



The Associations
of the Districts
of Victoria

Involving Local Authorities
In the programming process
of EU Cooperation in Seychelles

**LOCAL AUTHORITIES
ROADMAP
FOR THE 2021-2027 CYCLE
OF EU COOPERATION**



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INTRODUCTION

This Roadmap is distinctively divided into three parts that thus present; the status quo on the involvement of Local Authorities (LAs) in Seychelles' national development and cooperation framework, as well as the way forward towards enhancing that position, including the roles to be played by key stakeholders in the process and the target timelines for achieving the goal.

The first part presents an overview on the current levels of LA involvement in the national development and cooperation policy. This is crucially important because it enlightens us on the current status and trend in order to enable us identify the gap that needs to be addressed. This part is largely drawn from the key highlights and conclusions of the compendium and analytical report of the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa) specifically commissioned to inform the development process of this roadmap.

The second part delves into the identification of key stakeholders and most specially the role of policymakers at national and EU level. The purpose is to highlight the roles of key stakeholders in creating an enabling environment for the enhancing the participation of National Associations of Local Government Associations (NALAs) in the definition and implementation of national development and cooperation policy. The part also looks at the priority goals of EU cooperation and identifies appropriate mechanisms for LAs access to available EU funds and other development driving opportunities, in order to improve their delivery capacity.

The third focusses on the status quo and potential contribution of the LAs and their national association, the Association of Districts of Victoria (ADV), towards enhancement of their involvement in the national development and cooperation policy framework. This involves a look at the managerial, financial and technical capacity of ADV, as well as assessing the gaps that require to be addressed to enable it effectively play its role as a unified voice for LAs in the country.

The three parts are followed by annexes, which provide additional data and information considered to be useful to the highlights and discussions presented by the roadmap.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The involvement of Local Authorities (LAs) in development and cooperation policy and arrangements is not only desirable, but also necessary and even crucial. One of the key benefits of a strong involvement of LAs is that it can bring first-hand data and locally-grounded knowledge that can allow decision-makers at national level to define development and cooperation policies that take into account local contexts, in a more accurate manner. It also enhances the participation of key non-state holders at the local level, such as the local civil society, whose contribution can be sought through participatory multi-stakeholder's consultations organized at the local levels. Such multi-stakeholder engagement is important in the definition of local policies and exploration of multiple and innovative ways that better inform the policy formulation process. Besides the benefits associated with local participation in information and data collection, the involvement of LAs is likely to strengthen solidarity between the local and national levels in implementing development and cooperation policy. On the other hand, it is assumed that effective involvement would facilitate better appreciation and consideration of local priorities in the development process.

Against that background, a study was commissioned to analyse the level of involvement of local authorities in Uganda in the national development and cooperation framework. This is part of a process intended support the LAs along the path of strengthening their interaction with national government. Such synergy will, among others, be crucial in facilitating their participation in the EU programming process. In that light an analytical study was conducted and its report findings are part this roadmap, which is intended to guide the LAs and NALAs in their interaction with their national government and European Union Delegation.

The analytical study of LA involvement in national development and cooperation processes, with in context of the decentralisation framework and political economy of Seychelles, is aimed at examining the feasibility of the new EU political agenda by providing strategic answers to the 3 questions that feeds into the **Integration of Local Authorities in the European Cooperation Programming Process 2021-2027**.

The three broad clusters of questions on which the report is built are:

- Shifts towards territorialization on national plans and policies
To what extent has there been an evolution at central government level in terms of moving towards a "territorialization" of core national plans and (sectoral) public policies? What is the reason for central government doing it and how solid is this national commitment to integrate the spatial dimension in order to recognize that territories have different needs? Has this has been translated into clear plans, policies and implementation processes? The existing national funding mechanisms foreseen to ensure effective territorialization of core public policies?

- Local Authorities as development actors
To what extent does central government consider LAs as a “development actor” in its own right and an essential partner to be associated in the territorialized public policies (including SDGs or the Nationally Determined Contributions for the Paris Agreement)? Or are subnational authorities merely seen as subordinated “implementing agencies” of centrally conceived and steered national policies?
- Recognition of the added value of territorial approaches to local development
To what extent does central government recognize the added value of territorial approaches to local development spearheaded by the LAs on the basis of their “general mandate”? Do central governments acknowledge that LAs have not only a role in helping to implement national (territorialized) policies, but that they should also act as a catalyst of bottom-up processes of territorial development by developing partnerships with all relevant local actors (private sector, civil society, etc.)?

The study assessed i) the opportunities and constraints created by the decentralisation reforms; established whether it is a development-friendly national decentralization policy, and one of the building blocks of a national strategy for territorial development, whether it provides a necessary foundation for it. The added value of the assessment was to identify the opportunities and/or constraints created by the decentralization system for the empowerment of local authorities as developmental actors in their own right. (ii) The extent to which national development policy supports place-based, territorial development and the role of local authorities in promoting it.

The study went beyond a diagnostic of the prospects of territorial development, assessing the opportunities created (or not) by decentralization reforms. By definition, if ‘territorial development’ is understood as the difference that empowered sub-national authorities can make, decentralization may generate it only if the central government is also committed to ‘place-based’ (as opposed to ‘spatially blind’) policy making. To that end the analysis looked not only at the country’s decentralization policy, but also at a) whether and how it interacts with the national urban, rural and regional development policies and b) the role these national (urban, rural and regional) policies give to sub-national authorities in their design and implementation. The document has three parts as below:

The goal of this roadmap is to review the current status of decentralisation in Seychelles, with a view of making recommendations towards the development or strengthening of a local government system that would ably respond to the challenges and needs of communities, in order to foster holistic development for their areas. The drafting of this roadmap particularly envisages the availability of potential avenues for support from the European Commission (EC) to strengthen local authorities and their national association.

The European Commission concluded a new financing instrument the Neighborhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) that will guide its next programming of the next 6 years (2021 to 2027). The programming process has already started

with the pre-programming phase that is conducted internally between the EU delegations and the EU headquarters in Brussels, particularly the External Action Service (EAS) in charge of the political dimension of the EU cooperation programme. The pre-programming phase aims at defining the key political objectives of EU cooperation in each partner country.

The in-country programming phase is expected to be completed by end of 2020. Generally, the programming exercise is meant to identify strategic and priority areas and sectors for interventions to be financed by the EU cooperation. The process is to be informed by a political dialogue that would ideally include central governments, local authorities and other development actors, including the civil society and private sector. Among other considerations, it will be pertinent for the short and medium-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic to be fully integrated into the next programming process. This is in addition EU's other geopolitical such as migration, security and trade and the Sustainable Development Goals.

EU delegations in partner countries are, therefore, expected to play a major role in the consultations and discussions that will inform the priorities and programs to be included in the 2021-2027 EU cooperation framework of the respective countries. The consultations and discussion have, however, often been confined to the central government level. The integration of local and other sub national governments will, therefore, present a key innovative feature of the programming process, since they until now continue to be considered by many central governments as non-state actors. The integration will indeed be in line with the EC 2013 Communication on "Empowering local authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes", which recognises local and sub national governments (local authorities) as state actor in their own rights and capacity. This is partially because they ideally work as proximity public authorities besides the central government, as in accordance to the subsidiarity principle.

The Republic of Seychelles is no exception to the list of countries, striving for good governance and attempting to reform its governance structure, to better decentralise and maximise national development implementation efforts. Despite being highly centralised, considerable strides have been made to establish the required framework and mechanisms that would essentially facilitate the processes of decentralisation. In consideration of the fact that the transition from a centrally planned system to that of an autonomous regional/local administration can be lengthy and not without its challenges, the country has embarked on a journey seeking to improve accountability, transparency in local governance and to drive a bottom-up approach in decision-making among local communities. The Local Government Act was enacted in 2015 and ratified in 2019 the '*African Charter on The Values and Principles Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development*'. These milestones illustrate the political commitment that the country has, in pushing the decentralisation agenda within its local settings.

It is against that background that this roadmap has been developed to present a case, as well as facilitate the course of action, in the negotiations intended to allow for the effective involvement of local and other sub national governments in the EU programming process.

THE THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL REVIEW OF KEY CONCEPTS

For purposes of understanding better the status quo, discussions and recommendations presented in this roadmap, it is pertinent to first explore the theoretical and conceptual issues that underlie the foundation and importance of strengthened involvement of local and sub-national governments, in the national development and cooperation policy framework. Prior to further discussion, however, it is worth mentioning that this roadmap is mostly inclined to local and sub-national government structures and not the broader spectrum of local governance. In that light and specifically in the case of Seychelles, the term Local Authorities is generally used to refer to the Districts. We, nonetheless, begin by discerning the conceptual difference between government and governance, since districts are part of the country's local governance system.

The Terms 'Governance' and 'Government'

Although it is not rare for the terms 'governance' and 'government' to be used interchangeably, they are increasingly being deliberately distinguished in recent literature. According to the Oxford Dictionary the word 'government' can mean "the group of people who are responsible for controlling a country or state," or a "particular system or method of controlling a country."¹ More than often, however, application of the word 'government' is, as in term 'local government', extended to other legitimate levels responsible for public service delivery.

The term 'governance' is broader than 'government'. Rhodes finds six separate uses of the term 'governance'. We, however, take interest in the one that looks at governance as a network where both government and non-government actors are involved in service delivery,² thus suggesting the involvement of non-state actors in public sector matters. The term 'governance' and not 'government' is, therefore, particularly used to "denote the interaction between public and private institutions and actors."³ According to Eckerberg *et al*, the common aspect in recent usage of the term 'governance' entails the erosion of the traditional bases of power by the shifting from the traditional to a new way of management or government.⁴ In that context we see that government is part of governance but not vice-versa. As such the theory surrounding the concept of governance remains applicable and relevant to the study of government.

The importance of Local Authorities in the governance system rests upon the hypotheses that government structures poses higher levels of universal legitimacy; already have structures and capacity to build on; are more broadly accountable; are permanent; and can easily be coordinated. As such, this roadmap's advocacy for the involvement of local authorities is not being fronted as a panacea to the challenges being faced by the national development and

¹ S. Wehmeier, (ed) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (New Seventh Edition edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, United Kingdom 2006) 646.

² R.A.W Rhodes, 'The New Governance: Governing Without Government' (1996) XLIV *Political Studies* 652, 653.

³ See Rosanne Palmer, *Devolution, Asymmetry and Europe: Multi-level Governance in the United Kingdom* (P.I.E Peter Lang, Brussels, Belgium 2008) 25.

⁴ Katarina Eckerberg and Joas Marko, 'Multi-level Environmental Governance: A Concept under Stress?' (2004) 9 *Local Environment* 405.

cooperation framework, but rather as a means intended to facilitate the participation and coordination among interests at various levels of government.

Why Local Government?

As is the case with many other development issues, local-level participation in matters of national interest has progressively been presented with ideas that imply a multitude of changes/reforms, some of them being radical. As the concept of state-centrism continues to be attributed as a major cause for the inefficiencies in the management of local affairs, several options have been presented to complement and in some case supplant the centralist paradigm in various public services. Therefore, the question 'why local government?' arises from the fact that advocacy for local level participation in national matters can as well be championed non-state actors in the local governance sphere, including Community Based Organisation (CBO) and Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) networks. There remain wide disparities, however, as to the institutional setup that is deemed likely to return the best results in a sustained and all-encompassing manner.

As has been mentioned, our focus on government structures, and this case the Local Authorities, is not intended to marginalise the potential contribution of non-state actors, but to emphasize that they ought to operate within a permanent, legitimate and robust institutional framework. Although the rapid rise of NGOs, since the 1980s, can be attributed to poor performance of the public sector,⁵ they cannot be a perfect substitute to government structures.⁶ NGOs are faced with the problems of: legitimacy; external control, especially from their funders; not being broadly accountable; and being constrained in mandate.⁷ Indeed, Arts Bas stresses that the power of NGOs should not be exaggerated, as their success depends on partnerships with government and other stakeholders.⁸

Working Through the Local Government Framework

While it appears to be a widely appreciated position that a good national development and cooperation process entails effective participation or representation of local communities, unpopularity of the local government system is mainly founded in the contention that it is merely an extension or localisation of central government. The truth, however, greatly depends on the manner in which the local-central relations are defined. Loose systems such as those based on administrative deconcentration tend to maintain a thin line between local and central government, while the reverse is true under strong devolution models. The central-local relations must be complementary and not based on submissiveness. Saito observes that:

⁵ S. Madon, 'International NGOs: Networking, Information Flows and Learning' (1999) 8 *Journal of Strategic Information Systems* 251; See also, Akbar S. Zaidi, 'NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State' (1999) 11 *Journal of International Development* 259, 261.

