AHN COUNTRY REPORT

Seychelles

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OUR ORGANISATION

• Seychelles (~100 islands, population 90’000) has currently no formal Heart and Stroke Foundation.

• A Seychelles Stroke and Heart Foundation existed for several years but it could not be sustained, mainly for financial reasons, lack of sufficient membership and communality of activities of a foundation with preventive activities run by the ministry of health of Seychelles.

• Indeed, the ministry of health runs public health programs since many years, including World Heart Day, tobacco control programs, health education programs through a 4-5 person Unit for Prevention and Control of Cardiovascular Diseases (UPCCD).

• Substantial budget for these activities comes from MOH, WHO and other sponsors.

• Pascal Bovet is a former head of this unit (1989-2000), then director of NCD section and currently a consultant for this Unit.

• Pascal Bovet is a “individual member” of WHF and, as such, he is affiliated to AHN and representing Seychelles to AHN (pending a hypothetical new Seychelles Heart & Stroke Association).
OUR ACTIVITIES (2015-2016)

• Activities related to CVD are mainly run by Unit for Prevention and Control of Cardiovascular Diseases (UPCCD) in ministry of heath (in which P Bovet is a consultant)

• High profile activities for World Heart Day are run every year, including screening of hypertension and diabetes in work places and public places, several education programs on national radio/TV stations, preparation of drafts of speeches for minister of health on occasion of WHD or similar events (broadcast in full or part on TV, radio and newspapers), etc

• Screening and education programs for CVD (hypertension, diabetes, smoking, etc) throughout the year in ~20 workplaces per year

• Developing Seychelles tobacco legislation and ad hoc regulations

• Leading the process to draft Seychelles NCD Strategy 2016-2025 (to be submitted to cabinet in June-July 2016)

• Spearheading a program to install water fountains in all schools and government places (in order to provide an alternative to soft drinks)

• Conducting research in CVD in adults (survey in 2013 & an ongoing international cohort on role of physical activity on obesity, USA, Jamaica, South Africa, Ghana and Seychelles) and surveys of ~5000 school going children every year for BP and obesity)
PLANNED ACTIVITIES

• Continue the activities that are ongoing in 2016

• A main focus of UPCCD will be on finalizing the Seychelles NCD Strategy 2016-2025 and developing a Plan of Action, including setting priority interventions with multisectoral committee appointed by minister of health (likely reduction of salt in selected foods, developing program to install water fountains in schools and government public places, full enforcement of comprehensive Seychelles tobacco control legislation, continued focus on surveillance and research, etc)
OUR SUCCESSES

• **UPCCD** spearheads Seychelles Tobacco Control Legislation (comprehensive and stringent provisions) with further development of related regulations

• **UPCCD** spearheads development of Seychelles NCD Strategy 2016-2025 and related multisectoral mechanism

• **UPCCD** conducts vivid surveillance and research on CVD with multiple publications
OUR CHALLENGES

• Continue to develop and maintain adequate expertise related to NCDs among the public health force (and avoid that the few well qualified public health professionals move from government positions to the private sector)

• Overcome inertia in developing structural interventions for NCDs (NCD strategy, tobacco control, etc)

• Rise priority given to NCD prevention (vs health care for acute NCD and/or excessively focus on other issues such as Zica, Dengue, etc, which tend to divert human and financial resources away from NCD prevention)
OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

• In the context of Seychelles, with a small population & high involvement of ministry of health in public health - including free health care for health including cardiovascular disease and important ongoing programs for CVD prevention-, the necessity for, and viability of, a sustainable Stroke and Heart Foundation in Seychelles is not obvious.

• But ministry of health of Seychelles (particularly UPCCD) has a long history to build CVD prevention and control activities around AHN/WHF themes, vision and resources (e.g. WHD), while also building NCD policy on WHO resources.

• All countries in the African region, which often are at largely different stages of situation and response with regards to CVD/NCD, can benefit of a strong AHN that can provide resources in different fields, including advocacy, materials and resources, forum for exchange, and leadership with the purpose to assist in the efforts by countries to prevent and control NCD in the African region.
THANK YOU