office Assistant

Social Policy Section

Internal Auditor

Senior Research Officer

Gender Secretariat
2x Senior Research Officer

Population Unit
2x Senior Research Officer

Admin & Finance Section
Director GI

Secretarv

Human Resource
Development Officer

System Support Manager
IT Technician

Drug & Alcohol Council
Director
Senior research Officer
Administrative Assistant
Office Assistant
Cleaner

Personnel Unit
Personal Manager
2x Personnel Supervisor
Secretary
2x Assistant
Documentation Officer

Finance Unit
Accountant
Assistant accountant
Accounts supervisor
2x Accounts Supervisor
Accounts assistant
Secretary

Administration Unit
Administrative Officer
Assistant Administrative Officer
Office Assistant
Technician (maintenance)
Chief Security Guard
2x Security guards
3x Cleaners
2x Telephone Operators
3x Drivers

Social Services Division
Director

Family Tribunal
Tribunal Secretary

FAMILY TRIBUNAL BOARD

PROBATION SERVICES SECTION

COMMUNITY SOCIAL WORK SECTION

LEGAL SERVICES & CHILD PROTECTION SECTION

MONITORING, COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT UNIT

REGISTRATION, MEDIATION AND LITIGATION UNIT

National Gender Management Team

Recently launched in June 2009, the Team is chaired by the Principal Secretary for Social Development, with the Gender Secretariat acting as the secretary. The rest of the team consists of 13 representative members from government, private and NGO sector. Currently meeting on a monthly basis, the Terms of Reference of the NGMT is to:

1. Support the Gender Secretariat in developing the Gender Management System (GMS) concept in the national context, i.e. broad operational policies, indicators and timeframes for implementation.
2. Support the Gender Secretariat in the development of the National Gender Policy and Plans of Action:
 - a. Supply sex-disaggregated data;
 - b. Identify critical areas of concern;
 - c. Analyse causal factors;
 - d. Develop effective objectives;
 - e. Determine efficient strategies;
 - f. Plan engendered Local Frameworks.
 - g. The policy shall take into consideration the legislative framework and existing national and sectoral policies.
 - h. Priorities, objectives and targets shall take into consideration international/regional instruments such as CEDAW, Beijing Declaration and Plan of Action, the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015, AU Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Children and Women and the IOC Gender Policy, COMESA Gender Policy and Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2008-2012 etc.
3. Support Gender Secretariat in reporting responsibilities (CEDAW, Beijing Platform of Action, AU Protocol, SADC instruments etc.).
4. Build consensus regarding conflict resolution and problem-solving procedures.
5. Seek funding for gender related projects.
6. Set up working groups for specific topics as and when needed, in consultation with the Gender Management Team.

The NGMT is currently in the process of finalising a 2 year Plan of Action, which focuses on reviewing the existing Gender Management System; sensitisation campaigns; gender training; support reporting obligations; develop a national gender policy, strategy and PoAs; and monitor the implementation of the National Strategy on Domestic Violence. **Add finalised PoA in appendix?**

Gender Commission

The "Gender Commission" of (LUNGOS) is a platform which provides a common meeting ground for collective dialogue, collaboration and action by Women and Gender-related NGOs. It represents the NGO sector on government bodies and committees and has the responsibility for the Platform of

Action and Commitments of world conferences as well as UN Special Days. Please refer to the TOR of the Gender Commission in the appendix for further details of its objectives, structure and composition.

Question 2: Assess processes of collaboration and coordination among the national mechanisms for gender equality and with other stakeholders.

Seychelles is a small island developing state, which is characterised by a small population and limited human resources. The number of focal persons, activists and advocates of gender in Seychelles is small, and in general coordination and collaboration between different organisations exists. However there is still much room for improvement, the main expected outcomes of creating the NGMT was to increase collaboration and coordination of gender related activities, improve networking and pool together limited resources. The Gender Secretariat, the Gender Commission, the Ministry of Education, the Seychelles Institute of Management (management training institution), GEM Plus (local gender and media NGO) and SAWOP (professional women's association) are all members of the NGMT. Seychelles will very shortly open the doors of its own university, which will be launched in phases and it is hoped that the Seychelles University will become a major partner in the future once it becomes better established.

In the past many activities were achieved through collaborative effort amongst the members of the now defunct National Gender Steering Committee, especially in the commemoration of International Women's Day and the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. It is hoped that the NGMT will build on past achievements.

