



Editorial

The Seychelles National Parks Authority has set itself this ambitious goal of becoming that entity that can cater for all groups, regardless of interest or abilities; ambitions, because of the wide range of partners with which we have to engage, from private operators, tourists, students and scientists. This current issue of *Mediz* brings to you a snapshot of engagements of SNPA with its partners during the first half of the year. It would take more than an issue of the newsletter to cover all activities and all partners. The commitment to engage with all partners remain undiminished however, and the SNPA hopes to be able to highlight more such partnerships in the coming editions. We hope those items that have been included in this newsletter will satisfy your curiosity.

Mr Flavien Joubert

Seychelles National Parks Authority Award Ceremony



Mr. Michel Victor receiving his award from CEO Joubert and Mr. Cedras

Similar to numerous organizations in the country, the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) hosted its end of year gathering in January. This was an opportunity for staff of the organization to meet up in a social atmosphere and appreciate the work undertaken during 2015 and also to briefly learn about upcoming challenges for 2016. It was the ideal moment to reward some long serving employees, some of whom have been working in government for over 35 years. The end of year lunch took place at Club 55 on Friday 15th January 2016 and was attended by Mr. Flavien Joubert (CEO of SNPA), Mr. Selby Remie (Chairman of SNPA board), other board members as well as staff working in the different sections of the organization, from Praslin, Mahé and La Digue.

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Mr. Bernard Bijoux with Chairman of SNPA board Mr. Selby Remie

A total of thirty-one staff members were rewarded for their continuous service. Three employees received special awards; Mr. Michel Victor from Praslin for having been in service for 37 years, Mrs. Edwina Quatre from Forestry Section on Mahé have been employed for 32 years, Mr. Bernard Bijoux have served the Marine National Parks for 25 years.

“My love for the job kept me going all these years” said a delighted Mr. Bijoux who now manages Marine Operations on Mahé at SNPA.

All three employees said they will continue to offer their services to SNPA so that it can continue to dedicate itself to the conservation of the National Parks.

Celebrating World Forest Day in March

The Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA) which is mandated to implement sustainable forestry practices, joined the rest of the world this March to celebrate the ‘International day of Forests’. The Authority organized a tree planting activity in the

‘Veuve Reserve’ on La Digue. On Mahé, SNPA partnered with Development Bank of Seychelles (DBS) to reforest an area at Sans-Soucis with the endemic Thief palm *Theoniphorium borsigianum*.



SNPA and DBS staff at Sans Soucis

The activity on La Digue began with a small presentation inside the reserve, in which students from the ‘Friends of Flycatcher’ environment club read poems and performed songs, highlighting the importance of forests and trees, with emphasis on the role of those found inside the reserve, in relation to the critically endangered Seychelles Black Paradise Flycatcher *Terpsiphone corvina*. The CEO of SNPA Mr. Flavien Joubert addressed the fifty guests and staff present.

Mr. Joubert, Mr. Jacqueline and Mr. Selby Remie (Chairman of SNPA Board) had the honour of planting the first endemic tree of the day. A total of 150 trees including ‘bwad renet’ *Dodonaea viscosa*, ‘bwa sousouri’ *Ochrosia oppositifolia* and ‘bwa zoliker’ *Titosporum scenatia* were planted. All the participants were exuberant about the contributions made towards providing a better habitat for the endemic Seychelles Black Paradise Flycatcher. Having the activity on La Digue has not only helped raise awareness on the endemic *Terpsiphone corvina*, it has also helped the island of La Digue to join the rest of the world in celebrating our very important forests.

Coastal Hazard workshop

Representatives from several countries from the Western Indian Ocean region met in Seychelles for a workshop to learn how to assess coastal hazards. The training was attended by delegates from the Comoros, Reunion, Kenya, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania.

The five-day training workshop was held at the STC Conference Room, from 7th-11th March 2016. It was organized by the Division of Risk and Disaster Management (DRDM) in partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (IOC-UNESCO). The workshop was also supported by the Malaysian Funds-in-Trust Project.

Seychelles was being represented by staff from DRDM, Ministry of Environment (Coastal Unit), Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA), Seychelles Land & Transport Authority (SLTA) and also from Ministry of Land Use and Housing (MLUH). Present at the opening ceremony were the Principal Secretary for Energy and Climate Change, Mr. Wills Agricole, the Principal Secretary for Environment, Mr. Alain De Commarmond, the Director General of the DRDM, Mr. Paul Labaleine, the Head of the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG/IOTWMS) Mr. Tony Elliot.

The training workshop on coastal hazard assessment is in response to the need for member states of the Western Indian Ocean and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to

build capacity to undertake coastal hazard assessments within an overall risk assessment, management and mitigation framework.

Seychelles Schools equipped with props and games



Props and games made by Secondary students especially for Primary schools

Props and games produced under the project funded by UNESCO, were handed to primary schools on 23rd March, in a short ceremony held at Plaisance Secondary School.