⁶ Akbar S. Zaidi, 'NGO Failure and the Need to Bring Back the State' (1999) 11 *Journal of International Development* 259, 261

⁷ *ibid.*; See also, Tina Wallace, 'The Role of NGOs in African Development' in Deryke Belshaw and Ian Livingstone (eds), *Renewing Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy, Performance and Prospect* (Routledge, London 2002) 13.

⁸ Arts Bas, 'The Global-Local Nexus: NGOs and the Articulation of Scale,' 95 *Economic and Social Geography* 498.

“Facilitation differs from domination. Thus, creating effective local facilitation is indispensable, and often this role needs to be played by the public offices.”⁹

Whatever the shortcomings of non-state actor, they nonetheless remain important actors in the advocacy and implementation of local service delivery mechanisms. Their contribution is likely optimised if coordinated through a local government system, which usually has a broader spectrum of services and is also fully accountable to its entire citizenry. Aside from the likely problems of conflict of interest and the unnecessary waste of resources that often arises from fragmented approaches to service delivery, the mandate and capacity of non-state actors is more limited, especially when they operate in isolation. Indeed several writers have questioned the effectiveness of self-standing community based interventions, especially, if based on models that negate the participation of other critical stakeholders such as local government.¹⁰ It is probably because of the advantage of economies of scale that Zaidi contends that, the only alternative to state failure in development related service delivery is the state itself. He also observes that the state should, nonetheless, be reformed along principles of participation under democratic and decentralised structures.¹¹

Definition and Contextual Application of Decentralisation

Prior to delving into the main body of this roadmap which presents a situation analysis followed by a statement on possible remedial actions, it is important to first define or describe the terms deemed to pivotal in the discussion to follow. This is intended to elevate our understanding and appreciation of such terms from both theoretical and contextual points of view, since systems and application of some words and concepts may vary across countries.

Decentralisation: There is no commonly accepted definition of decentralisation. Nevertheless, almost all authors who have attempted to define the concept often hold that decentralisation involves, even if in varied forms, transferring responsibilities, powers, functions and resources from a centre to peripheral governmental institutions.¹² Yet, decentralisation is not meant to deprive the centre of all political powers.¹³ There are certain areas of authorities which are appropriate to the national actors and other areas of authorities which are appropriate to subnational actors. “Both national and sub-national actors have a complementary role to play.

⁹ Fumihiko Saito, ‘Uganda’s Local Council and the Management of Commons: An Attempt of Theoretical Reassessment’ (11th IASCP Biennial Conference, Bali Indonesia, 19-23 June 2006) at p.3.

¹⁰ See, generally, Jesse C. Ribot, Chhatreb Ashwini, etal, ‘Institutional Choice and Recognition in the Formation and Consolidation of Local Democracy’ (2008) 6 (Special Issue) *Conservation and Society* 1 and; Jesse C. Ribot, *Democratic Decentralization of Natural Resources: Institutionalizing Popular Participation* (World Resource Institute 2002); Fumihiko Saito, ‘Community Environmental Conservation in Uganda: Possibilities and Limitations of Decentralized Management’ 6 *Society and Culture* 283.

¹¹ See Zaidi (1999) op. cit., n. 8.

¹² “Decentralisation is commonly regarded as a process through which powers, functions, responsibilities and resources are transferred from central to local governments and/or to other decentralized entities howsoever defined.” Kauzya (2005)

¹³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ‘Local Governance for Poverty Reduction in Africa’ (Fifth Africa Governance Forum, Maputo, Mozambique, 23-25 May 2002)

However, their role needs to be “determined by analyzing the most effective ways and means of achieving a desired objective.”¹⁴

Forms of Decentralisation: Decentralisation takes various forms. The most known ones are deconcentration (also known as administrative decentralisation), devolution (democratic decentralisation) and delegation.

Deconcentration: Also known as administrative decentralisation¹⁵ is the transfer of responsibilities, authorities and resources from a centre to local units of the centre¹⁶. Through deconcentration, powers and responsibilities are transferred to governmental institutions within the jurisdictional authority of the central government.¹⁷

Delegation: refers to a situation where decision-making and administrative authority and responsibility for definite tasks are transferred from a centre to an autonomous sub-national unit¹⁸. The central government defines the powers which are to be transferred.

Devolution or democratic decentralisation: refers to a situation where a local level government is constituted legally as a ‘separate governance body’¹⁹ and that powers and responsibilities are transferred to such unit on permanent basis. This form of decentralisation is referred to as “genuine decentralisation.

Potential Levels of Disjuncture in the Decentralisation Process

According to Andrews *et al* the effectiveness of decentralisation is based on a joined-up flow of service assignments.²⁰ The authors identify three levels at which disjuncture can occur in decentralisation programmes. The first is at the *theoretical level* where principles in normative literature on decentralisation are depicted in terms of the decentralised powers and functions.²¹ It is at this level, for instance, where differences may occur in the conception of the definition, types and dimensions of decentralisation.

Secondly, there is the *legal level*, which encompasses the legal framework that mandates and implements the decentralisation programmes.²² The importance of this level is well presented by the UNDP, which contends that the robustness of local government systems is greatly dependent on the clarity and level of protection embedded in the instruments that establish and

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ‘Local Governance for Poverty Reduction in Africa’ (Fifth Africa Governance Forum, Maputo, Mozambique, 23-25 May 2002)

¹⁵ Manor (1999) ‘The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralisation’, quoted in Junge (2002), *op. cit.*, n. 6, at p.27

¹⁶ De Visser (2005) at 14; Assefa (2003) at 5; Rondinelli & Nellis (1986)

¹⁷ De Visser (2005) at 14; UNDP (1998) at 3; Manor (1999)

¹⁸ UNDP (1999) at p. 7; De Visser (2005)

¹⁹ Manor (1999)

²⁰ Matthew Andrews and Larry Schroeder, ‘Sectoral Decentralisation and Inter-Governmental Arrangements in Africa’ (2003) 23 *Public Administration and Development* 29, 30.

²¹ *ibid.*

²² *ibid.*, at p. 32.

operationalise them.²³ Legal mandate and clarity of power relations and scope of responsibility among different levels of government are not only crucial for the implementation of decentralisation but also in the management of conflicts that arise as a result. This partially explains why the proponents of local government are increasingly seeking for constitutional fortification of complementary systems in public governance.²⁴ Though it is argued that constitutionalisation of decentralisation protects it from various forms of threat, there are always justifications for recentralisation. In some instances functions or services that are legally decentralised are held back by bureaucratic tendencies and direct forms of inter-organisational conflict.²⁵

Thirdly, there is the *practical level* which depicts the degree to which a given component is actually decentralised.²⁶ The transfer of services or sectors does not necessarily spell what components of it are actually decentralised.²⁷ Also, decentralisation of a sector or service may not take into account capacity issues in terms of the human, financial and physical resources, at the disposal of the decentralised units.²⁸ Andrews *et al* further observe that disjoints between theory and reality arise from various factors including intergovernmental politics, bureaucracy and local level incapacities.²⁹ Indeed, political commitment, exhibited in the form and level of support extended by the centre to local units, remains a core foundation for effective decentralisation. As we shall see later, however, several disjoints in the decentralisation process can be attributed to the elevation of state-centrism in local affairs management.

Decentralisation and Local Government in Africa

Decentralisation has, since the 1980s, been embraced by many African countries as a complementary system of government,³⁰ although in different forms. Unlike its earlier forms founded on administrative deconcentration, most of the new decentralisation efforts are linked to state democratisation and poverty reduction programmes that usually entail the transfer of political and fiscal powers.³¹ Notwithstanding this, administrative deconcentration still remains widely practiced.³²

²³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 'Local Governance for Poverty Reduction in Africa' (Fifth Africa Governance Forum, Maputo, Mozambique, 23-25 May 2002).

²⁴ Dele Olowu, 'Local Institutional and Political Structures and Processes: Recent Experience in Africa' (2003) 23 Public Administration and Development 41, 44.

²⁵ Matthew Andrews and Larry Schroeder, 'Sectoral Decentralisation and Inter-Governmental Arrangements in Africa' (2003) 23 Public Administration and Development 29, 30.at p. 36.

²⁶ Andrews *op. cit.*, n. 2.

²⁷ *ibid.*, at p. 30.

²⁸ Dele Olowu, 'Local Institutional and Political Structures and Processes: Recent Experience in Africa' (2003) 23 Public Administration and Development 41, 44., n. 6

²⁹ Andrews *op. cit.*, n. 2.

³⁰ James S. Wunsch, 'Decentralisation, Local Governance and Recentralisation in Africa' (2001) 21 Public Administration and Development 277. See also, J. Kirkby et al, 'Introduction: Rethinking Environment and Development in Africa and Asia' (2001) 12 Land Degradation and Development 195.

³¹ See Jesse C. Ribot et al, 'Institutional Choice and Recognition in the Formation and Consolidation of Local Democracy' (2008) 6 (Special Issue) Conservation and Society 1

³² See, generally, Wunsch *op. cit.*, n. 13.

The renewed interest in decentralisation in Africa is attributed inter alia to: failure of centralised public sector management; the need to address conflict resolution at sub-national levels; the push for local democratisation in decision making and management; pursuance of poverty reduction through equitable resource distribution; the absence of parastatals, many of which have since been privatised or liquidated; economic crisis and structural adjustment reforms; and the realities of globalisation.³³ Without undermining central government roles, Africa's renewed interest in decentralisation can be said to result significantly from donor pressure acting in concert with non-state domestic organisations, the private sector, civil society and various international organisations.³⁴ Nonetheless, not all decentralisation programmes have been initiated by donors. Uganda's decentralisation programme, for instance, was inspired by the informal Resistance Councils' system, which was used by the leadership of the current government to manage areas that were under their control as a guerrilla army, before capturing state power in 1986. In fact, as Uganda's decentralisation programme was being rolled out, government objected to the model that was being pushed by the World Bank, to decentralise up-to district instead of sub-county level.³⁵

Although pressures for its adoption are great, decentralisation faces a number of challenges and criticisms,³⁶ most of which concern its functioning rather than the principle itself. As seen in the discussion on the potential levels of disjuncture,³⁷ the challenges occur at the different stages of implementation as well as at different levels of the participating parties.³⁸ Often the failure of decentralisation is significantly blamed on central government in that, aside from taking a leading role in designing the decentralisation programmes, it possesses and controls the powers and resources that are required to run the programmes. The outstanding issue in this respect is the pseudo devolution of powers and functions, which is usually compounded by poor central-local relations. The principal laws on decentralisation are sometimes ambiguous or inadequate to enable the proper running of the decentralised functions.³⁹ This may be a deliberate outcome or an omission or may as well be due to lack of the required expertise in designing the decentralisation programmes. A study of twenty-one African countries, funded by the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), revealed that although decentralisation was increasingly being adopted, crucial powers and functions were being retained at central government level, rendering the local councils more as functionaries than partners in the entire

³³ Olowu (2003) op. cit., n. 6; See also, Kirkby, op. cit., n. 13; and Olowu Dele, *Decentralization Policies and Practices under Structural Adjustment and Democratization in Africa* (Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme Paper Number 4, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development 2001).

³⁴ Olowu (2003) op. cit., n.6.

³⁵ John-Mary Kauzya, *Political Decentralization in Africa: Experiences of Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa*, (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations 2007) p. 8.

³⁶ See Olowu (2003) op. cit., n. 6.

³⁷ See earlier discussion on 'Potential Levels of Disjoint'.