The Gender Commission (formerly the Women's Commission up until 2008) primarily coordinates and collaborates with the Parliament, specifically with women parliamentarians forming part of the Action Group of Women Parliamentarians; as well as the NGMT and the Academy of Civil Society (ACTS). Although recognized as a Commission, there still exists the need for those organizations to show more commitment and be more engaged in its Action Plan.

Question 3: How is political will translated into concrete support for national mechanisms for gender equality?

Political will for the promotion of gender equality is expressed through the support of the work of the Gender Secretariat, which as previously mentioned receives most of its budget from Government. The Cabinet of Ministers in June 2008 approved the National Strategy on Domestic Violence and supported Seychelles' bid to join the UNIFEM *Say NO to Violence* campaign. Upon returning back to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) the President signed the SADC Gender and Development Protocol.

The Gender Commission on several occasions has expressed views on promoting women in the echelon of the government structure. The Commission has observed in the past the disappearance of women in high decision-making positions and the reluctance of high placed men to talk about this subject, apart from talking about women's roles vis-à-vis their children. It is however recognised by the Commission that slowly things are changing in the right direction with the government appointing more women in the executive and in parliament, although this is still not enough. There is still room

for improvement since more dialogue is needed in this respect. The need for women in positions to think about the other women who are toiling hard, either at community levels, in NGOs, in the churches, etc. and work towards supporting and promoting them.

Question 4: How are national mechanisms for gender equality able to influence the country's main political priorities?

Access of National Gender Machineries (NGM) to policy planning process, especially in finance, has been limited. Despite the continued practice of top down planning (especially in response to immediate needs e.g. structural adjustment programmes) NGMs are sometimes included in planning processes through participatory processes such as committees, task groups and workshops or have been circulated draft policy documents for comment. The following is a list of the most recent planning processes the Gender Secretariat has participated in and its nature:

- The Senior Management Committee for the Social Development Department includes the Gender Secretariat head as a member. This is an on-going management practice.
- The National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) was identified as a critical entry point for gender mainstreaming by the National Gender Management Team (NGMT). The National Statistical Bureau who is responsible for the NSDS is represented on the NGMT and has been targeted in the Communications Strategy and through the 2 year PoA.
- The Gender Secretariat has recently been invited to sit on the MDG Steering Committee, which will be chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) representative invited the Social Development Department including the Gender Secretariat to participate in planning the next WHO country programme, through a series of meetings in the third quarter of 2009.
- The 10th European Development Fund (EDF) consultants invited the Gender Secretariat to the appraisal workshops for the next EDF and conducted an interview to evaluate the 9th EDF and discuss priority areas for the next programme, all of which was conducted in the second quarter of 2009. In the draft 10th EDF, the Gender Secretariat has been suggested as a rotating member of the small grants fund board.
- International Labour Organisation (ILO) Decent Work Country Programme held a tripartite workshop to validate the draft document, in which the Gender Secretariat represented the Social Development Department. After which a small drafting committee was set up to finalise the amendments and the Gender Secretariat was nominated as a member. These activities continued throughout the second quarter of 2009.
- The consultant working on the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy invited the Gender Secretariat to participate in the development of the draft document, through a series of consultations, meetings and workshops in the first quarter of 2009.
- The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) invited the Gender Secretariat to participate in identifying national priorities for the UNFPA country programme 2008-2010. The Gender Secretariat successfully secured funding from the programme for gender mainstreaming and gender based violence interventions and is a member of the Implementing Partners committee.
- Negotiations for the Eastern and Southern African (ESA) and European Union (EU) Economic Partnership Agreement, included the Gender Secretariat as a representative of the former Social Development Division on the Task Force for the Development Cluster, in 2006 and 2007.

The Gender Commission is often contacted by the government through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Social Affairs and sometimes the Ministry of Employment for its views on certain specific matters. Through LUNGOS the Commission is also engaged in discussions with the IMF on the current economic reform programmes taking place in the country. It is also part of the LUNGOS plans geared towards contributing in the “Social Programmes” which falls directly under the Macro-Economic Reform Programme” and as such, regularly meets with representatives of the Ministry of Finance for specific discussions where its views and opinions are shared.

Question 5: Where do you see opportunities for the national mechanisms to strengthen the use of the gender mainstreaming strategy?

It is hoped that the launch of the new NGMT, will lead to better support of the work of the Gender Secretariat, so that it may build its capacity to fulfil its role of facilitating gender mainstreaming nationally. Through the two year PoA of the NGMT, focus will be placed on reviewing the Gender Management System, developing a national gender policy/strategy/action plan, and improving reporting obligations.

