

**Ministry of Local Government, Sports and Culture
Department of Sports and Culture**

**THE CULTURAL POLICY
OF
THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES**

The Cultural Policy
of
The Republic of Seychelles

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Foreword

Preamble

Seychelles has a rich and unique culture that developed as a result of contact between descendants of various ethnic groups from Africa, Europe and Asia. History, and in particular the blending of cultures, has led the Seychellois people to adopt Kreol, English and French as national languages.

Our pristine environment has played an important role in inspiring the Seychellois people to develop a unique expression that today is described as “Kreol” in all its variety and forms.

Culture can be generally defined as the way of life of a society or a particular group of people, with their shared set of learned manners, customs and beliefs.

Our culture, which includes our ideology, our way of life, our entertainment and the manner in which we give outward expression to these, is what makes us Seychellois and gives us our identity as a people.

Access to cultural development and expressions is the right of every citizen. Through this policy, the Government intends to broaden cultural spheres with the aim of promoting cultural awareness in order to cultivate the cultural pride of the people of Seychelles.

Article 39 (1 & 2) of the Seychelles Constitution (June 1993) states:

The State recognizes the right of every person to take part in cultural life and to profess, promote, enjoy and protect the cultural and customary values of the Seychellois people.

The State undertakes to take reasonable steps to ensure the preservation of the cultural heritage and values of the Seychellois people.

The overall responsibility for the implementation of the government's cultural policy falls within the mandate of the ministry responsible for culture. It is also responsible for ensuring that culture will encompass all aspects of our national life, and will also invite other ministries to collaborate in this national endeavour. The ministry will also recognise the supporting role of the private sector in the implementation of the national cultural programme.

The Policy

The Cultural Policy of the Republic of Seychelles is based on three underlying principles:

- Democratization of culture.
- Continuing development of our culture.
- Protection, preservation, and promotion of the natural and cultural heritage.

The Cultural Policy is the document that will guide all cultural institutions and other ministries and partners in the formulation and development of cultural activities and programmes in Seychelles.

Aims of the Cultural Policy

1. Promote and develop a Seychellois Kreol identity.
2. Protect, safeguard, and develop the moral, ethical, and spiritual values of Seychellois culture and dignity, including the protection of intellectual property, and the cultural, as well as the natural heritage of Seychelles.
3. Preserve our traditional culture and values alongside contemporary lifestyles and developments, in order to ensure the preservation and protection of our small island culture against all adverse cultural industries, national and international.
4. Ensure that the population of Seychelles participates, contributes, as well as benefits from the promotion and development of Seychellois culture.
5. Ensure the access and availability of the arts and culture to all, through the various cultural institutions.
6. Ensure the promotion of a cultured nation by providing access to knowledge and information in all fields of the arts and culture.
7. Provide access to education and training in the arts and culture at different levels.
8. Keep abreast with, and provide access to information, communication, technology, (ICT) for the furtherance of our cultural development.
9. Encourage the participation of all communities living in Seychelles, in all artistic and cultural exchanges, as well as foster cultural tolerance in order to enhance inter-cultural understanding, innovation, peace, and harmony among the Seychellois population, for social and cultural cohesion.
10. Develop a cultural marketing strategy in order to generate revenue as a means of contributing to the national economic growth and development.
11. Develop cooperation with other countries and organizations for the promotion and development of the arts and culture.

Policy Statements

Article 1: Promotion and development of a Seychellois Kreol identity

- Promote and develop a Seychelles Kreol identity based on our traditions, values, customs, beliefs, languages, and way of life.
- Promote the linguistic, social, creative and aesthetic values of the Seychellois Kreol language alongside English and French as recognized national languages by the Constitution of Seychelles.
- Protect our Kreol values with a view to creating and sustaining an appreciation of the same.
- Promote our thinking, wisdom, and our culture, to the rest of the world, in our maternal and other languages.
- Promote the understanding and appreciation of the Kreol culture from the earlier stages of formal education, among all Seychellois.
- Promote awareness, understanding and respect of our biodiversity through museums of natural history.
- Promote cultural artifacts for public viewing through a proper preservation system, and develop programmes that will create awareness in the general public on the importance of their preservation.
- Encourage Kreol Studies in all academic fields for the development of a Kreol academia.