³⁸ For examples see, David Dent Dalal-Dayton and Oliver Dubois, *Rural Planning in Developing Countries: Supporting Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Livelihoods* (Earthscan, London 2005) p. 27-89; See also, Wunsch (2001) op. cit., n. 13; and Olowu (2003) op. cit n. 6.

³⁹ Wunsch (2001), op. cit., n. 13.

development process.⁴⁰ The 'power and control equation' that defines the relationship between central and local government continues to disfavour the latter.⁴¹ Such a scenario is what another study with similar findings refers to as the 'power retention' syndrome.⁴² Generally, most local government operational challenges such as insufficient human, financial and physical capacity and administrative or political interference are associated with the refusal of the centre to cede reasonable power to the local units.⁴³ This is partially a result of conflicts between national and local socio-economic development needs, which according to Onyach-Oola, are inherent in long-term development strategies, and their resolution may require hard decisions.⁴⁴

Aside from the challenges associated with the design and implementation phases, the tenure of decentralisation in Africa is often under constant threat of being scaled down or completely abolished. Partial or full recentralisation may occur at any stage of the decentralisation process.⁴⁵ Recentralisation is often based on the argument that decentralisation has failed to deliver the expected results. However, such conclusions are often arrived at without taking into account all the factors contributory to the failures. In fact, decentralisation is at times said to have failed even before it actually commences effectively.⁴⁶ In certain cases decentralisation fails to effectively take off due to lack of the necessary institutional or legal adjustments that would facilitate its alignment within the broader context of government. It is at times neutralised by elaborate supervision and control measures by the centre, which often degenerates into interference. At times, decentralisation programmes are too ambitious, in that a lot is expected from them within a short period of time, irrespective of shortfalls in the desired level of the implementation inputs.⁴⁷

The failure of decentralisation programmes should not be blamed on only normative issues or the central government. Crook, for instance, observes that the democratisation process in Africa is facing an 'elite capture' problem. He believes that 'elite capture' has been deliberately constructed by ruling elites to establish and maintain power bases over the grass roots.⁴⁸ Power structures largely remain under control of local elites who are resistant to change and at times disinterested in the development of pro-poor policies.⁴⁹ In their study, Keeley *et al* observed that,

⁴⁰ Dele Olowu, *African Local Governments as Instruments of Economic and Social Development* (International Union of Local Authorities, The Hague 1988).

⁴¹ Morris Odhiambo, Winnie V. Mitullah and Kichamu S. Akivaga, *Management of Resources by Local Authorities: The Case of Local Authority Transfer Fund in Kenya* (Claripress, Nairobi 2006) p. 30.

⁴² James Keeley and Ian Scoones, *Understanding Environmental Policy Processes: Cases from Africa*, (Earthscan, London 2003) p. 172.

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ M. Onyach-Olaa, 'The Challenges of Implementing Decentralisation: Recent Experiences in Uganda' (2003) 23 *Public Administration and Development* 105

⁴⁵ Wunsch (2001) *op. cit.*, n. 13, at p. 277.

⁴⁶ Jesse C. Ribot, *Waiting for Democracy: The politics of Choice in Natural Resources Decentralisation* (World Resources Institute, Washington, D.C 2004).

⁴⁷ See D. Rondinelli, J. Nellis and S. Cheema, *Decentralisation in Developing Countries: A Review of Recent Experience* (Management and Development Series No. 8 - Staff Working Papers No. 581, World Bank 1983) pgs. 62- 69.

⁴⁸ See Crook (2003) *op. cit.*, n. 12, at p. 85.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

certain local councils despite their potential were more pre-occupied with issues of revenue collection than substantially engaging in policy processes.⁵⁰ They argue that democratic decentralisation does not necessarily imply that available opportunities are optimally utilised.⁵¹ In addition, local officials and leaders are at times found to be incapable of performing their duties and instead reign within highly bureaucratic systems that defeat the essence of decentralisation.⁵²

On the other hand, the local communities have their own share of the blame. Although their responsiveness to decentralisation is greatly dependent on awareness campaigns, it can also be influenced by attitudinal, behavioural, and cultural conditions.⁵³ While the 'power lies with the people' idiom is cherished under decentralisation philosophy, the local population at times fails to be responsive to their roles. They may, for instance, fail to exert pressure on the local institutions for accountability.⁵⁴ They may resort to physical or social resistance methods that strongly impact on the decentralisation programmes.⁵⁵

The positive relationship between decentralisation and local government in Africa has generally remained limited because of shortfalls in the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern the interrelationship among various actors.⁵⁶ This is often exacerbated by lack of local capacity, enthusiasm of the local officials and laxity among the local communities. Scepticism is rife as to whether Africa's new decentralisation programmes will consistently stand the test of time as a major platform for local service delivery.⁵⁷ As is the case with potential drivers for effective local participation and representation, successful involvement of the local authorities in the national development and cooperation framework is not only dependent on the policies and laws that create it, but also the entire set-up of the local government system, including its intended beneficiaries. In other words, the involvement of Local Authorities requires not only an enabling legal, policy and institutional framework, but also the capacity, awareness and commitment on the part of all the key stakeholders including the national and local governments and local communities.

⁵⁰ James Keeley and Ian Scoones, *Understanding Environmental Policy Processes: Cases from Africa*, (Earthscan, London 2003), p. 25.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Crook, C. R., 'Decentralisation and Poverty Reduction in Africa: The Politics of Local-Central Relations' 23, *Public Administration and Development* 77, at pgs. 79-81.

⁵³ D. Rondinelli, J. Nellis and S. Cheema, *Decentralisation in Developing Countries: A Review of Recent Experience* (World Bank 1983), p. 30.

⁵⁴ Olowu (2003) *op. cit.*, n. 6; Crook (2003) *op. cit.*, n. 12.

⁵⁵ Olowu (2003). *ibid.*

⁵⁶ United Nations Development Programme (2002), *op. cit.*, n. 5.

⁵⁷ See, for instance, Dele Olowu, *Decentralization Policies and Practices under Structural Adjustment and Democratization in Africa* (Democracy, Governance and Human Rights Programme Paper Number 4, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development 2001).

BACKGROUND

The Seychelles archipelago is considered as a Small Island State, with a population of 98,462 inhabitants and a landmass of approximately 445sq km². The country has limited natural resources and severely lacks economic diversification. It is particularly heavily reliant on tourism and fisheries and as an island state, its economy is physically isolated, with mainland Africa being the closest landmass, located more than 1500 km away. The long distances from principle markets therefore result in high costs of imports and exports, whilst the diseconomies of scale predominantly determine the limits of manufacturing potential of the country. This further contributes to its economic vulnerability to external shocks, as recently exemplified by the current COVID -19 pandemic.

Despite the many limitations, however, Seychelles has managed to achieve a High Human Development Index (HDI) scoring 0.801 (ranking 62nd out of 188 in 2019). The attainment of this ranking is largely attributed to the country's long-standing policies of universal education and healthcare provision, coupled with appropriate social safety nets. Between 2000 and 2018, Seychelles' HDI value increased from 0.712 to 0.801, an increase of 12.6%.

Notwithstanding the achieved social-economic development milestones, however, the Seychelles remains with a number of development challenges that require to be addressed. The most recent national HBS conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in 2013 with the results published in 2015, for instance, revealed that 39.3% of the Seychelles population was living below the established national poverty line of US\$10.76 gross income per adult per day. Addressing such basic necessities to life inevitably requires effective local participation in the development and cooperation framework, which crucially presents the foundation for resource mobilisation and implementation of the required interventions.

Well as the country does indeed have in place a number of mechanisms intended to facilitate local participation, such processes are mostly managed at the national/sectoral level. As argued in the theoretical background to this roadmap, however, democratic decentralisation is a precursor for effective local participation in the national development agenda. Administrative deconcentration, which underlies the current local administration system in Seychelles, therefore, falls short of assuring the local population of their effective representation. Indeed, the district administrations were designed to function more as implementing arms of the central government than structures intended to facilitate bottom-up participatory processes. For that reason, the Government of Seychelles initiated in 2009, a Local Government Reform Programme aimed at introducing a new local government system. The Local Government Act 2015 was enacted and its progressive implementation is expected to entail a number of positive changes along the lines of democratic local governance. As in accordance to the Local Government Act, 2015 (Commencement) Notice, 2020, the commencement date of the Act is 17th February 2020. The new Local Government system is intended to offer a dynamic platform to better scrutinize, ensure transparency and accountability right from the community to Central Government. It is in that light expected to ensure provision of quality services to the people in the community, while involving them in decision making about the development of their communities.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Considering its over dependence on tourism and fisheries, Seychelles' current development model of, is faced with several threats. Indeed, recent diversification efforts tend to point to the fact that the government is aware and concerned about the fragility of its economy. Despite its remarkable social and economic development, the country faces many challenges. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development observes that Income inequality in Seychelles is high and a large percentage of the population experiences multidimensional poverty. It also points at its geographical configuration, small market size and low manufacturing capabilities among the factors that make the country extremely vulnerable to climate change and economic shocks. It goes further to note that the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates these challenges, and highlights the country's dependence on imports for its food security and heavy reliance on tourism for revenues, employment and foreign exchange.⁵⁸

Vision 2033 and the National Development Strategy 2019–2023, which are main national development plans of the country make a realistic assessment and recognize the existential threat these challenges pose to the country's future. They in that respect, set ambitious objectives to address the challenges through economic transformation, innovation, good governance, social cohesion, environmental sustainability and resilience, and people-centred development. Successful implementation of most of those objectives will, however, necessitate a strong and effective local government system. The part that follows, therefore, discusses and makes recommendations on the crucial importance of local government in the national development framework. It also looks at some of the aspects that call for attention in the definition and implementation of an effective local government system.

1.0 Why improve LAs involvement in development and cooperation policy? Rationale of the Road map.

Considering their mandate and proximity to local communities, whenever they exist, LAs are crucially important components of the public service delivery institutional frameworks. It is, therefore, important for them to be effectively involved in the national development processes right from the planning, implementation, review and reporting stages. Since national development process often involve the participation of various actors, its success is inevitably founded on the cooperation among the stakeholders. Usually, such cooperation is not only among between state and non-state actors within a country but also transcends across borders. In many African countries, however, development and cooperation policy is often championed by the central government with limited involvement of the LAs. In most cases the LAs are involved at the implementation phase, whose specifics are at times decided by the central government.

⁵⁸ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development: The Investment Policy Review of Seychelles, 2020

It is in that light that many proponents are increasingly arguing for more LA involvement in the national development and cooperation policy. Indeed, other development partners have gone ahead to restructure their development assistance framework, with a view of making them conducive and more responsive to greater involvement of LAs in the development process.

It is therefore imperative for Local authorities, through their national association, to be integral of the programming process alongside the representatives of the national government, in the dialogue with the EU delegations.

Involvement of the LAs in the EU will, however, require not only an agreement on their crucial priorities but also the approach to the negotiation that will ensue, first with the national government and eventually with the EU. It will be important for the priorities to underlie a clear and credible development agenda that supersedes a mere statement of financial requirements. The purpose of this roadmap is to, therefore present, a working framework against which ADV members will collectively and consistently chart and defend the proposed actions to be considered by the EU programming process.

By putting across their priorities in the national development agenda, LAs will seek for the support and endorsement of the central governments, for purposes of engaging it in a mutually beneficial partnership. This will be important in reinforcing the fact that the intention of the LAs is not to present themselves as competitive but rather a complementary level of government in the development process.

1.1. Main conclusions resulting from the Compendium

The compendium begins by highlighting the background to the decentralisation process and the subsequent current trend of events, in respect to the country's governance structure right from the central to the local level. It notes that the Republic of Seychelles is a young democracy with a history of 22 years of appointed local government. The President who is the Executive head of both the state and the government and is, however, directly elected through universal adult suffrage, for a five-year term. The president appoints the cabinet of ministers, which as to be approval of the parliament. The National Assembly (NA), which is the parliament is unicameral and until recently had a membership of 35:25 members using the 'first past the post' system, followed by up to ten additional members. These are allocated on a proportional basis to all parties involved in the election. This translates to one seat for each 10% of the vote won. All Members of the National Assembly (MNA) whether elected directly or indirectly, have a tenure of 5 years.