The NGMT mainly acts in a consultative basis and apart from monthly meetings, the Gender Secretariat uses e-communications to disseminate and circulate information to NGMT representative members. It is hoped that in the near future that the Gender Secretariat will be able to implement the next development phases of its Management Information System (a mechanism of the GMS, see diagram above), by creating closed website access sites and two-way communication, through the use of personal log-ins for NGMT members, to facilitate information dissemination, drafting and discussions.

Future development phases of the Gender Secretariat’s website also include increased levels of dynamic interaction with the public, through the use of e-surveys, e-polls and online-discussions. These will be quick and cost effective data collection tools, facilitating quick analysis of topical gender related issues impacting targeted audiences, which is an undeveloped practice in the Seychelles.

The Gender Commission is presently in contact with the Ministry of Employment with regards to re-skilling projects aimed at providing skills to young school leavers, single mothers and other unemployed youths who are facing great difficulties with everyday realities.

The Commission has presented a specific project entitled “Capacity Building: Empowering Seychellois Women and Youths for Concrete Actions Gearing Towards Full Productive Employment”. This project, amounting to SR 100,000 has just been approved. Through the project it is aimed to train some 200 people, helping them to enter the world of work in a prepared manner.

Lastly through greater networking it is hoped that Seychelles will be able to source more assistance from bilateral/regional/international partners and stakeholders to implement planned gender related activities.

Question 6: What are the biggest obstacles to gender mainstreaming and what could be the role of the gender mechanisms in overcoming those?

In Seychelles, and like many other countries, gender mainstreaming initiatives have been heavily hampered by the serious lack of up-to-date sex-disaggregated data, which in part weakens our lobbying and campaigning ability in order to create an enabling environment and political will. As mentioned above, the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS), (administered by the NSB and supported by the IMF), has been identified as an important entry point for gender mainstreaming. Because of the intervention of the IMF in Seychelles since the end of 2008, emphasis has been placed on the need for reliable statistics for monitoring purposes through the adoption of the General Data Dissemination System. The National Gender Management Team (NGMT) through its Communications Strategy plans to target key stakeholders and partners to improve the availability of sex-disaggregated data using a pragmatic approach through instrumental arguments, rather than stressing on justice arguments, that have in the past proved to be unpopular and even counter productive.

The priority need of the Gender Commission is to start educating the leaders in the executive, legislature and judiciary on gender. It is only when all leaders are themselves ready to understand and accept the concept and reality about gender mainstreaming that we shall be able to move together with our gender programmes. Time has come for the gender machineries to start shouting.

Question 7: What are the areas of work where gender mechanisms have been most effective?

Having achieved many of the Millennium Development Goals, focus has been placed on specific areas such as domestic violence, boys academic underachievement, single-parent households, economic empowerment of women, adolescent reproductive health/teenage pregnancy, men's health and gender parity in decision making processes.

The Gender Secretariat has been successful in developing the National Strategy on Domestic Violence, which was approved by Cabinet without reservation. Through the adoption of the strategy, Government endorsement for some previously controversial interventions (e.g. shelter for high risk victims) was finally achieved.

The Gender Secretariat has also been successful in raising public awareness about gender based violence and domestic violence in particular, through activities commemorating internationally celebrated days (IWD and 16 Days campaign). Examples can be listed as TV spots featuring popular community leaders and authority figures which roused public debate; leaflets on domestic violence which were updated and published in the local language following public demand, and the recent poem competition which was launched for IWD 2009, which received almost 400 submissions (a good response considering our small population size).

Question 8: What are the areas of work where gender mechanisms have been least effective?

Having developed the Gender Management System, the Gender Secretariat has found difficulties in securing stakeholder ownership and commitment towards implementing the system. This has been in part explained in question 6, where advocacy, lobbying and sensitisation efforts have been limited by the lack of up-to-date reliable gender-disaggregated information.

The Gender Secretariat has up until now found it difficult to effect decisions of the Ministry of Finance, particularly concerning gender budgeting. This is in part due to lack of capacity of the Secretariat to effectively advocate this practice, as well as within the Ministry of Finance, followed by stakeholders who would be involved in preliminary processes (e.g. NSB and line ministries).

By signing the SADC Gender and Development Protocol, Seychelles has been legally obligated to work towards the target of 50% women in decision making posts in the public and private sphere by 2015. In general Seychelles has hovered just below the 30% mark in female representation at cabinet and parliament level for many years. However, gender machineries have found it difficult to influence the use of affirmative action policies, due to many factors including the lack of available human resources.