During the ceremony, the CEO of SNPA, Mr. Flavien Joubert urged schools to make good use of the resources so as to enhance environmental education. Mr. Joubert was particularly impressed with the manual produced and thanked the project team for the successful completion of the project. Teachers and students who produced the props and games each received a certificate. All schools on Mahé will receive a copy of the manual, which guides teachers on how they can use and produce the props and games.

Bleaching surveys



Bleached coral in Ste Anne Marine Park

The month of April proved to be a busy one for people working in the field of Marine conservation here in Seychelles.

Since the beginning of the month bleaching reports started coming in from all over the country. SNPA was no exception, all our marine parks were impacted by the phenomenon. The first report from Baie Ternay Marine Park showed water temperature to be around 31.5 °C and that be-

tween 70%-90% of corals in water less than 10m to be affected.

Between the 26th April and 2nd May, SNPA and the Seychelles Fishing Authority conducted Line Intercept Transect (LIT) coral surveys at 12 sites (8 x 10 m LIT at each site, 8 x plan surveys) around Mahe (3 east coast, 3 Ste Anne, 3 north west coast, 3 west coast). Preliminary analysis of the LIT data indicates that 79% of hard corals were at varying degrees of bleaching (paling, partially or fully bleached) and that some (8%) had suffered recent mortality.

All genera showed bleaching, with very high rates in *Acropora* and *Pocillopora*.

World Biodiversity Day celebrated in Curieuse Marine Park, with Launching of Reef restoration project



Mr Joubert and the project team taking a souvenir photo in front of the information board

World biodiversity Day has been celebrated worldwide since 1993. The event which aims at raising awareness and understanding on issues relating to biodiversity is celebrated on the 22nd May. On Tuesday 24th May the EBA Reef restoration Project was officially launched by CEO of SNPA Mr. Flavien Joubert on Curieuse Island. In attendance were the Project team, staff from Ministry of Environment, SNPA, GVI and students from Praslin Secondary School. After the unveiling of the information board, which explains the project, guests learnt about the processes involved in reef restoration. To

show the importance of the project to biodiversity the students were taken to the mangrove to understand the linkages which exist between mangrove and coral reef. In the afternoon they went snorkeling to observe for themselves the impacts of coral bleaching and its effect on marine biodiversity and why reef restoration might be a vital tool in the conservation of biodiversity. The students were excited about activities organized that day, they had a lot of questions to ask. For them it was an exciting learning experience.

"I wish that I could do it again next Tuesday" remarked one of the boy.

The students were really enthusiastic about the reef restoration project and one of them is even considering it as a possible career opportunity in future.

Winners of school competitions rewarded in celebration to commemorate World Biodiversity Day

Distinguished guests, students, parents and the general public gathered at the International Conference Centre (ICCS) to see which school will win the star prize for the Public Presentation and Art Poster Competitions. The two competitions were organized by SNPA in collaboration with 'The Outer Islands Project' and ICS. During the special event, the top two schools from the eliminations round were to present their topic of discussion to the public. On that day judges were to decide which school should win the top prize. Finally the winners were as followed;



Guests look on, impressed at the presentations.

For primary school it was Anse-Boileau school which discussed 'Whether we need marine and terrestrial protected areas'.

For secondary it was Plaisance school which presented on 'Species apart from turtles and dolphins which are threatened by unsustainable harvesting practices' and they had to provide solutions.

The winner for Post-secondary category was school of A-Level studies who presented on 'Tag and Release fishing and how the community can get more involved'.

For the Art poster completion the winners were:

For Primary category: Nerrick Clarisse from Beau-Vallon Primary school

Secondary category: Jade du Preez from independent school

Post-secondary: Angie-Cecile Denis from the National Institute of Health Studies.

Minister for Environment Climate Change and Energy Mr Didier Dogley presented prizes to the winners in the Post-secondary category, for the Public presentation competition. Popular artists including Joe Samy (who performed his popular song 'Don't let them die', a song urging for the protection of Seychelles unique environment) were present to entertain the crowd.



Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Energy, Mr Dogley presenting prizes to school of A-Level studies

National Park Survey

The forestry section undertook a survey of the Morne Seychellois trail network in May, with the help of students from the Marine Academy. The aim of the survey was to obtain information about how many visitors visit the trails on a daily basis and to obtain their views on the conditions of the trails. The 15 students covered the Anse Major, Mare Aux Cochon, Dan Gala, Trois Freres, Copolia, Salazie, Casse Dents and Morn Blanc trails. Results of the survey will help SNPA assess its services in the National Parks.



Students posing with security officer on the Copolia Trail

Job fair

The theme for the job fair organized by the Ministry of Labor and Resource Development at the beginning of the year was 'My family, my career and my responsibility'. The fair was held at the International Conference Center from 10 am till 4pm.

Present at the ICCS that day were different organizations showcasing their services and products. The most popular stalls were those from the tourism industry, where many 5 star hotels were doing recruitment on site.

SNPA participated, showcasing the various employment opportunities that exist within the organization, such as Research Officers, Marine and Forest rangers and so forth. The stall was very popular with school kids. The Authority was recruiting; Marine Ranger, Park Officer and Assistant Research officer.

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