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## Urgent action needed at all levels on waste management in Seychelles

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Students of the University of Seychelles and ETH Zürich have presented their findings of a three-week intensive research programme on solid waste management here.

This was through a short ceremony held at the Seychelles Institute for Teacher Education (Site) last Wednesday in the presence of Environment, Energy and Climate Change Minister Didier Dogley, principal secretary for environment Alain Decommarmond, consul representing the Swiss embassy Angelika U. Maurel, representatives of the ministry and UniSey, Sustainability For Seychelles (S4S), Land Waste Management Agency (LWMA), and other stakeholders which helped them in their endeavour.

The presentation focused on key insights the project team has gained from studying the waste system. Students provided answers to the following questions and more: How is waste management governed? What are the important waste streams and how much is imported, exported, and dumped? What are the environmental impacts of the landfill at Providence? Is a biogas reactor feasible and are there further opportunities to recycle? What can the government do to reduce waste? What are the perception and concerns of the consumers? And how could the future of the landfill look like in the Seychelles?

From the research they declared that landfilling has economic and environmental costs and action is urgent and needed at all levels.

Some of the main points were for the legal and institutional framework to be clearly set by the government on different operational levels.

Whereas for the environmental impact, they acknowledged that there is some evidence of landfill leachate entering surrounding water bodies (e.g. Zn, NH<sub>4</sub><sup>+</sup>) and pre-treatment does not operate so far.

As the leachate may have severe environmental consequences and therefore should be treated they recommended a long-term disposal solution must be developed for the leachate and concluded by stating that the fishing industry may be compromised by the leachate from the landfill, although there could be other contaminant sources.

Conclusions of the study for optimising recycling markets include the fact that government support is required to create markets for recycled products, combine aluminium, pet and glass collection.

Recycling markets require upfront costs provided by the government so they recommended preferred instruments to raise recycling rates such as environmental education and the deposit and levy scheme.

For the portfolio analysis they said a portfolio of coordinated action is needed in order to divert waste fraction from being land filled, additional landfills are still needed in the long-term even with very favourable assumptions.

In order to increase robustness of the results better data is needed and improved sorting at source is a core assumption of all implemented scenarios.

Students also reflected on the intercultural exchange and their experiences working together.

During his address Minister Dogley said this is an excellent collaboration started many years ago.

"Today with UniSey which has been established six years ago they have been able to develop a partnership not only between the government of Seychelles, but now we have an institution that is providing teaching but also research facilities and also local students with the capacity to be able to conduct the studies together with the foreign students for us to be able to pave the baseline with the knowledge that we need to further understand issues of sustainable development," he said.

ETH student Danny Nef said he had a very good experience.

"The most striking thing was the exchange between the UniSey students and the Swiss students, this exchange has even increased while we were working together and ended up as a friendship with a fruitful working team," he said.

PS Decommarmond said the results of the study showed them that the various presumptions which they had were proven to be the fact such as the waste stream.

He also pointed out a few steps which will be taken by his department.

"We will keep working on specific regulations to tackle these issues for example specific types of waste like the programme on plastic bags which is underway. We will also work on collection of information which is required for good decision-making in environment management," he said.

From the results he said we need to tackle this problem in various aspects.

"We cannot just reduce waste by implementing recycling, there are various steps which have to be taken and a key message is that we have to act now and people are willing to help in this situation, they are very interested in waste and having a clean country," he said.



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