

## Seychelles Nation

### Seychelles welcomes first World Statistics Day - 20.10.2010

Seychelles welcomes the naming by the United Nations of today as the first ever World Statistics Day, chief executive Laura Ahtime of the National Bureau of Statistics said in an interview yesterday.



She said the UN has chosen today's date – 20.10.2010 – as it stands out.

The importance of statistics is often overlooked, and the day will help educate people at the sources of facts and figures to give them out more readily, said Ms Ahtime, who was accompanied by census commissioner Helena Confiance and principal statistician Michel Mellie.

“With statistics, we can determine how we will live a year, 10 or 20 years from now. This is important because if we didn't have data from the past to look at, we would not be able to prolong our existence by avoiding or preparing for recurring hazards like climate change, or prepare for food shortages resulting from droughts,” she said.

She said statistics help us to make educated decisions based on what we already know.

“Based on data we have gathered from the past, for example, we know that it is very likely that during specific periods we will have very little rainfall, and because we know this we can prepare by having enough storage and proper water management plans for what we have to last through the dry season,” she added.

Ms Ahtime and her colleagues said statistics are used all over the world and are helpful in almost any situation.

“They are used in explaining behavioural patterns in animals and human beings, in market research and also in social development,” they said, adding that statistics help in providing food, shelter and educational infrastructure for the population.

Statistics on the numbers and distribution of the population help to plan effectively for all kinds of services such as health and transport, they said.

“Without statistics there would be too much guesswork in our daily lives, which could lead to inefficient and/or bad planning, unforeseen shortage of supplies, mismanagement of scarce resources, unnecessary loss of life, waste and many other disadvantages.”

Seychelles has had a statistics office since the early Seventies, in the form of a small unit within the then Ministry of Economic Planning.

Before independence it was called the Economic and Statistics Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister.

But over the years it has changed its name, location and parent ministry.

In the 25-year period from 1980-2005 it changed parent ministry five times until it finally became a semi-autonomous organisation in February 2005.

In 1980 it was known as the Statistics Division in the Department of Finance under the President’s Office and was headed by a chief statistician.

In January 1986, it was transferred from the Ministry of Finance to the President’s Office.

In August 1986, with the reorganisation of the President’s Office, the Statistics Division was renamed the Information Systems Division (ISD), which was made up of two sections, the Statistics and Database Administration Section (SDAS) and Systems Development Section (SDS), each headed by a director.

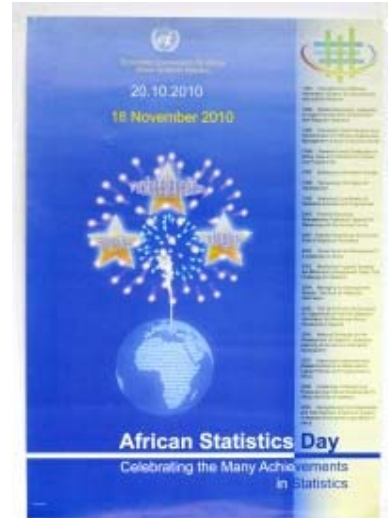
In January 1989, the ISD was renamed Management and Information Systems Division (MISD) and fell under the then Ministry of Administration and Manpower. The SDAS of the MISD was headed by a director-general.

On April 1 1998, the MISD moved to the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications (MITC) until December 2003.

And in January 2004 it moved to the Ministry of Economic Planning until February 2005, when the National Statistics Bureau was created as a semi-autonomous organisation headed by a chief executive.

In July this year the legal framework for the bureau was recast and modernised, and the National Statistics Bureau Act of 2005 was replaced by the National Bureau of Statistics Act, 2010.

The institution is now the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and is headed by a chief executive.



(See page 4 for a message from Paul Cheung, director of the United Nations Statistics Division, on the occasion of World Statistics Day).