** Articles 2 & 3: Protection, preservation and development of Seychellois Kreol culture and values*

- Protect and promote the cultural values of the Seychellois people through the preservation of the national cultural heritage, making it accessible to all segments of the Seychellois community.
- Preserve the various aspects of the Seychellois way of life, and promote and develop the cultural landscape and the natural heritage as assets for cultural tourism.
- Promote the multi-faceted and positive dimension of the Seychellois Kreol culture, both traditional and contemporary.
- Establish cultural agencies in Seychelles and abroad.
- Develop programmes in order to preserve our cultural artifacts and documents, as well as our cultural landscapes.
- Protect all intellectual property and copyright.
- Establish national legal deposit legislations for the acquisition and protection of printed material.
- Protect our cultural artifacts against illicit, illegal appropriation, exportation, or leakage.
- Establish a system whereby Seychelles' cultural objects, artifacts, and natural history specimens, cultural and historical documents are repatriated for the Seychellois people.
- Establish a system to prevent the exploitation of Seychelles' cultural heritage, or the Seychelles' Kreol identity in an adverse manner.

- Establish measures for the protection of tangible and intangible cultural properties.
- Protect, safeguard and develop the moral and ethical values of Seychellois culture and dignity.
- Develop the Kreol Festival into an international forum, encouraging all Kreol communities to celebrate and create a sense of pride in Kreols and among all Kreolophone nations, thus enriching the world cultural heritage.
- Establish norms and standards to promote a positive image of the Seychellois culture.

** Articles 2 & 3 refer to 2 and 3 in Aims of the Cultural Policy.*

Article 4: Popular participation in cultural development

- Foster the development of Seychellois artistic talent at district level to ensure high quality participation of all in cultural and artistic events, at both the national level, as well as in the international arena.
- Develop awareness programmes on our cultural heritage for the youth in collaboration with the Ministry responsible for youth.
- Produce educational programmes on the arts and culture in order to sensitize the population and encourage their participation in the protection of our national heritage.
- Encourage the formation of arts and culture circles, associations and NGOs who support arts and cultural development.
- Initiate and create awareness of arts and cultural activities in the districts through participation, promotion and the exchange of information.

** Articles 5 & 6: Access to cultural information and institutions*

- Ensure the development of the National Library as one of the country's main information centres.
- Provide public library services for educational, informational and recreational needs of all individuals.
- Provide national library services for the preservation and bibliographic control of the country's literature.
- Ensure that the documents of the National Archives are protected, preserved and made accessible to the general public and depositors.
- Provide the necessary training in the field of arts criticism to allow better public appreciation of the arts.
- Ensure public appreciation of the Visual Arts through the proper display of the National Art Collection.
- Encourage the setting up of private libraries, museums, and archives according to specific standards as defined by the appropriate policy.
- Ensure access to cultural information.
- Network with national, regional, and international cultural institutions.

** Articles 5 & 6 refer to 5 and 6 in Aims of the Cultural Policy.*

Article 7: Education and training in the arts and culture

- Provide the education, training, knowledge, skills, attitudes, and perceptions necessary for national development and prospective artistic distinction.
- Stimulate creativity in all artistic disciplines and develop those individuals who have special aptitude in their studies.
- Develop training programmes in the literary, visual and performing arts.
- Ensure that artistic opportunities exist at both the national and international level, and as well as part of lifetime education for all in the arts, especially for the youth.
- Ensure that artistic opportunities are available to all Seychellois nationals interested in promoting the arts at both the national and international level, wherever they may be residing.
- Promote the development of the different ranges of cultural expressions and their acceptance as part of our everyday life.
- Promote the appreciation of our artistic, archaeological, anthropological, historical, linguistic, natural, archival, and ethnographical dimensions of our heritage.
- Maintain links with Seychellois associations or organisations abroad that are interested in promoting the arts and culture of Seychelles.

Article 8: Promotion and development of the arts and culture through Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the media

- Provide greater promotion of the arts and culture through the media.
- Make use of current technologies to obtain funds for sponsorship to finance development projects in the various fields of the arts and culture.
- Make use of new technologies to further the development of cultural programmes for public education.
- Assist in the development of current Information Communication Technology (ICT) in order to further development in the arts and culture.
- Promote and encourage the development of Seychellois feature films and documentaries, as well as the media, for cultural promotion and development.
- Promote the utilisation of information, communication technology (ICT), in order to preserve, as well as access cultural knowledge and information.