As it is indeed observed in the compendium, the constitution of Seychelles has no specific provision or protection for democratic local governance, but rather provides for a local administration system. The Local Government Act 2015 does cater for the creation of district councils, as well as the participation of citizens in the governance and development of their communities and local areas. As the democratisation process of local councils continue, however, the local government political heads and officers continue to be appointed.

All listed by the compendium, the legal/policy framework that drives or relates to local governance is not only narrow, but also falls short of providing for some basic decentralisation principles. As earlier mentioned, the constitution instead provides for administrative deconcentration, with Article 167 (1-2) stating that:

“A law may, for the purpose of facilitating the administrative functions of the State in respect of its social and economic undertakings contained in Chapter III, provide for the division of Seychelles into such number of units, which shall bear such name as the law may specify... A law referred to in clause (1) may provide for the composition and the functions of the units and for all other matters necessary to give effect to the provisions of that clause.”

In consideration of the current decentralisation reform process, therefore, it will be crucially important for the appropriate constitutional provisions to be reviewed with the purpose of ensuring that the ongoing reforms are constitutionally fortified. It will be remembered that because of lack of such fortification, the Local Government Act 1991 was repealed in 1993, upon the adoption of Constitution for the Third republic. This led to the dissolution of the district councils and thus collapse of the local government system.

Although note yet significantly implemented especially in respect to the establishment of democratic local structures, the Local Government Act 2015 is the principle legislation for the local government in the country. It provides for the establishment and functions of the District

Councils; election and qualification of councilors; staff of the District Councils and; the financing mechanism of the councils. The statutory instruments so far made under the Act are the: Local Government Act, 2015 (Commencement) Notice, 2020 which fixes 17 February 2020 as the commencement date of the Act and; Local Government First Election of Councillors Notice, 2020, which notifies that the first election of Councillors to the District Councils shall be held on 21st, 22nd and 23rd days of January, 2021. Also recently adopted is the Local Government Strategic Plan and Implementation Framework, 2018-2022.

It is further noted that government is currently formulating a policy that will guide the Local government reform process. In addition, the government has adopted several national policies whose implementation is not only intended to benefit the local populations but also requires their active participation. These include the National Climate Change Strategy, 2009; Protected Areas Policy, 2013; Sustainable Development Strategy, 2012-2020; Education Sector Medium-Term Strategic Plan; Information Communications Technology (ICT) in Education and Training Policy, 2014-2019; Framework for early Childhood care & Education, 2011; Energy Policy, 2010-2030; Water Supply Development Plan, 2008-2030; Fisheries Sector Policy and Strategy 2019; Blue Economy Strategic Policy Framework and Road Map 2018-2030; National Gender Policy 2016; National Health Policy 2015; National Food and Nutrition Security Policy 2013; Tourism Master Plan, 2012-2020; Strategic and Land Use Plan, 2040 and; Land Reclamation by Private Individuals Policy, 2019.

The compendium observes and concludes that, while several laws have been enacted and policies adopted, their implementation mainly remains a duty of the central government, through its ministries, departments and agents. The role played by the district administration remain very limited, especially on the part of local participation in the decision making processes. Given their current mandate and institutional set-up the district administrations are more of decision implementation arms of the central government, than facilitative hubs for citizen engagement in the local development agenda. Although decentralisation and territorialisation have not been explicitly pronounced in the majority of these national and sectoral plans and policies, the need for decentralised services and place-based approaches are embedded in the national development agenda framework and spectrum. For instance, the two main principal documents guiding the national development agenda, the NDS-2019-2023 and the SSDS comprise of elements that permeate down through to the district levels, targeting communities across the country. The associated Action Plans of the SSDS make provision for district land use plans, which includes the dissemination of amenities such as water and electricity, waste management and natural reserves. The same can be said for the NDS whereby the 6 main thematic pillars offer a wider umbrella for individuals within each community.

The current scenario therefore, presents a clear disjuncture between the national development planning framework and a number of sectoral policies and plans. As such, the disconnect is mostly vivid at the practical level, which is ideally supposed to be guided by the sectoral plans and strategies.

1.2. Main findings from the analytical report

Foremost, the analytical report highlights the fact that Seychelles has a high Human Development Index (HDI). In 2019, its score of 0.801 ranked it 62nd out of the 188 assessed countries. The attainment of this ranking is largely attributed to the country's long-standing policies of universal education and healthcare provision, coupled with appropriate social safety nets, which saw the index improve by close to 13% between a period of 18 years, 2000 – 2018.

The report, nonetheless, goes further to observe that despite the high HDI, Seychelles remains with a number of development challenges, some of which being partially attributed to the lack of a well-entrenched and empowered local governance system. The challenges are likely to be further compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Being a not so diverse economic Seychelles is expected to be more susceptible to the effects of COVID-19 that has already devastated its tourism sector, which is by far, a major source of income to country. International tourism also accounts for approximately 30% of the country's GDP.

Compared to the pre-pandemic projected growth rate of 3.5 %, the projected 15.9% decrease in GDP by 2020, can indeed set in far reaching implications on people's livelihoods, if not appropriately addressed in a timely manner. Considering the impact of such a situation on local communities, the need for their participation in the normalization and prosperity of the economy and, the general national development framework, need not be overstated.

The national development and political economy discourse in the nation building and development process

In order to understand the undercurrents of governance with regards to the decentralisation trends in Seychelles, overtime, it is imperative to consider a number of factors that range from political history, the economy, population dynamics and other social constructs of the country.

On the front of Seychelles Political Economy, the report gives the highlights of the country's nation building process and ably brings out its impact on current trends in the political arena. The country was first colonized by the French in 1770 by a group of incomers consisting mainly of African slaves and French settlers. In 1804, the British took over the colony and between 1811 and 1888 Seychelles was administered by Mauritius. In 1903 that the first executive and legislative council of Seychelles was initiated, albeit being a crown colony. It is, however, worth noting that Seychellois representation on council was for long non-existent. It was the governor to the council who nominated a small number of representatives.

It was not until 1964 and 1967 that the first two political parties were established and the first ever elections of universal adult suffrage were held. On June 29th 1976, Seychelles attained her independence, which saw formation of the First Republic. Hardly after a year, a

coup was successfully stages, giving birth to the Second Republic which was run under a one-party rule. Multiparty democracy was re-introduced under the 1993 Constitution, which established Third Republic.

The long-term income inequality and the associated sharp class divisions carried on from the colonial era was a major precursor in the quest for reform and, indeed a major rationale for the 1977 coup. Thus, the first national development plans (1978–1982 and 1982–86) emphasized social development, which saw significant capital expenditure being extended to school and hospital construction and; the redistribution of income through wages policy and radical reforms in the social welfare system. Schools were decentralized and so were healthcare centers, although their management remained centrally coordinated. Shortly after central government appreciated the necessity to free itself from directing managing many of the social service and productive sectors, in an attempt to improve efficiency and run them on a sounder financial basis. It instead chose to establish, in 1982, parastatals and offload that responsibility to them. Not considering the option of dispersing such responsibility to a local government system can perhaps be understood from the political sense, since countries running under one party rule have often expressed little trust and confidence in democratic local governance.

Trajectory of Recent Decentralisation Reforms

The report observes that for the greatest part of its first two decades, 1900s-2000s, the third republic first focused the national development policy on macroeconomic reforms, a trend that saw a series of economic liberation interventions being adopted. Significant emphasis was placed on a central planning model that embraced market oriented mechanisms under pinned by economic liberalization denoted with privatization. Such a shift was not only considered good for the economy, but also inevitable due to pressure from the IMF that swept across the developing world. The country did not, however, pay sufficient attention to the potential role of the local government system in the formulation and implementation of the reforms. Indeed, the 1993 constitution, which ushered in the Third Republic was the very instrument that repealed the Local Government Act 1991 and the district councils were subsequently dissolved.

In 2009, the Government of Seychelles initiated a Local Government Reform Programme aimed at introducing a new local government system. The reform process has however been to slow for over a decade. Although a new and reasonably responsive Local Government Act was enacted in 2020, it was not until 2020 that the reform process has been given considerable momentum intended to ensure that District Councils are established and operationalised in the first quarter of 2021. Key milestones in the reform process, since the past 5 years include:

- 4th August 2015, the Local Government Act was approved by the National Assembly.

- October 2016, the Department's name was changed back to Local Government. It was earlier, from 1994 to 2006, the Department of Local Government but had, in 2006, been changed to Community Development Department
- December 2017, Developed the Local Government Department Strategic Plan (2018-2022) providing the Department's vision, mission and strategic priorities
- 8th February 2017, the Local Government Reform National Coordinating Committee was established. The Committee's aim is to enhance inter organizational collaboration in the implementation of the Local Government Reform Programme.
- 28th February 2017, the Local Government Department Technical Working Committee was established.
- 25th February to 25th May 2017, District Public Meetings with the aim of sensitizing the general public on the rationale, benefits, functions and proposed structure and role of the District Councils and related organs and matters, were held.
- 30th October 2017, Regional Councils were established
- October to November 2017, a Regional Councils Administrative Framework was developed in line with and in the spirit of the bi-partisan consensus at the national political level.
- 4th June 2019, the National Assembly ratified the African Charter on Values and Principles of Decentralisation, local Governance and local Development and it was approved by cabinet on 20th June 2018
- 13th July 2018, the seven Regional Councils were launched
- 13th February 2020, the Local Government Act 2015 (Commencement Notice, 2020 was published in the Official Gazette
- 20th February 2020, the President of the Republic announced that the District Councils elections will take place on the 21st, 22nd and 23rd January 2021 and the Local Government First Election of Councilors Notice, 2020 was published in the Official Gazette on 6th April 2020

Budget and Source of Funding for Local Administration

As earlier mentioned, decentralisation in Seychelles has since the 1990s been in the form of administrative deconcentration, based on a district administration that are void neither elected councils nor locally appointed and controlled staff. Implementation of the recently enacted Local Government Act 2015 that brings forth several changes toward democratic governance is, however, schedule to commence early 2021 with the election of District Councils. As we, nonetheless, wait to see the level and pace of implementation of the Act, the local administration system remains in place.

Under the current system, the district administrations are fully financed by the central government. The report observes that for each quarter, the local administrations are advanced funds by the Each district receives a yearly allocation of approximately SCR140, 000 to meet basic operational expenses, exclusive of personal emoluments. Another sum of SCR1, 200,000 is allocated to the districts to undertake micro community projects. Once allocated the funds, the

districts exercise control over their allocated budget. They discuss their budgetary forecast with the respective parent Ministry which in turn forwards the request to the Ministry of Finance for approval and financing through the Ministry of Local Government. For the past three years, the local administrations receive approximately 1.6% of the annual national budget, as highlighted in the table below.

Year	Appropriation Bill	Total LA allocation	%
2018	7,951,537,313	133,056,986	1.67
2019	8,457,359,478	141,717,418	1.68
2020	9,292,088,262	148,388,885	1.60

The Office of the Mayor of Victoria (currently the Chair of The ADV) receives an allocation separate from the funds allocated to the Ministry of Local Government and districts. There is, however, no separate budget allocated to ADV, which is composed of 8 districts, each of which is required to use its own budget while participating in the activities of the association, among others.

Potential Opportunities & constraints created by decentralisation reforms

Opportunities	Constraints/Risks
Tailor-made results for the specific local communities. Through the decentralisation process, districts that are experiencing a particular set of problems may need a targeted solution. For example, the touristic districts such as <i>Beau Vallon</i> and <i>Bel ombre</i> facing stray dog attacks on tourists may need particular attention to address the problem at their district level.	Lack of expertise and resources to implement the identified solutions. There may not be adequate expertise at the district level in terms of population threshold (inhabitants) and may require intervention from the national government, especially if not in accordance with the laws and regulations.
Encourage stewardship and project ownership by local authorities and communities	Insufficient resource/ revenues may hinder project and programme execution, leaving communities frustrated and uninterested.
Provides reasonable financial and political autonomy to the districts and local authorities to control and manage their localities	Lack of synergies between local and nationally overarching management plans can result in uncontrolled and unaligned goals and objectives
Develop and increase capacity at district level leading to empowerment and business opportunities	Due to the small size of the country, the district levels may not have the required population threshold
Increased competition amongst districts and promoting higher standard for service delivery, autonomous performance and better quality of life for local communities	Inequality of resources may not be fair to constituents who are generally economically disadvantaged
Promote essence of good governance encouraging free and fair elections of community leaders	Popular community leaders who may be charismatic or endeared by the local community may lack the necessarily skills and attitude to lead.

