



**Introduction by
The Rt Hon Lord Hurd
of Westwell CH CBE PC
Chairman of the FIRST
Advisory Council**

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this official FIRST report on the Republic of Seychelles. We at FIRST would particularly like to thank the staff at the Office of the President for all their help and guidance on the preparation of this publication. We are especially grateful to the President for contributing such an important interview to this official report.

Seychelles has done much in recent years to promote high living standards and social development having reached many of the eight Millennium development goals. Economic growth has been led by the tourism sector which provides more than seventy per cent of Seychelles' hard currency earnings. Other sectors which have developed strongly in recent times, are fishing, agriculture, small scale manufacturing and services.

Gross Domestic Product is projected to have increased by over four percent in 2013 and lower inflation is expected to promote private sector activity and domestic demand. These positive trends will help focus the attention of international business leaders and key policy makers on the many trade and investment opportunities that exist in the Republic of Seychelles.

The country has continued to pursue reforms designed to improve further the regulatory environment for investment. According to the 2013 index of Economic Freedom which measures the level of market openness, regulatory efficiency, rule of law and other factors, economic freedom has increased every year since 2010 in Seychelles.

The medium term economic outlook is also positive with growth dependent on

the prospects for the tourism sector. The economy does, however, remain sensitive to developments in the Eurozone. Seychelles' performance under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Extended Fund Facility (EFF) has been positive with all structural benchmarks and quantitative targets being achieved.

The United Nations has proposed 2014 as the International Year of Small Island Developing States and President James Michel has declared the theme for 2014 as: Seychelles – A Determined Island Nation. This recognises the leadership role of Seychelles as a small island developing state and underlines the President's vision for the country's long term economic stability and shared prosperity.

Seychelles, under the leadership of President James Michel, has won considerable global support for its role in the fight against piracy and for the promotion of maritime security. Seychelles also has a clear strategy to combat climate change and develop the 'Blue Economy' concept for sustainable development. This approach is to be welcomed – given the country's geo-strategic importance and its role as a bridge between Africa and Asia.

The outlook for Seychelles is positive with the growing contribution of eco-tourism and good prospects for oil and gas exploration.

We at FIRST are delighted to have been asked to produce this official publication and hope that it contributes to the further development of Seychelles' international relationships, especially in the areas of trade and investment. E

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D. Hurd".

The Rt Hon Lord Hurd of Westwell CH CBE PC