

Planning and budgeting

“Foresight allows us to peer into the future,” says Minister Hassan

The Minister for Finance, National Planning and Trade made that clear yesterday to public servants who are participating in a three-day workshop facilitated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

by V. Moonien

“The alignment of budgeting with foresight and systems thinking is a powerful concept. It underscores the importance of not only addressing immediate fiscal needs but also anticipating future challenges and opportunities. Foresight allows us to peer into the future, to understand the evolving landscape, and to make informed financial decisions that resonate with our long-term vision for Seychelles.” Minister for Finance, National Planning, and Trade Naadir Hassan made that clear yesterday to public servants who are participating in a three-day workshop under the theme “Foresight and Systems Thinking for Strategic Planning and Financing for Sustainable Development Goals in Seychelles.”

The event, which is being held at the Savoy Resort in Beau Vallon, is facilitated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) through its Division for Public Institutions and Digital Government and its Financing for Sustainable Office (FFSDO). It also has the support of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). This initiative is meant to foster a more cohesive, participatory, and evidence-informed governance framework to advance Seychelles’ National Development



· Ms. Véronique Verbruggen, from UNDESA



· Minister Naadir Hassan



· Ms. Elena Proden from UNITAR

ment Strategy. It also aims to enhance the country’s resilience and promote sustainable development by prioritising effective planning and implementation, including the financing strategy.

For Minister Hassan, this workshop is “a significant milestone in our collective pursuit of a more adaptive, responsive, and visionary governance framework.” It is on line with the government’s continued commitment to enhance and boost service delivery in the public sector, he said, by investing in public servants’ training. “[...] public servants have to be on board and most importantly you have to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to understand this transformation, given your key role in delivering service

es to our people,” he pointed out.

“It is thus, why, today, we gather with a shared vision to reinvigorate and refine our internal policies and coordination strategies, aligning them with the priorities of the National Development Strategy and Sustainable Development Goals. This workshop is not just a formality; it is a commitment to empower officials from line Ministries, equipping them with the skills to navigate the intricacies of planning and budgeting,” explained Minister Hassan. “By embracing systems thinking and strategic foresight, our aim is to fortify collaboration across Ministries for more effective resource allocation and short- to long-term planning. Let’s not see this just as a gathering of individuals; it is a convergence of minds committed to catalyzing positive change,” he went to say.

“Our goal is clear—to foster a collective understanding of how foresight and systems thinking can become powerful tools in our strategic planning endeavors. This session signifies our shared commitment to fostering a public sector that is not just dynamic but resilient, capable of navigating the complexities of an ever-evolving future,” he stressed.

Minister Hassan emphasised that everyone should “recognise the swift and dynamic changes in our global landscape.” “Financial prudence, forward-thinking strategies, and holistic systems understanding are imperative for our journey towards sustainable development. Our national

budget is not merely a financial document; it is a blueprint that reflects our collective aspirations and commitments to creating a Seychelles that is not only economically robust but environmentally sustainable and socially equitable,” he said.

The challenges and opportunities Seychelles face are intricately woven, thus requiring a holistic approach, stated Mr. Hassan. “In a world characterized by rapid technological advancements, geopolitical shifts, and unprecedented social and environmental changes, our traditional methods of decision-making may prove inadequate,” he underscored. “The true essence of this journey lies in the power of strategic foresight. It empowers us not only to anticipate and adapt

to emerging trends but also to be the architects of proactive policies and strategies,” he added.

[...] this gathering is an investment in our collective ability to envision a future where our nation not only survives but thrives economically, socially, and environmentally. It is a resounding declaration of our commitment to infuse innovation, resilience, and adaptability into the very fabric of our government institutions. As we delve into discussions, let us keep in mind that our decisions today have ripple effects far into the future. The budget we shape, informed by foresight and systems thinking, can become a powerful tool for transforming challenges into opportunities, for bridging gaps, and for building a Seychelles that is resilient, inclusive, and sustainable,” he said.

The Senior Interregional Adviser Véronique Verbruggen from UNDESA explained that a similar mission was done in Mauritius, with the emphasis being on small island development states that are suffering from multidimensional vulnerabilities. “The emphasis is on transformational change rather than talking about public sector reform the way it has been done in the past. The approach is based on compliance and results. There is also an understanding that we can’t work in isolation anymore. We need to work, for example, with the private sector,” she detailed.

December 6, 2023, rainfall

Zbest Compost and Manure aims to rebuild and resume operations

by A. Vandervalk

The St. Louis-based Compost and Manure business, Zbest, faced substantial challenges due to harsh rainfall recorded on December 6, 2023, that wreaked disaster on their operations. Ms. Zarah Ally, the Managing Director, of the 3-year operational business, provided insights into the extent of the damage and the proactive measures being taken to address the aftermath.

The excessive rainfall inflicted significant structural damage, resulting in collapsed roofing, scattered debris, and eroded land areas. This unfortunate situation posed immediate risks to product integrity, leading to a substantial challenge in the company’s operations due to the absence of storage space.

Zbest Compost and Manure is actively responding to the crisis by exploring temporary storage solutions to fulfil orders. Despite experiencing delays, the team is diligently recording incoming

orders and working tirelessly to meet customer demands, aiming to clear the backlog caused by the disruption.

To safeguard unaffected products, the company is relocating them and utilising water-resistant covers where needed. Additionally, compromised material is being discarded to ensure that only top-quality products reach customers. Ms. Ally highlighted transparent communication with customers, providing detailed explanations of potential delays and updates on order sta-

tuses.

The company is actively informing its customer base through direct communication and social media platforms. In response to the incident, Zbest Compost and Manure is re-evaluating its production and sourcing strategies, considering an expanded network of third-party suppliers to enhance supply chain resilience. Plans are underway for a reevaluation of storage facilities, exploring a location with lower risk, and fortifying structures to withstand



· Remnants of landslide

extreme weather events.

She also emphasised the priority given to current orders based on their chronological placement, ensuring transparency about fulfilment timelines with customers. The company is now implementing changes to

enhance its resilience, including a rotational stockpile system, investing in modular storage units, fostering community-based support networks, establishing a ‘rainy day’ fund, and exploring tailored insurance options.



| Average Exchange Rates of Authorized Dealers Based on Wholesale Trading | Average All Authorized Dealers | | | | | Notes | | | | TT/Drafts | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------------------------|-----------|---------|----------|----------------------------|
| | | Buying | Selling | Mid-Rate | Change from previous day 1 | Buying | Selling | Mid-Rate | Change from previous day 1 | Buying | Selling | Mid-Rate | Change from previous day 1 |
| February 19, 2024 | USD | 14.0712 | 14.4411 | 14.2562 | -0.0907 | 13.9968 | 14.7075 | 14.3521 | 0.0713 | 14.0794 | 14.4330 | 14.2562 | -0.0912 |
| | EUR | 15.1266 | 15.7241 | 15.4254 | -0.0679 | 15.0674 | 15.6238 | 15.3456 | -0.0468 | 15.1445 | 15.7466 | 15.4456 | -0.0399 |
| | GBP | 17.2937 | 18.3503 | 17.8220 | -0.0952 | 17.3211 | 18.3383 | 17.8297 | -0.2119 | 17.2123 | 18.3509 | 17.7816 | -0.1124 |

1. The Change is in relation to the mid-rate. A positive (negative) sign denotes a depreciation (appreciation) of the Seychelles Rupee.