PART II

This part looks at what can be done on the side of the policy makers at national and EU levels to create an enabling environment for enhancing NALAs in participating in the definition and implementation of national development and cooperation policy, insisting on what added value this participation brings into the efficiency and impact of the aforementioned development and cooperation policy in the country. It addresses at the same time the priority goals of EU cooperation and identifies appropriate mechanisms for LAs to access funding to improve their delivery capacity.

It is in the interest of both the national government and the EU to actively support territorial approaches to local development spearheaded by LAs -as they can assist to unlock the potential of territories and create additional wealth and income. Development-friendly decentralization policies which enhance both the autonomy and accountability of LAs are key to promote place-based dynamics from the bottom-up. Policy makers can engage with EU and secure support at policy level which EU could easily agree on and fund:

1. Priority Principles for Consideration as Foundational Outcomes of the Negotiation Process

Prior to discussion of the status quo and presentation of the subsequent recommendation, it is deemed worthy to first outline the priority principles that ought to be focused on as the core outcomes of the negotiation process. Once achieved within reasonable limits, these principles are expected to be the bedrock for the establishment or strengthening of an enabling environment for democratic decentralised governance

A) Recognition of local governments as public authorities

Due to their legitimacy, mandate and set-up, local governments are ideally expected to be public authorities, especially when they are founded on democratic principles. Such recognition can, however, be more meaningful if well-defined and entrenched in the legal/policy framework, as well as implemented in practice. Outright recognition of the local governments as public authorities does not only make dependable allies of the central government in decision making process, but also serves the purpose enriching the quality of the decisions and their acceptance across the levels of governance.

B) Application of the subsidiarity principle and building synergy within the public governance system

The subsidiarity principle entails that central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed at a more local level. This does not, however, mean a disconnection between the two levels of government. Rather, each of them is expected to play distinctive roles albeit in a complementary and coordinated manner, thus

reliance synergized mechanism often clearly spelt out in the legal/policy framework for public governance.

Entrenching the subsidiarity principle neither begins nor ends with the establishment of an institutional structure for decentralisation governance. It begins with a show of the level of commitment and confidence that informs and guides the decentralisation process, right from the policy formulation process. Nonetheless, since decentralisation is a process that is at times lengthy, entrenchment of the subsidiarity principle is equally a process. That notwithstanding, however, there are a number of basics that ought not to be left-out at the onset of implementing the decentralisation reforms. These include fortification of the decentralisation framework with the constitution; clear definition of the responsibilities and functions of local government in a manner that reasonably disperses power from the centre to the sub-national/local level; having democratically constituted and functioning local authorities/councils; empowering local government through implementation of fiscal decentralisation measures; creating an enabling environment for citizen participation with the local government system and; putting in place transparency and accountability mechanisms.

C) Mainstreaming/engagement of the Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD)

Since the local level is the place where various forms of challenges are manifested especially on the population, development undertakings ought to not be initiated at the local level, but also with the involvement of the local communities. Therefore, an approach to development that is cognizant of territorial considerations is central in having grounded national economic development plans.

It is from that perspective that the concept of Territorial Approach to Local Development (TALD) is increasing gathering traction in national development perspectives. This modality is indeed, consistent with the priority given to the geographic approach prioritized for the 2021-27 cycle of the EU cooperation programming process that is undoubtedly aimed at guaranteeing efficacy, efficiency, and impact on people on the ground. This approach comes in the heels of the sectoral approach that has often been solely privileged by development partners.

It is highly recommended for the above listed three principles to be prioritized and put forward by the LAs, through their national association, to the national government and eventually to the EU delegation representatives, during the whole consultations and negotiation process. Against that background, presented below are highlights of the recommendations made within context of the current state of affairs and on-going decentralisation reforms in Seychelles, as well as the soon anticipated developments in that respect.

2. Recommended short term remedies and long term perspectives for effective decentralisation

Recent developments and commitment tend to point to the realization that Seychelles is delving deeper into the path of its decentralisation reform process, which is anticipated to be peaked with the restoration of democratic district councils, by early 2021. It is important, therefore, for the country to take into account the following recommendations that would likely make a significant contribution towards decentralised governance.

2.1. Recognizing the Local Authorities and the National Association of Local Authorities as Public/State Actor: Which formalization?

Differentiation between state and non-state actors mainly lies in the source of authority from which an action or decision is derived. State actors represent a government entity, while non-state actors do not. Ideally state actors are therefore persons or institutions acting on behalf of a governmental or public body. Non-state actors are the influential organizations or even individuals having the potential to influence the actions of state actors, but not allied to a state.

To be an effective state actor, however, requires legal recognition. Well as national associations for local authorities (NALA) represent subnational governments many of them are neither legally nor in practice, recognized as public/state actors by the respective national governments. In fact, most NALA are registered as non-government associations and therefore, not recognized as state actors much as they are associations of public/government entities. ADV is registered as a Non-Governmental Organization, thus a private, voluntary and non-profit body and is, therefore, not established by law, as a public body.

Indeed, several interviews conducted in the buildup of compiling the analytical report revealed that local authorities feel that they are not considered to be 'development actors', but rather more as 'implementing agencies' of the central government. The 'top down', centrally governed mode of operation allows for limited independence of the LAs in their ideal right as 'state actors'. As such central government is yet to fully consider the added value of territorial approaches to local and, ultimately, national development. Besides the historical aspect and political undertones, especially under the first and second republic, such a stance can probably also be attributed to the size of the country and proximity of LAs to one another. Notwithstanding the aspects of size and proximity, however, Districts have different and at times peculiar needs based on specific locality and traditions. Such peculiarity calls for the specific needs to be tailored within the overarching development plans, policies and strategies. In that right and sense, it is important for the Central government to acknowledge both the common and peculiar roles of LAs in implementation of national plans and policies. Such roles are crucial in catalyzing 'bottom-up' processes of territorial development, which should ideally be based on partnerships with all relevant local actors including the private sector and civil society.

Non-recognition of ADV as public/state actors disadvantages them not only at the national but also international levels. At the national level, for instance, NALAs that are not recognized as

public/state actors have no claim of entitlement in the allocation of public resources. Any support extended to them is by way of courtesy or goodwill that may arise from rigorous negotiations or political pressure. At the international scene, it is extremely difficult if not impossible for NALAs not recognized as state actors to be directly involved in international development and cooperation engagements.

In order to enhance their legitimacy, mandate, opportunities and bargaining power, therefore, ADV ought to be legally and in-practice recognized as public entity. Such recognition will, however, necessitate implementation of several legal and policy measures underpinned by strengthened and streamlined information sharing, consultations, structured dialogues and partnership mechanisms. This will not only call for commitment of political will but also resources on the part of both the LAs and national government.

2.2. Implementing the Local Authorities and the National Association of Local Authorities involvement mechanisms: information, consultations, dialogue, partnership measures

Currently, it is the role of the Ministry of Local Government to implement government policies, regulations and programmes at the district. It is the primary role of the District Administrators (DAs) to inform the Minister of local government about all developments within their respective jurisdictions and to play a leading role in coordinating community projects and programmes. The DAs are also supposed to encourage community participation and maintain service delivery standards.

Under the direction of the responsible ministry or sector, LAs are required to encourage citizens participate in the initial planning stages and formulations of projects, plans, programmes and policies. This usually occurs in the form of public meetings and reviews of documents placed at the District Administration offices. There is, however, neither a clear nor consistent framework that is specifically intended to facilitate such processes.

Considering the current state of affairs, therefore, significant improvement in information sharing, consultations, dialogue and partnership measures between the LAs and central government, is expected to be ushered in by the new Local Government Act 2015. Indeed, Section 26 of the Act states that;

“A Government department or other agency shall, in planning and implementing any development plan having social, economic or environmental effect on any area in the district, consult the District Council.”

Effective implementation of the provision will, however, require significant understanding and commitment on the part of all concerned parties. This is especially because such a shift in the governance system may take time and significant resources to take root

2.3 Funding – Local Government Financing

While commencement of the Local Government Act 2015, is expected to usher in a new fiscal decentralisation regime, it ought to be noted that there remain several gaps that need to be addressed in the path of ensuring that the District Councils that it establishes have reasonable budgetary discretion. For instance, the Act does not explicitly provide for tax revenue for the districts. More so, there also remain reasonable central government control over the District Councils, in respect to the budget approval process.

Although the implementation of decentralisation reforms have yet to be completed in Seychelles, the following fiscal decentralisation aspects are identified as grey areas that require to be addressed, as a matter of priority.

2.3.1 Provision of adequate and unconditional financing to local governments

Local government financing, which is extensively discussed in the analytical report is very critical for the effective performance of local governments. The percentage allocation of funds to the Districts, which has for the past 3 years been averaged 1.6% of the national government, remains far below the level required to meet local service delivery needs. Among others, the new local government Act established district councils whose members (Sec. 4(1)) and functions (Sec. 5(1)) have to be facilitated, and a staff structure whose remuneration has to be paid by the district councils (Sec 17(2)(b)). It is, therefore, important for the on-going decentralisation reforms pay particular to fiscal aspect of the decentralisation process, by providing for more resources and sources of own revenue to the yet to be established district council.

Furthermore, budget ceilings on local governments set by the center limits their capabilities to address critical and special needs in their jurisdictions, and respond to the citizens' demands. In order for local governments to execute their mandates as provided for in the decentralization policy, including localized planning and activity execution, local governments require adequate resources. It is recommended that government considers and prioritizes adequate financing of local governments as an affirmative action. While it is important for the government to plan for the whole country, some districts have unique challenges and needs. To this end, it is also recommended that some of the funding should not be conditional but flexible to allow local governments to prioritize their key strategic areas of investment. This way, local governments will be able to undertake localized planning and perform their other mandates better, as was envisaged by the decentralized policy.

Considering its geographical nature, Seychelles service delivery challenges that mainly accrues from the topography and water expansiveness of the country. Mountainous areas are hard to access in respect to some services, while a number of islands are far from each other, let alone having non-feasible levels of human activity or settlement. Such hard to reach or stay places require significant resources to meet the higher than normal operational costs, yet they are often disadvantaged when it comes the local revenue base. It is therefore imperative for the country's fiscal decentralisation policy to also place commensurate focus on the calculation and disbursement of equalization grants among the disadvantaged Districts.

2.3.2 Exploration of more avenues for increased revenue generation

Among the common challenges facing local governments is the inadequacy of financial resources, a situation that is usually exacerbated by low local revenue bases. Local revenue is important in that it does not only supplement central government transfers and donor contributions, but also accords local governments with greater financial discretion. Currently the main District Revenue Source is inter-governmental transfer from the national consolidated fund. The local revenue base for the district councils being established under the new local government Act is not significantly different from the status-quo. Section of the Act provides that;

The funds of a District Council shall consist of-

- (a) moneys appropriated by an Appropriation Act and paid to the District Council;*
- (b) moneys received from any investment;*
- (c) moneys received in connection with any services, the use of any facility or property of the District Council or the provision of any leisure or other recreational facilities; and*
- (d) moneys lawfully received by way of gift or otherwise.*

Any significant increase in the revenue for Districts will, therefore, largely depend on the extent increment of the appropriated funds. Nonetheless, the revenue base for the district councils will require enlarging. Generating own revenue remains important, because its being associated with greater local discretion, local revenue does not only supplement the total resource development, but also serves the purpose of bridging the critical expenditure gaps arising from the conditions of central government transfers. The local revenue base proposed by the Act includes property related charges, user charges, and Local Service Tax (LST). However, those revenue sources often involve high overhead costs, let alone some of them being difficult to collect leading to poor collections. The solution to the low revenue generation conundrum is to, therefore, review the entire fiscal decentralization policy, including the allocation of taxes between central government and local governments.

