



COMMUNIQUÉ

Seychelles makes major contribution to Aichi Biodiversity Targets

Montreal, 27 June 2011— The Seychelles Government announced it will declare new protected areas in the archipelago, resulting in half (50.59%) of all Seychelles land becoming protected under the law.

The Cabinet approved the designation of protected areas, which amounts to 15.72 km² of land representing 3.53% of Seychelles land territory and totals 45,500 hectares (excluding reclaimed areas). Last year, the Silhouette National Park and the Recif Island Reserve were created, thus raising the total area of protected land to 47.06%.

The latest decision follows Seychelles President James Michel's announcement in 2010 that Seychelles will protect 50% of its land territory, as a contribution to fulfilling its obligations under Article 8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), to ensure conservation of the archipelago's biodiversity for the well-being of present and future Seychellois generations and visitors to the islands.

“We will become the first country in the world that has half of its territory protected as national parks and nature reserves. This will ensure that our most beautiful islands remain in the hands of all Seychellois, for many generations to come. We will show the world how important it is to preserve this precious natural heritage, both for sustainable development of a small island nation, for tourism development, as well as the protection of our planet for our children,” said President Michel.

“The announcement by the President of Seychelles to declare 50% of the country's land territory as protected areas is an outstanding contribution to the achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets and a major contribution to the implementation of the decision by the Heads of State of the African Union adopted in February this year elevating biodiversity as a priority in all relevant programmes and activities of the African Commission,” said Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The new protected areas will be Curieuse National Park, South Island Farquhar National Park, Goëlettes Island (Farquhar) and Banc de Sable Special Reserves, Grand and Petite Polyte (Cosmoledo), Grande Ile (Cosmoledo) Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Desnoeuifs Island Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Saint Françoise & Bijoutier National Park, South Island National Park (Poivre), and Assumption Island National Park.

Cabinet approval is the first step in the designation process. The Seychelles Department of Environment will now work on the demarcation points of the protected areas. Regulations and statutory instruments as well as conservation management plans will be prepared before the designation orders become law.
