

**LUNGOS CHAIR REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE LIAISON UNIT OF THE NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
OF SEYCHELLES HELD ON 11TH OCTOBER, 2008**

Board members of LUNGOS, Chairpersons and members of NGOs, ladies and gentlemen, a very good morning to you all and welcome to your Annual General Meeting for 2008.

Like last year, LUNGOS has had an extremely busy year trying to prepare our NGO and potential NGO members for full engagement and participation in national policy dialogue and decision making as representatives of Civil Society. (See also attached list of NGO members activities from January to December, 2007.)

This has been manifested in the various training activities undertaken by LUNGOS through its training institution or commission named the Academy of Civil Society of Seychelles.

The training programme which falls under the Capacity Building Project for State and Non-State Actors has continued to benefit from funding under the 9th European Development Fund and management support from the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) office in Mauritius.

The training continued to focus on the immediate, medium and long term needs of NSAs in Seychelles.

To respond to some of those needs including LUNGOS secretariat's own needs, we have recruited additional staff in the person of a Research and Information Officer who is currently busy trying to compile information to set up LUNGOS electronic data base.

We are also still searching for the right candidate to fill the position of Project/Programme Officer, to assist our members with project preparation and sourcing of potential funding partners.

ACHIEVEMENTS:-

The Memorandum of Understanding for the setting up of a Government/NGO framework for collaboration through a partnership agreement has also been signed between LUNGOS and the Government of Seychelles represented by the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The signing of this very important document is an acknowledgment of the important contribution being made by civil society and more specifically that NGOs and NSAs are making towards the socio-economic development of our communities, society and country as a whole through your various programmes of activities.

To facilitate and accelerate the process of dialogue, policy formulation and decision making with Government, LUNGOS will shortly be forming and launching different

sectorial and autonomous commissions to act as focal points with the different Government ministries. The Secretaries General of the commission will also sit on LUNGOS Board as ex-officio members and report on the activities of the commissions periodically.

CHALLENGES

During the past year LUNGOS has operated under a very tight budget with most of the income coming from Government in the form of an annual grant of SR 150,000.00. As a result of the low income, staff remuneration has remained below reasonable levels but our dedicated staff have continued to deliver quality services despite the odds.

As a result, the Board is recommending that the annual membership fees be increased as follows, effective 01st January, 2009 Minimum SR. 300.00 to maximum SR. 500.00 per year based on the different categories of membership to be finalised soon – i.e. socio-economic NGOs, welfare NGOs, Environment NGOs, Women Youth and Health NGOs, CBOs, etc.,

As part of the current Seychelles economic recovery programme, LUNGOS Board has met with delegates of several international financial institutions during their periodical visits here – i.e. IMF, World Bank, ADB, etc.,

The objective of the meetings was to seek the civil society's views of how we think the economic measures being proposed will impact on the lives of ordinary citizens and what should be done to minimise and possibly absorb some of the socio-economic shocks which will be felt as a result of some of the measures. Our views have been noted and recently we had a meeting with the Minister of Finance and his Principal Secretary to discuss the role of civil society in this process.

LUNGOS is awaiting for more details but in the meantime we have been assured of financial assistance for implementation of a sensitization programme of activities for civil society and the citizens in general.

During the year, we also met with members of the National Assembly to brief them on the important role of NGOs and civil society in the communities and society as a whole.

LUNGOS Chair and Executive Director have participated in some of the Capacity Building workshops for MNAs at the invitation of the Speaker of the National Assembly. We also met with the International Affairs Committee of the Assembly to discuss possible project funding support under the Cotonou Agreement's EU/ACP 10th EDF programme.

It is also worth noting that funds are still available under the 9th EDF and as a result LUNGOS will continue to provide training and other services to NGOs and NSAs under the Capacity Building Project during 2009.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all the NGOs who have been very active in their respective fields during 2007/2008.

Through your selfless contributions, you have given hope and comfort to your fellow citizens, you have empowered the women, farmers, fishers, the mothers with hope, the disabled, the small businesses, people with hearing impairment, the consumers, the cancer patients, the children and youth, you have helped protect our natural environment, given hope to the HIV/AIDS victims, saved the animals from cruelty. In other words you have contributed immensely to make our society and the world a better place and for all of that I thank you most sincerely.

May God Bless You All!

Thank You!