2.3.3 Initialization of Local Economic Development

Entrepreneurship is a fairly recent policy area in Seychelles, but the country has been progressively scaling up support for its development, and among the possible catalysts for that process is Local Economic Development (LED). Entrepreneurship will be instrumental in addressing some of the country's development and is undoubtedly the main reason Government has stepped up efforts to strengthen the domestic private sector. Establishment of new businesses not only generates value added, fiscal revenues, employment and innovation, but is also essential for the economic transformation foreseen in the national development plans. Furthermore, it has the potential to contribute to specific sustainable development objectives, such as the employment of women, the youth or disadvantaged groups.

Local Economic Development is defined as a process or development model that entails a tripartite partnership between Local Authorities, the private sector and the community, where all are jointly and collectively engaged in the identification, mobilization, management and

initialization of resources for investment at the local level for the good benefit of the local population. The ultimate aim of LED is, therefore, to stimulate a conducive environment for investment, job creation, increased household incomes and higher revenues for Local Governments, a move that eventually translates into improved livelihoods for the people through poverty reduction and improved service delivery.

Notwithstanding the strong correlation between LED and PPP, the former often tends to be more contextualized with the ambits of decentralised governance and, therefore, more elaborate and explicit as to the roles and intended benefits of each party, from a local perspective. As Seychelles gear up to deepen its decentralisation endeavours, therefore, it is important for the country to prioritise the formulation and adoption of a Local Economic Development Policy.

The national LED Policy has to be formulated taking into account existing policies and legal instruments so as to craft its relevance and consistency to the holistic national development aspirations and the legal/policy regime that governs it. Principle among them, in the Seychelles case, would be the national constitution and policies and laws relating to local government, public finance and procurement, investment, private-public partnerships, tourism and climate change among others. The policy ought to focus on several pertaining and anticipated challenges including;

1. The absence of strategies to stimulate local and community enterprise development.
2. Inadequate infrastructure development, which makes it difficult for entrepreneurs to access business development services and markets.
3. The narrow revenue base envisaged in the Local Government Act, for the yet to be established Local Governments that are thus expected to be over dependence on inter-governmental transfers.
4. Continued orientation of Local Government structures to serve as instruments of service delivery rather than catalysts of wealth creation and economic development.
5. The anticipated limited capacity of LGs to attract and retain competent staff.
6. The need to drum up effective participation and coordination of stakeholders within the LED environment.

Worth noting is the fact that LED policies are not designed to supplant power and roles of the various players within the national investment and development framework. Rather, it assists in sprucing up the local investment climate, as being part and parcel of the national development goal.

2.3.4 Support Private Financing of Public Infrastructure

Seychelles' Vision 2033 stresses that the creation of a strong enabling environment for free entrepreneurship, foreign investment and global partnership is a priority. The NDS 2019–2023 encourages stakeholders to seize opportunities in the blue economy and other sectors through entrepreneurship. Efforts include the adoption of several strategic documents, the establishment of a number of agencies and institutions in charge of MSMEs' support, as well as initiatives to

facilitate access to finance or introduce modules on entrepreneurship education. However, local entrepreneurship is currently very limited

Local Authorities have not embraced private financing of public infrastructure under the pressures of fiscal stress, that is likely to be heightened in the post-COVID era. However, unless a concurrent review is undertaken to align several laws with the spirit of decentralisation, local government aspirations for private financing of public Infrastructure will be hindered, especially in view of several provisions of the PFM Act 2012 and its corresponding regulations. Well as it can be rightly argued that the Act was enacted prior to the on-going decentralisation reforms, it suffices for us to be cognisant of its likely limitations on the effectiveness of the decentralisation process. For example, its provisions on budget execution controls will certainly impact on the leverage required of the District Councils to champion the drive for private financing of public infrastructure. On a positive note, however, the establishment of District Councils as corporate bodies provides them with a chance to initiate Public Private Partnerships, courtesy of Sections 10 and 11 of the Investment Act, 2010. It is, therefore, important for several policies and laws to be reviewed and harmonized within a spirit of decentralised governance. otherwise, local government financing and public infrastructure development that is devoid of private investment negates opportunities for fast, entrepreneur supported and market driven development.

2.4 Strengthen local government participation in climate change adaptation and mitigation

The main pillar of Seychelles' economy is tourism. The country's tourism sector is heavily dependent on the sun, sand and sea and it is the main foreign exchange earner and source of employment. Being an island country, Seychelles is on the other hand also a blue economy dependent on the fisheries sector and sustainable use of ocean resources for its economic growth, job creation and livelihood improvement. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, by 2017, the tourism industry accounted for about 25.6% of the total GDP, while the fisheries sector contributed about 7.7% of total GDP in Seychelles. About 90% of its total population is clustered in the shoreline of the inner islands of *Mahé*, *Praslin* and *La Digue*. These facts and characteristics inevitably make the islands vulnerable and susceptible to Climate Change. They, on the other hand, present a situation that calls for collaborative engagement at all levels of government, since most of the activities undertaken within the framework of those main two sector of the economy are undertaken not only at the local level but also with significant participation of the local communities.

In that regard, therefore, it is crucially important for the climate change management framework to be cognizant of the potential roles and actual needs of the local government and communities that they are intended to serve. Of no doubt local communities bear the brunt of food insecurity, devastating weather conditions, pestilence, and diseases of all types of which are associated with changing climatic conditions. Yet Environment and Natural Resources Management remains among the most underfunded sectors at the local level, save the fact of being appreciated among the sectors that call for reasonable level of decentralised governance. Although the concern climate change continues to be raised mostly at the global level, disasters associated with climate change are local; hence, the need for local governments to find their niche in responding to this

challenge. Incidentally, several studies have revealed that responses to climate change by local people and/or communities in local governments remain low due to insufficient support mechanisms. Persistently disempowered and ill-equipped people in local communities in disaster prone areas have not and cannot handle emergencies in their own settings. The need for building climate-resilient communities and the role of local authorities in such processes cannot, therefore, be overstated.

The place of local governments in Seychelles' current and envisaged institutional framework for climate change management remains low and not clearly defined. Indeed, the Seychelles' National Climate Change Policy 2020 (NCCP), lists the major players in the climate change institutional structure as being, the National Climate Change Committee; Seychelles Meteorological Authority; Seychelles Energy Commission; Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) and; Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Private Entities. It is also not explicit on the subsidiarity concept among its 10 guiding climate principles. While policy objective 3 of the NCCP is "To mainstream and integrate Climate Change considerations into all relevant sectors and all levels of government", there is no clear mention as to the role of local governments in that process. Furthermore, the NCCP envisages the establishment of the National Climate Change Council, but does not provide local government representation on the Council.

Against that background, the call for a review of the climate change management framework remains pertinent, especially in view of the ongoing decentralisation reforms. As District Councils get established, it is important for their existence and roles to be clearly defined and facilitated under the country's climate change management framework. The recognition also ought to be cognizant of the need for access to climate change financing, by the local governments.

2.5 Strengthening transparency and accountability measures

Undoubtedly the issues of transparency and accountability are widely expected to be among core values that give credence to any system of public governance. It is not only necessary but also a right for citizens to know how public resources are utilized, and that bestows upon the public official the unfettered obligation to be transparent and accountable to the population.

2.5.1 Mechanisms of accountability

Democratic local governance requires accountability in a number of directions:

- Horizontally- of the executive to the elected representatives
- Downwards- of the elected representatives to the citizens
- Upwards- of local governments to central government

Using the principal-agent analysis, the principals (citizens) must be able to hold their agents (the elected representatives) to account for what has been done, and the elected representatives (principals) have to hold the executive/paid officials (agents) to account. All this requires

information and transparency, since the typical problem in the principal-agent relationship is often concern access to information, in an understandable, accurate and timely manner.

The following measure are, therefore, important in achieving local accountability:

- Proper mechanisms for reporting by the executive to the elected council;
- Publication of information about local government performance to citizens, in an understandable form;
- Preparation, approval and publication of budgets, showing the proposed use of resources;
- Preparation, approval and publication of accounts in a timely manner, showing the actual use of money;
- Auditing of accounts and publication of auditors' reports.

2.5.2 Strengthening Audit and Inspection

Audit and inspection offer complementary roles in improving service delivery by local governments. Traditionally in most countries, inspectors of government services are concerned with enforcing professional standards, where they are more focused with costs, financial regularity and probity. There has been a shift, where in addition to the traditional areas of focus, auditors are now increasingly being also concerned with issues of performance and appropriate management structures.

2.5.3 Enhancing the Performance Auditing function

For it to be proper, auditing needs to be concerned not just with probity, but also with performance in the use of public funds: whether resources were used effectively to achieve agreed objectives and efficiently or making the best use of resources, a scenario that is at times referred to as 'value for money'. Three key performance areas commonly known as the 'three Es', for its analyses include:

- **Economy:** minimizing the costs of inputs (for a given outputs)
- **Effectiveness:** maximizing outcomes (for a given input)
- **Efficiency:** the appropriate mix of inputs and outputs (or outcomes)

Strengthening the auditing function would therefore necessitate a proper structure and mechanism for performance auditing, where the auditor would perform the following roles that are crucially important to local governments.

- Conducting national studies on best practice
- Publishing papers on performance management
- Collating national data on best value performance indicators

- Verifying performance indicators at the local level
- Auditing the best value performance plans of local governments
- Checking the adequacy of local governments' management capacity and plan to track the aspects of economy, efficiency, effectiveness in service delivery and checking whether best practice recommendations are being followed.

2.5.4 Facilitation of Councilors to Monitor Service Delivery

One of the important pillars for effective local governance is performance monitoring. This entails monitoring the performance of local government councils and providing information about their performance to the electorate. From the downward perspective, the expectation is that citizens should demand for accountability from their local elected officials. While at the horizontal level, the supervision and monitoring of the performance of duty bearers, by elected leaders, is essential to improved service delivery. However, it is not strange to come across systems with poor or dysfunctional service delivery monitoring mechanism for the elected leaders. This can be a result of insufficient funds or lack of proper prioritization by the local councils. Unless well facilitated, elected leaders would not have the resources to undertake one of their cardinal roles of monitoring and reporting.

2.5.5 Strengthen systems of civic engagement

It is recommended that government invests in creating civic awareness of citizens in order to hold elected leaders and the technical staff accountable. Although Seychelles is still in its early stages of restoring democratic local government, the issue of strengthening civic engagement should be prioritized among front running core values of decentralisation to be considered at the on-set ushering in the District Councils. To strengthen accountability at the local governance level, it is necessary to have a civically competent citizenry equipped with the knowledge and tools of civic engagement. On the other hand, local government officials will need to have the resources needed to engage with their constituents.

2.6 Strengthening Citizen Participation in Local Governance

The traditional view of local government is that citizens elect councilors who make decisions about local services and levy local taxes to pay for those services. In that respect, the envisaged role for citizens is to routinely vote in elections and pay their local taxes. This view of local governments is being increasingly challenged. Citizens expect to have a greater say in the running of services that affect them. They must hold those that they accountable for their decisions and action in respect to the utilization of public resources.

Elections are, of course, a key mechanism of accountability for local government. But elections are very basic instrument of choice. Manifestos, if they offer anything at all clearly, offer a package of generalized policies. Elections are often fought on the basis of personalities or other considerations that may be of an economic, social or political nature. More so, electoral practices

are often not inclusive (first-past-the-post elections tend to marginalize women and minority groups as well as the poor) and open to abuse. Once elected, councilors may make decisions in an environment that offers limited opportunities for the participation of others. At times, local level political processes are often dominated by local elites, who may be able to rely on patronage networks to ensure their re-election. Worst still, there might be little or no information to judge the performance of the elected.

Thus, the range of choice is highly constrained, occurs only infrequently (typically, once every after two-five years) and with little information available. Consequently, for decisions on more specific issues, other mechanisms of participation are needed.