Article 9: Allow cultural diversity, as well as foster cultural and religious tolerance among all people living in Seychelles

- Promote and develop our cultural diversity based on our ethnic origins: Africa, Asia and Europe.
- Promote respect for all ethnic and cultural differences and develop ethnic tolerance as a means of encouraging harmony in Seychelles.
- Cultivate tolerance for the cultural traditions, customs, beliefs, and also religious differences between the different communities living in Seychelles.
- Promote and develop the fusion of our different ethnic cultural elements, as a means of enriching and enhancing our contemporary artistic expression in all art forms.
- Promote and encourage inter-cultural exchanges in the arts and culture between the Seychellois and other ethnic groups in Seychelles.
- Ensure that women and men have equal access to all opportunities in the arts and cultural fields.

Article 10: Establish a promotion and marketing strategy.

- Collect fees for entrance into the art galleries, museums, national monuments, and natural heritage sites.
- Encourage and promote cultural activities, performances, and events.
- Promote the sale of publications and souvenir items.
- Encourage the development of cultural industries, and new forms of cultural activities.
- Loan cultural artifacts that are available for hire.
- Provide professional services for writing, translations, or editing of texts.
- Provide opportunities for filming at cultural locations, monuments and sites.
- Provide expert advice or professional assistance, or make provision for sound, visual material, texts, or documentation for filmmakers.
- Provide opportunities for cultural research in conformity with the laws of Seychelles.
- Promote other ways of collecting revenue for furthering cultural development.

Article 11: Develop cooperation at regional and international level with all organizations for the promotion and development of the arts and culture.

- Conduct bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation with other countries and organizations
- Conduct dialogue with countries in the North-South and South-South context in order to promote cultural enterprises and exchange.
- Network with other regional and international organizations.
- Organise training workshops, seminars, conferences, colloquiums, twining with other institutions, ('jumelage'), well as the exchange of expertise, with both regional and international organisations.
- Conduct research at national, regional, and international levels on the history, natural, and cultural heritage of Seychelles.
- Pursue inter-cultural dialogue with the other Indian Ocean islands on the concept and development of *Indianoceanity*.

Conclusion

The Seychellois people have a valuable openness, and an awareness and appreciation of different aspects of culture that must be explored, nurtured and exploited. The cultural policy takes into account the need to ensure the continued development of this appreciation whilst making provisions for the broadening of our cultural horizons through exposure to and exploitation of different aspects of other cultures. As a small country with a culture based on the convergence of peoples from three different continents, and bearing in mind our colonial past, it is easy for our traditional values to be eroded by the rapidly expanding popular cultures of the world, leaving behind an infertile soil for the re-growth of a benevolent culture to all, devoid of all values that make it rich.

The policy is based on the concept that wealth, both material and mental, must inevitably co-exist as one leads to the other. Material wealth enables the development of culture through the creation of a need for leisure activities whilst a solid educational foundation enables the exploitation of cultural assets to create wealth.

Thus, in order to make full use of the cultural opportunities as defined by this policy and enhance the cultural awareness of our people, the Ministry responsible for culture must, as stated in the policy, work in collaboration with other organizations, which participate actively in the production and perpetuation of culture, with particular attention to the following authorities:

- **Education:** The solid foundation whereby culture will be nurtured from a young age and made available to all children; where young talents will be discovered and cultivated for the greater wealth of our society.
- **Media:** For an efficient and effective diffusion of culture through information, educational programmes, opportunities for creativity (in local productions for example), especially in the domains of language, literature, arts and science.

- **Tourism:** For the exploitation of our cultural wealth to create material wealth, with the added dimension of exposing our culture to other peoples. Necessity being the mother of invention, this is sure to effect more creativity as culture becomes exposed to business.
- **Environment:** for the preservation and careful exploitation of our natural heritage, both for touristic and educational purposes.
- **The Private Sector:** In our endeavour to further enhance exploitation of our entire natural and cultural heritage with the view to generate more national wealth, the ministry will encourage the creation, improvement and expansion of local businesses with special emphasis on the arts and culture, in order to tap into the markets, both national and international.

The Ministry responsible for culture will ensure proper cultural planning for effective implementation of the policy, with provisions for evaluating and reviewing cultural development as our society evolves and develops new needs. In particular, there will be emphasis on the cultivation of tolerance for other cultures, in order to promote cultural democracy.

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