**Seychelles: Enticing investors**

Geared up to become a clean offshore financial center, the low-tax utopia invites Japanese investors to play an integral part in its impressive transformation.

As foreigners from across the globe try to lock down pieces of paradise for the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Group, one country will be watching with more than a hint of interest: Seychelles.

Having weathered a financial crisis in 2008 thanks to stringent IMF-inspired reforms, the Seychelles is now in radar, making great progress in creating a sustainable economy.

The revamped approach that sits at the core of the country, where Asia meets Africa, was heavily influenced by the IMF and the World Bank, because they are policies that have proven themselves stronger than history in being the most adaptable.

For the Development Bank of Seychelles (DBS), the large international financial institution offering long-term lending facilities at preferential rates finds Seychelles a perfect fit.

"The way we function enables us to be more flexible in our lending conditions, especially if you’re a small-scale economy," explains Pierre F. Laporte, former governor of the Central Bank of Seychelles.

He is keen to point out that theDBS, the key financial institution offering limited access to local businesses, became a low-tax jurisdiction, not only to encourage that.

"Join with us and show how we can increase the value of the Japanese fishing market," notes Pierre A. G. Sinon, Minister of Finance, Trade and Industry.

The minister also advocates more investment in agriculture, which currently represents only 2 to 3 percent of the GDP (governing produce).

"We have underplayed the organic aspect and fresh produce of our product and need to market this more," he says. "We have not appreciated the number of stakeholders that have responsibilities in this area, just as fishers return from sea. From this, we saw that our main source of income and livelihoods is fishing in our waters, and we need to protect and maintain these resources so that we can continue doing business.

"To succeed, we must have a sustainable, strong fishing fleet that can adapt to market changes and ensure a greener future. Together, we can achieve this, and it’s within our reach."

**Minister of Finance, Trade and Industry**

"Seychelles, has a very special offering, which is nature and transparency," she says. "It is normal for me to buy fish off the shelf and sell it as fresh fish, as it is that which is returned from sea. We don’t appreciate the number of stakeholders that have responsibilities in this area."

"We are open to any country that we want to move in. It is this that will allow it to continue to be a low-tax jurisdiction, not only to encourage that.

"The Seychelles is, without a doubt, a perfect place for businesses. Our quality facilities and personal service make the Seychelles a great country. We have the facilities in place to become a low-tax jurisdiction, but the main concern is to create a management and transparent system," she says.

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