2.6.1 Strengthening Participatory mechanisms for community engagement and role of civil society

For purposes of better understanding the place and importance of local participation in governance systems, it is prudent to first appreciate the relationship between the terms 'local government' and 'local governance', which are at times used interchangeably.

Local government differs from local governance in that, the latter which is broader, refers to:

“...the processes through which public choice is determined, policies formulated and decisions are made and executed at the local level, and to the roles and relationships between the various stakeholders that make up the society.”⁵⁹

The definition rightly points to the fact that local governance embodies processes and institutions of both the state and non-state actors. Key among the roles of non-state actors is to participate in decision making processes and, on the other hand, hold the duty bears accountable for the decisions and actions. It is against that background that the need for representative democracy emanates, against the thinking that locally elected leaders will always present the views of their constituents or stand by them.

In view of the limitations of representative democracy, however, more direct participation of citizens remains a crucial necessity. This particularly is the case when dealing with local issues in greater detail, something that cannot be ably without the participation of those that are directly concerned. Strengthening participatory mechanisms calls for a number of measures, most of which have to be bonded together by the core values of trust, confidence, timeliness, knowledge sharing and, reasonable access to accurate information. Key among the core values is the institution of democratic local governance and as such, local democracy needs to be open to and responsive to civil society interaction.

⁵⁹ Miller, L. K., 'Advantages and Disadvantages of Local Government Decentralisation' (Caribbean Conference on Local Government & Decentralisation, Georgetown, Guyana, 25-28 June 2002)

Democratic local governance is not only manifested through local official and elected leaders executing their role, but also the active participation of non-state actors, often lumped together under the umbrella of civil society. The Civil Society is often constituted of CBOs (Community Based Organizations) or GROs (grassroots organizations); NGOs (Non-Government Organisations -national, local and international); Private businesses and business organizations (e.g. Manufacturers Association and National Chamber of Commerce); Trade Unions (although these often represent only those in formal employment) and trade associations of the informal sector; Co-operative Societies (unless they are part of the state structure); Religious organizations/Faith Based Organisations (FBOs); Traditional/cultural leaders (Kings, chiefs, elders, etc.); The media – local and national press and broadcasting media.

Well as the district councils are yet to be established, the civil society has always been in existence. The most crucial factor, therefore, is to work toward the strengthening and most particularly, as to its role in the new local governance dispensation. As such, deliberate efforts will have to be concerted towards ensuring the establishment and thriving of a structured dialoguing mechanism for productive interaction between state and non-state actors in the local governance space.

Section 5(1)(h) of the Local Government Act requires district councils to “engage and mobilise the population to participate and promote community spirit and sense of ownership amongst the inhabitants”. That notwithstanding, it is important for the Act - being the principle law on local government, to have explicit provisions on the mechanisms for civic engagement.

2.7 Institutional Strengthening - Develop Capacity of LGs and their NALAs

For local governments to be effective, they must have the capacity to undertake mandate. This means that in addition to being facilitated by central government and development partners, they must, on the other hand, be able to play their own roles in the institutional strengthening process. This includes enlarging their resource envelop by generating own revenue; being responsive capacity building undertakings; putting to good and accountable use the support extended and; engaging all key stakeholders in the institutional strengthening process.

Since it is expected Seychelles is geared towards having fresh office holders, as well as new district councils, challenges relating to institutional functioning are expected. The level of their impact on the new local government system will highly depend on the preparedness of the stakeholders at the centre of the local government reforms.

In consideration of their mandate and mode of operation, local governments are often more demanding than local governments in terms of institutional setup. Conducting a Capacity Needs Assessment for each local government is, therefore, crucial in informing the National Local Government Capacity Building Plan, which would detail the form, extent and pace of the institutional strengthening to be undertaken across the board. The new district councils inevitably require staff to occupy vacancies in the new establishment; need their staff and councilors to be inducted on their roles; have the constituents sensitized on the dynamics of the

new dispensation and; require the officers and elected leaders to be facilitated in their work by way of office space; equipment and; operational costs, among others.

On the other hand, it is also important to extend institutional strengthening to the national association that brings together the Local Authorities in the country. Because national associations often participate in the institutional strengthening processes of their members, it is necessary for their capacity to be enhanced, as well. Besides operational capacity, the national association needs to have the legitimacy, ability and skills to enable it articulate matters of concern or interest to their members. The association should be able to engage the national government, development partner and civil society on behalf of its members.

In the case of Seychelles, it is noted that the Association of the Districts of Victoria (ADV) brings together 8 districts. Well as the ADV framework has, overtime, been utilized even for the benefit on non-member districts, there is now an increasing call to have an association for all the districts. With the establishment of district councils, the need for having an a national-wide association ca not be overstated. Once established, the councils will, have to discuss among themselves with a view of charting a roadmap for the establishment of a national-wide local government association.

2.8 The localization of Sustainable Development Goal: Role of Local Authorities in the implementation of the SDGs.

As indeed observed by the UCLG report of 2017 on the Way Towards the Localization of SDGs by National and Sub-National Governments,⁶⁰ it will not be possible to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without their full ownership at local level and by civil society. For that reason, city, local and regional government networks are working hard to contribute to awareness raising, alignment of work plans, learning exchange and local monitoring and reporting by developing global, regional and national systems of 'localization'.

Such efforts will, however, be more fruitful and decisive with a clearer recognition of the role of sub-national governments in policy making and change. Sub-national governments need to be better integrated in the institutional mechanisms responsible for SDG up implementation, including coordination and follow-up, at all levels.

An integrated approach towards the achievement of SDGs offers an opportunity to explore innovative strategies and relationships that would reinforce dialogue and collaborative mechanisms across all level of government. This is not only indispensable for the achievement of the SDGs but also provides an unprecedented opportunity to update governance mechanisms and make them fit for so as to make local communities more resilient and able to face future challenges.

⁶⁰ UCLG, National and Sub-National Governments on the Way Towards the Localization of SDGs report, 2017

National governments should, therefore, consider to put in place or strengthen an ambitious legal and administrative framework that facilitates multilevel governance, deepen sub-national governments' capacities and thus, reduce on any existing institutional gaps in the aspects of administrative, fiscal, and political capacity. Indeed, progressive and effective decentralization should be at the core of the creation of an 'enabling environment' for sub-national governments, and for the localization of the SDGs. Specific attention ought to, among others, be drawn to the financing of the SDG localization process, where intergovernmental frameworks will inevitably be crucial in ensuring that subnational governments are adequately empowered, funded and incentivized.

2.8.1 The Role of Local Authorities in the implementation of the SDGs.

Since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015, the Government of Seychelles has undertaken several measures towards integrating SDGs into national development frameworks and national policies. SDGs have been incorporated into the principle planning framework - "Vision 2033" and the National Development Strategy 2019-2023. Vision 2033 calls for Seychelles to steer its development "Towards a sustainable and inclusive future" for all Seychellois, with emphasis on ensuring broad inclusion. The NDS 2019-2023 is founded on six thematic pillars (Good Governance, People at the Centre of Development, Social Cohesion, Innovative Economy, Economic Transformation, Environment Sustainability and Resilience), and each of them has anchored SDGs within its core guiding principles.

Despite the relatively impressive achievements in SDG implementation, however, Seychelles has faced notable challenges in its efforts to adopt and implement sustainable development pathways. Having attained "high-income" status in 2015, Seychelles finds itself on an equal footing with countries that are more developed and equipped to handle emerging challenges and technological disruptions. As a "small" country (in terms of population), Seychelles has limited human and financial resources to effectively implement, monitor and evaluate the 2030 development agenda. Such a lack of human resources is inevitably more pronounced with in the local authorities and at the community level.

Reporting on the SDGs compels Seychelles to produce various sets of data, which may not necessarily be readily available. The recent SDG Baseline Assessment Report 2019 identifies the gaps that exist in data collection and dissemination. The report further highlights the difficulty, which stakeholders encounter in obtaining reliable statistics, while often the required data is indeed absent. It was, on the other hand, reported that data collected is in many instances not dependable to allow for in-depth data analysis. Consequently, the lack of quality and disaggregated data impairs policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation. There is thus a need for more robust data collection, processing and dissemination efforts. The study goes on to suggest the need for urgent revamping of the data collection strategy, so as to enable Seychelles report better on its commitments. At present, the National Bureau of Statistics is the only institution engaged in the generation of data nationally. Although other governmental bodies do collect data, this is done using systems and methods suitable for their needs, which are not

necessarily effectively compliant to the SDG reporting format. A similar situation is likely for the emerging local government structure and will, therefore, need to be addressed as the local governance reform process take root.

2.9 Recognising and strengthening the role of LAs in the national Development Framework

The development and cooperation agenda of Seychelles consists primarily of an overarching national framework that has limited cognizance of decentralisation, as a complimentary system of government. While the need for decentralised services, territorialisation and placed-based approaches is highlighted in the national development, this have not been explicitly pronounced in the majority of the national and sectoral plans and policies. For instance, the two main principal documents guiding the national development agenda, the National Development Strategy (NDS)-2019-2023 and the Sustainable Development Strategy (SDS) comprise of elements that permeate down through to the district levels, targeting communities across the country. In that light, the associated Action Plans of the SDS make provision for district land use plans, which includes the dissemination of amenities such as water and electricity, waste management and natural reserves. Also, the six main thematic pillars of the NDS present a framework that is cognizant of the need for local community participation in its processes.

Under stewardship of the Ministry of Local Government, the district administrations are the link between local and central government in the implementation of the national plans and strategies. Though centrally governed district administrations play a major role in coordinating community projects and programmes, within their respective jurisdictions. Through the same system that district administrations are collaboratively linked to elected authorities to form partnerships that facilitate community participation.

Notwithstanding its achievements, however, the current institutional arrangement takes the form of administrative deconcentration, which presents several limitations. That is especially in respect to the practice of democratic decentralised governance whose key tenets are focused on building governance structures founded on effective representation and participation in decision making processes. Certainly, limitations of the current governance system impacts on the effective participation of the local administrations and their communities in the national development and cooperation formulation and implementation framework. As the on-going decentralisation reforms take root, therefore, there is an urgent need for the yet to be established local councils to thrive in an environment that facilitates their participation in the national development agenda, effectively.

PART III

3. Enhancing Local Authorities' Meaningful Involvement in Development and Cooperation Policy: Actions Expected from the Local Authorities and the National Association

Recent strong socio-political demand to establish local governments triggered sweeping institutional reform leading to the adoption of institutional and legal frameworks that have served as a basis for deepening decentralization, in Seychelles. This institutional reform combined with strong commitment to political, administrative and to some extent, fiscal decentralization, underscores the political will to give local governments direct and transparent power in the management of local affairs. Among others, the goal is to create and strengthen the role of local governments so that they can ensure better people's participation in the management of public affairs and greater democracy in decisions on the decentralized provision of public services.

However, meaningful involvement of LAs in development and cooperation policy requires a concerted effort of action from two sides. That is the policy and decision-makers at national level and development partners on the one hand and; LAs and their representative national associations on the other. LAs and NALAs should, therefore, be ready and able to fulfill a proactive and leading role in this process. Working towards ensuring meaningful involvement of the LAs in the development and cooperation decision making framework entails a number of issues and processes, a number of which are explored in the following sections.

3.1 Organizing a meaningful and competent voice of Local Authorities: The critical political and institutional role of ADV

Having been established on 14 December 1994 the association of the Districts of Victoria has been in existence for 26 years. It was established shortly after the adoption, in 1993, of Constitution for the Third republic which repealed the Local Government Act 1991. For its entire life, therefore, ADV has operated under a system of administrative deconcentration, with all its 8 members being district administrations. This means that the reforms under which the new district local governments are being established equally calls for changing roles and operations of ADV. Inevitably, the changes also point the need for changes that will see the establishment of as association for LAs, at the national level.

Due to the adoption and implementation of decentralization (shift of responsibilities from the national to the sub national and local governments) in most African countries, local authorities have become more important, in that they are increasingly bearing a more direct impact on the living conditions of the local people. As such LAs and their associations need to have varying knowledge and capacities. This includes, the capacity and resources to communicate with national policy makers and other stakeholders, especially the development partners, including the EU and; also be able to formulate policy messages, as well as implementable actions plans. In this part, attention is placed on the key issues identified in the SWOT analysis of ADV.

