

Failing to plan is planning to fail.

It happens daily. We all do it! We plan! We all plan for the day. What we'll be wearing, what we'll be having for lunch, what tasks we need to complete, what time we're picking up the kids from school, when and where we'll be meeting friends for a cold Seybrew, what to include on the grocery list, what to cook for dinner. Planning is very much part of our daily routine.

A typical example of this is preparing for an exam. For a student who will be sitting an exam, planning is key. They would need to have gone to their lectures, studied their notes, take note of the venue, date and time of the exam, and whether they have the required stationeries at their disposal. As the saying goes 'failing to prepare is preparing to fail'. Successful completion of an exam takes a lot of preparation.



Same applies in the context of our beautiful little islands, Seychelles. As with most countries around the world, Seychelles has articulated a 15-year vision - Vision 2033. A Vision, which calls upon every individual to work together for the creation of an inclusive and sustainable future.

“A resilient, responsible and prosperous nation of healthy, educated and empowered Seychellois living together in harmony with nature and engaged with the wider world.”



This long-term vision reflects the aspirations of the Seychellois people echoing the shared desire to see our beloved country grow in all three aspect of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. Vision 2033 provides the people with a ***clear sense of direction***, which is fundamentally important for a small island nation with limited resources and highly influenced by external factors.

Vision 2033 is to become a reality through a series of three 5-year National Development Plans (NDS). The NDSs will act as the instrument through which the vision will be realized. So what makes this process different from all other development-planning documents, which have been launched and published over the years? Concisely, the NDS was strategically formulated within a results based framework. Through this approach, the aim was to ensure that the process is performance driven and closely monitored to ensure delivery of results. Subsequently, this will give rise to fundamental values of good governance, accountability and transparency.

The vision is seen to come at an opportune time, strengthened with the recent Covid-19 outbreak, where the country is expected to become more resilient and persevere in the face of adversities. Essentially, planning aims to reduce uncertainties and manage risks, which is indeed crucial particularly amidst and beyond this global pandemic. The world is ever-increasingly changing. There are so many external factors, which can affect a small country such as Seychelles from the global political landscape to climate change issues.

Therefore, we must ensure that WE, collectively, are prepared for any eventualities that comes our way. The NDS does just that. It highlights four different scenarios which are more likely to occur depending on the country's courses of actions. As the only constant of today's world is change, this further allows for **flexibility and the ability to readjust** when required which is a critical part of the planning process.

In this day and age, planning is vital and should be encouraged across various sectors of the country in moving towards achieving the desired future for Seychelles. As stipulated in the first NDS, four alternative development scenarios makes reference of two critical parameters: (i) socio-political and economic transformations and (ii) building resilience to the adverse effects of climate change and other external factors which have which have already begun to adversely affect our future development trajectory. The four scenarios highlighted are as follows:



- (a) Garden of Eden: a resilient Seychelles with positive socioeconomic transformation
- (b) Time Bomb: a non-resilient Seychelles with positive socioeconomic transformation
- (c) Status Quo: a resilient Seychelles with a non-transformational future
- (d) Exodus: a non-resilient Seychelles with a non-transformational future

The worst-case scenario being 'Exodus' which is a state that is undesirable and must be avoided at all cost. The results of this is catastrophic and depicts an economy which is unstable that has suffered great losses in terms of competent human capital who have left the country for greener pastures elsewhere. Alternatively, the best-case scenario, 'Garden of Eden', paints a rosy picture of Seychelles filled with positive aspirations of the people with a focus on bettering their lives and the future generations. Scenario planning is one part of planning which makes use of different potential scenarios and recognizes the element of choice and the various alternative pathways. Additionally, the creation of possible alternatives complements the planning process by providing a picture of where the country wishes to be and what is expected to be done to reach this desired outcome.

Furthermore, as can be seen through the NDS, the planning function promotes **greater coordination** between the different actors within the country and aims to **eliminate the silo mentality**. This in turn will help prevent duplications of efforts between parties. Through proper planning, we all know what we are responsible for to ensure accountability and the plan's smooth execution.



As a small country, we are limited in terms of resources. We have limited land, financial and human resources and hence it is crucial that we make optimal use of and divert these scarce resources towards **priority areas** in order to ensure objectives are met in a timely manner. As we plan, we are aware of all the priorities, which will have to focus on for a set period of time and how resources will be **allocated efficiently**. So just like our daily planning, planning is essential for a country and an organization. Because a goal without a plan remains a wish.