

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Seychelles

CAPITAL: Victoria

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 453 Sq Km (175 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 78,500



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Seychelles is an archipelago of over 100 islands that are widely scattered in the West Indian Ocean. The principal island is Mahe which is mountainous with towering rugged crests, boulders and cliffs, although sandy beaches surround the coastline. In general, the islands are divided into two groups, (1.) the granite islands which number 32 and (2.) the coralline islands which number over 60. After Mahe the three largest islands are Praslin, La Digue and Silhouette. Major Cities; Victoria 24,300 (1987). Land Use; forested 11%, pastures and agricultural-cultivated 16%, other 73% (1993).

CLIMATE: Seychelles has a tropical climate that is influenced by the ocean. The hot season is from October to April and the cool season is from May to September. During the dry season from May to October the SE Monsoon prevails while from December to March the NW Monsoon brings heavy rains. Average annual precipitation varies from 2,280 mm (90 inches) along the coast to 3,040 mm (120 inches) in the interior at higher elevations. The average temperature is 26 degrees Celsius (79 degrees Fahrenheit) all year, although it falls to 16 degrees Celsius (61 degrees Fahrenheit) at night, at higher elevations.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Creoles who are of mixed Asian or African and European descent and account for 89% of the population. Other ethnic alien minorities include Indians, Chinese and a small number of French descendants.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 150 persons per sq km (387 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 59.3% urban, 40.7% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 50.0% male, 50.0% female (1989). Life Expectancy at Birth; 67.3 years male, 74.2 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 35% under 15, 32% 15 to 29, 15% 30 to 44, 9% 45 to 59, 7% 60 to 74, 2% 75 and over (1989). Birth Rate; 24.0 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 8.1 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 16.9 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 13.0 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with 91% of the population Roman Catholic while 8% are Protestant. The remainder are comprised of Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist minorities.

LANGUAGES: The official languages are Creole and English, with English spoken by a small minority. The national language is Creole which is spoken by 94% of the population and French is also spoken by a minority.

EDUCATION: Aged 15 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 13.7%, primary 50.1%, incomplete secondary 32.4%, secondary 1.4%, higher 1.8% (1977). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 17,066 or 57.3% (1971).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: During the 1960's James Mancham formed the Seychelles Democratic Party (SDP) and in the early 1970's many Seychellese began to demand an end to British rule. In Mar. 1975 Mancham formed a coalition government with France-Albert Rene of the Seychelles People's United Party (SPUP). On June 28, 1976 Seychelles became an independent republic within the Commonwealth with Mancham as President and Rene as Prime Minister. In June 1977 Rene ousted Mancham and adopted a new constitution in 1979 that established Seychelles as a single-party state under the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (FPPS). During the late 1970's and throughout the 1980's there were numerous coup attempts by hired mercenaries, although all were suppressed with the support of Tanzanian troops. In Dec. 1991 the ruling FPPS adopted a multiparty system of government, although no date was set for the elections. On April 12, 1992 James Mancham returned from exiled and met with Pres. Rene. In July 1992 elections were held to establish a 23-member commission to draft a new constitution and resulted in the FPPS gaining 14 seats, the Democratic Party led by Mancham 8 seats and the Seychelles Party one seat. In Sept. 1992 the PDS withdrew from the Constitutional Commission. On Nov. 15, 1992 a new constitution was put to a referendum, although it fell just short of the 60% vote required for approval. Also in 1992 the South African government paid some SR 8 million in compensation for their involvement in the abortive coup attempt in 1981. In Jan. 1993 the Democratic Party rejoined the Constitutional Commission as it reconvened. On May 7, 1993 both the FPPS and PDS adopted a draft constitution which was put to a referendum in June 1993 was approved with a 73.6% yes vote. On July 23, 1993 elections under the new constitution resulted in a victory for the FPPS and Rene, and on Aug. 3, 1993 Pres. Rene announced his new Cabinet.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Rupee (SR) divided into 100 Cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$444,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$138,100,000 (1993). Imports; SR 1,044,000,000 (1994). Exports; SR 259,600,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; SR 510,000,000 (1994). Balance of Trade; SR -780,200,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 25,238 or 38.9% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 11.5% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Pakistan, the UK, India, Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Singapore and Bahrain.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Copra, Fish, Fruit, Spices, Vegetables.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Brewing, Copra and Vanilla Processing, Cigarette Production, Fishing, Tourism.

MAIN EXPORTS: Cinnamon Bark, Copra, Fish, Fertilizers (Guano).

TRANSPORT: Railroads; nil. Roads; length 285 km (177 mi) (1989). Vehicles; cars 4,072 (1989), trucks and buses 1,321 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 6 (1990), deadweight tonnage 2,441 (1990). Air Transport; N/A.

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 1 with a circulation of 3,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 40,000 (1994). Television; receivers 13,000 (1994). Telephones; units 11,300 (1993).

MILITARY: 800 (1994) total active duty personnel with 100% army while military expenditure accounts for 4.2% (1989) of the Gross National Product (GNP).