In comparison to many African countries with relatively developed systems of local government, Seychelles has limited experience with the decentralization framework and process. For close to three decades, the country's local governance system has been championed through administrative deconcentration based on district administrations managed by the national government. ADV has since then been the only active association for LAs, and it brings together only eight of the districts. The Assembly on which all districts are represented is an organ of government and, therefore, not an association through which districts can independently run their affairs. As such, the country can be said not to have had a conducive ground to facilitate meaningful integration and co-ordination between the units of government functioning at the grassroots, partly because the very concept of local government and its structure have for long not been well conceived and developed in the country.

The establishment of a new structure for local governance is, therefore, expected to provide a suitable environment that will reveal the need and thus, re-awake the demand for a national-wide association for the districts. As is already the case with ADV, the challenges that the national-wide association will likely face in playing its critical political and institutional role will mainly concern capacity building matters in the aspects of leadership, management and technical capacities. The major priorities that will require to be addressed include:

1. Limited power of lobbying and advocacy on national policy dialogues,
2. Working environment: inadequate institutional infrastructure (office, office facilities, materials etc.);
3. Weak management of information system;
4. Lack of manpower in line with the expected size and quality of the structure;
5. Limited access to cooperation and communication with development partners;
6. Limited access to continental and international linkages;
7. Lack of enhanced resource mobilization capacity; and
8. Inadequate resources to implement desired plans;

As a national association of local authorities in the country, ADV of the new association will need to have an added responsibility of serving as a platform for research, policy dialogue, cooperation, knowledge, experience and practice exchange of local authorities. In particular, the national association ought to capacitate itself and be able to play the following specific roles;

1. Support the members (LGs) in appreciation, understanding, utilization and compliance with the National Development Plan (NDS) and its guidelines, in order to ensure that local plans and budgets are in line with the SDGs and NDS targets.
2. Assist in the design of a performance assessment/ peer review mechanism for local government.
3. Advocate on behalf of the LGs for the central government (CG) to address the key issues highlighted part II. This could be achieved by preparing and presenting issue papers/briefs

4. To engage in raising awareness of their members on SDGs and help the members localize SDGs and reflection of SDG targets in their development plans. LGs should be supported to develop the SDG data book detailing the status of LGs in achieving SDG targets.
5. Facilitate down ward accountability through networking with relevant government agencies to organize effective community accountability platforms in which the leaders provide social accountability to their electorates.
6. Participate in the formulation of manuals and working guides of the Councils, such as the Standard Rules of Procedure and support the upcoming Councils to adopt and customize them to their local needs.
7. Participate in the induction of new councilors and staff
8. Assist with the Organisation of Needs Assessment exercises and the development of plans to address the identified gaps
9. Provide technical support to the District Councils in the execution of their duties, including the mobilisation of resources.
10. Encourage and assist the new leaders to develop action points that are achievable within the 1st year, as a social contract with their electorates. These commitments should be disseminated to the communities
11. Lobby for increased wage allocations to LGs to enable them fill their positions;
12. Lobby for the establishment of a structured negotiation platform for central and local government and thereby assist with the process of establishing a local government negotiation team
13. Supporting LG to develop and implement Local Revenue enhancement plans
14. Promote Local Economic Development and generally, the Territorial Approach to Local Development.
15. Provide the district councils with the necessary legal advice, whenever need arises
16. Ensure that local governments are aware and participate in global development agenda
17. Link the association and its members to global networks with interest or stake in local governance and development

3.2 Capacity Building

In order to play its roles, including those listed above, the NALAs will require to have sufficient and continuously enhanced Leadership; Management and; Technical capacity.

Leadership capacity: The leadership capacity requirements spectrum includes formulation and propagation of an authentic political vision and mission, based on the knowledge, expertise and close relationship to members; cooperation with and relation to relevant stakeholders, including national policy-makers CSOs, the private sector, development partners, etc.; inspiration and motivation of relevant stakeholders; development of a strong reputation as a reliable and knowledgeable partner. In accordance to the Local Government capacity building policy that is spearheaded by the Ministry of Government, Local leaders in Uganda are often inducted on their roles shortly after taking over of office. The often two-day training is, however, not sufficient to

effectively cover the required knowledge and skills spectrum. It is also often more focused on the roles and responsibilities of local leaders and, therefore, places more attention on the part of leadership skills. Leadership capacity is particularly important for the leaders that take on extra duties to leader their colleagues at the national association level. In order to effectively play their roles, local leaders elected at the NALA level require advocacy and organizational capacities, since a significant part of their work entails lobbying, advocacy and institutional strengthening of the association. Therefore, the National Associations, should not only focus on training of councilors at the local government level, but also their own political leadership structures.

Management capacity: It entails support to the NALAs governing structures; managing and enhancing NALAs staff; developing NALAs standard of operations. In order to meet their obligations and mandate as the overarching voice for their members, NALAs require to have sufficient management capacity. They need to have in place not only governance structures and staff to advise and implement their decisions and aspirations, but also the facilitating requirements in the form of tools, equipment and documentation. Well as ULGA recently restructured its staff structure, it also requires more office equipment and means of transport. It is also noted that some of its critical positions in the staff structure are either vacant or not competently staffed partly arising a high staff attrition level. The rather high staff turn-over can probably be owed to consistent shortfalls on the part of the associations unfavourable resource base. On the other hand, well as UAAU has an elaborate governance structure, it is critically understaffed and its structure needs to be revisited in order to be re-aligned to the growing and changing needs of its constituents. Its resource and thus operational base is equally insufficient not only in terms of finances but also standard operational documentation. The need for strengthening the management capacity of both associations is therefore evident and critical.

Technical capacity: This entails training of NALAs staff on Policy and political frameworks (understand how the policy system works and how policies are developed); understanding Policy cycles (know the relevant policy cycles on local and national level in order to understand when advocacy activities need to be organized to create impact); Strategic partnerships: be aware of the relevant stakeholders in the field and know their role and position; know which stakeholders might support (allies) or oppose (enemies); motivate, inspire and stimulate potential allies to support specific advocacy activities. It is therefore very necessary for the NALAs to not only acquire technical capacity but also maintain through training and continuous mechanisms that promote staff motivation and, thus organizational morale. The recruitment and staff development policies and practices of the NALAs should, therefore, not only focus on the 'quality at the gate' principle but also emphasize motivation schemes. As is the case with the first two form of capacity needs, however, the resource envelops of both ULGA and UAAU must be significantly enhanced. Since the early 2010s, ULGA has attempted to address the two casual-effect challenges of technical capacity and financial sustainability by putting in place a charge per service consultancy arm, the Local Government Consultancy Bureau. Its success has however continued to be hampered by policy challenges and the dependence syndrome of its members. Considering their roles, responsibilities and aspirations, it is practically difficult and not feasible for the associations to recruit and maintain a staff model that is significantly responsive to their broad mandate. The gaps could, however, be ably addressed by adopting the practice of out-

sourcing as need arises. The other option internal resourcing from within the staff of their members, would be rather expensive because of travel costs and unreliable because of extra load and conflict in the chain of command between the NALA and parent employer.

Conclusion

Meaningful involvement of LAs in development and cooperation policy requires input and action from two sides. That is the policy and decision-makers at national level and development partners on the one hand; and LAs and their representative national associations on the other hand. LAs and NALAs should therefore be ready and able to fulfil a proactive and leading role in this process. Different aspects are key when it comes to the development of meaningful LAs involvement.

In order to effectively lead their members through the engagement process, NALAs must be well equipped in terms of leadership, technical and managerial capacity. Both UAAU and ULGA have shortfalls in meeting the outlined capacities, though not in equal terms. Elevating their capacity does however require proper planning and mobilisation of human and financial resources. Nonetheless, it is possible and important for the capacity enhancement undertaking to start within the framework of existing structures and resource envelop. Such re-organization will be critical is setting stage for the mobilisation of external support.

ANNEX I:

Actions/Tasks to be undertaken towards the integration of ADV and LAs in the 2021-2027 programming process of the European Union (Dates and Responsible centres to be filled by the NALA)

	Action/Task	Timeframe/ Date(s)	Responsible centre
1	<i>Get prepared for the political dialogue through developing a strategic partnership between the national government and the LRGs through their national association or representatives of local authorities</i>		
a	Get informed on the priorities established by the EU during the preprogramming phase. This information shall be collected in the services of the ministry serving as the national authorizing officer of EU cooperation and/or at the EU delegation upon demand by the national association;		
b	Finalize the roadmap and negotiate its approval and integration among the priorities of EU cooperation with the national authorities and notably the ministry of local governments and the ministry serving as the national authorizing officer of EU cooperation (NAO);		
c	Conclude an agreement with the national government recognizing the national association of LRGs among the implementing agents of EU cooperation		
2	<i>Be proactive in LRGs participation in the programming consultation process so that it leads towards an innovative process of political dialogue in the definition and implementation of EU cooperation</i>		
a	Engage the national government to reach an agreement that they will participate together in the consultations and dialogue processes together as public authorities.		
b	Sensitize the EU delegation on the new dimension of future cooperation (with the assistance of UCLG Africa secretariat and regional offices as appropriate in case of difficulties of dialogue on this matter with EU delegations).		
c	Make contact with the EU delegation to be aware of the calendar of the consultations process to be launched		
	<i>3) Advocate for the mainstreaming, integration and engagement of LRGs in the full spectrum of the new cooperation priorities</i>		

a	Organize a national meeting or webinar to mobilize the members for them to be fully informed of, and take active part in the programming process of EU cooperation		
b	Encourage members to own the LAs roadmap, keep them regularly informed of progress made in the consultations and dialogue with the national government and the EU delegation, and insure that they bring inputs in the conversation		
c	Support members to become familiar with the notions of territorialization of public policies and territorial approach to local development, and be exposed to methods, tools and experiences showing the practicability of these approaches, with the support and assistance of UCLG Africa and other partners, as appropriate		
4	<i>Engage lobbying and advocacy actions to conclude a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) between the National Association of LRGs and the EU delegation for the implementation of the Local Authorities Roadmap during the 2021-2027 European Cooperation Round</i>		
a	Prepare a plan for the development of institutional capacities of the national association of LRGs with the support of UCLG Africa		
b	Work with UCLG Africa/ALGA to develop and deliver training modules on structuring and capacity-building of the LRGs and their national associations		
c	Develop with the support of UCLG Africa systems of exchange of experiences, methods and tools on existing and innovative funding mechanisms, allowing the European cooperation funds to reach the LRGs budgets and projects (special funds, budget support, unconditional and conditional grants, etc.)		

ANNEX II

SWOT Analysis of the national association of local authorities (Association of the Districts of Victoria)

Strengths

- Operational structure in place
- Existing legal instrument
- Recognised as entity that can lobby and effect change
- Receive allocated budget
- Good community cohesion for some districts
- Existence of Boards, sub groups, such as district Task force, Group for the elderly, Youth group & gender based groups
- Politically stable system
- Participatory approach to development

Weaknesses

- Lack of ownership for programs and projects, resulting in reliance on central government for effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Deemed as 'politically affiliated' due to history of one party state using LAs to push for political agenda, therefore general lack of trust
- Inability to resolve disputes due to unclear guidelines with regards to operational powers
- Unable to raise revenue and invest in capital projects

Opportunities

- Increase participatory approach in development plans and strategies and advocate for localized implementation of national and global agendas
- Consolidate on existing network, especially internationally to lobby for support towards common goals and exchanges
- Increase involvement in expediting service delivery at a district level, as illustrated by post Covid-19 effects.
- Use community cohesion to enhance collaboration and execution of programs and projects
- Improve and invest in the e-government to ensure that the districts are equipped to cater for technological advancement in service delivery
- Investigate business and financial possibilities for revenue collection and administration

Threats

- Reluctance to share power and control by the LAs staff in the decentralisation process
- Conflict of interest between LAs and central government or any other stakeholders
- Lack of uniformity in services and provided opportunities between LAs
- Lack of sufficient funds required for effective governance
- Limited access to information at a local level

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