

**Launching of the inception workshop
for the Phase II of the Seychelles
Marine Spatial Plan initiative.**

Opening Speech by Wills Agricole- Principal Secretary for Energy
and Climate Change

**MSP Core Team, MSP Executive, Steering and Technical
Working Group members,**

I am delighted to be here amongst the distinguished participants and welcome you all to this important launching of the inception workshop for the Phase II of the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan initiative.

You may recall that the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan initiative consists of two phases and the Government of Seychelles has set a target since 2014 for 30% marine protection of its EEZ, with half of this in “no take” areas to protect marine biodiversity resources and also, in response to climate change threats (e.g., warmer ocean temperatures, sea level rise) and uncertainty surrounding the effects that these events will have on the marine ecosystem.

The first phase covering 15% of the Seychelles Ocean and putting it far ahead of an international target of 10% by 2020 was completed and announced on February 22 by the Minister for Environment, Energy and climate change. Mr Didier Dogley, who signed the two copies of the designation order for the two new Protected Areas into law. That was a big, bold and monumental step forward in making the vision of a Blue Economy a reality for the benefit of all citizens. It is the result of four years of a tremendous, consensus-driven effort by TNC, MECC, other key government officials, business leaders, fisheries and tourism stakeholders and ordinary citizens, the two new Marine Protected Areas covering 210,000 square kilometers created as part of the ground-breaking debt-for-conservation deal designed by The Nature Conservancy. As part of the debt conversion, Seychelles committed to increasing its marine protection from just 0.04 percent of its Exclusive Economic Zone to a full 30 percent. These first designations is an area the size of Great Britain.

So today, we are gathered here together with the MSP core team to launch the inception of the second Phase II of the MSP and to identify the next 7.5% of the Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone for protection and management.

The main objectives of the workshop will be:

1. To launch Phase 2: objectives, outputs, stakeholder engagement, timeline and work-plan;
2. To discuss areas of consideration for Phase 2 zoning design and reaching next milestone for MSP;
3. To begin discussions for objectives and integration for Blue Economy and climate change adaptation.

We are happy to be involved again in this exercise, as it underlines our commitment to see the MSP fully implemented by 2020.

It is with much pleasure that I officially open this important inception workshop for the Phase II of the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan initiative.

Thank you for your attention