



LINYON DEMOKRATIK SESELWA

Lakaz Seselwa, Mont Fleuri

Mahe, Seychelles

E-Mail : lds@seychelles.net

Tel: (+248) 4 321122

“CABINET RESPONSE TO DRUG USE AND HEALTH CONSEQUENCES IN PRISON INADEQUATE AND IRRESPONSIBLE ” – LDS

The Cabinet of Ministers has addressed the alarming drug use and drug-related health issues in the Seychelles prison revealed by a study which found that 92% of inmates are drug users while 25% are HIV positive and over 40% have Hepatitis C, according to a report on SBC TV.

In its response, the Cabinet has not addressed the obviously disastrous security failures revealed by the statistics. It has only endorsed a recommendation of the Agency for the Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation (APDAR) to introduce a methadone program in the prison as of next year, and to consider a needle exchange program.

The level of drug use reported in what is supposed to be a securely controlled environment, and the health consequences that are being attributed to it, represent a major menace not only for the inmates but for the people of Seychelles as a whole, since they will in due course become part of the general population.

An alarming aspect of the situation is that sentencing any person to prison, in addition to the punishment of incarceration, is also a condemnation to drug addiction and to potentially fatal health threats. Our prison system is not only failing in its duty towards rehabilitation of offenders, but quite the opposite, putting them in harm's way and escalating the scale of the problem for society.

The Cabinet position reported by SBC is inadequate and irresponsible because it does not address the root cause of the problem. While we can accept that methadone and needle exchange are useful resources in drug rehabilitation and harm reduction if they are managed properly, they do not replace necessary measures to prevent or curtail access to drugs in prison. By themselves they risk expanding the reliance on drugs rather than curtailing it.

It is to be noted that the Budget allocations for the Prison Department and for APDAR have been recently presented to the National Assembly without an acknowledgement of the scale of this problem, which should be a subject for larger debate and consideration.

LDS urges President Danny Faure and the Cabinet of Ministers to look again at the issues involved in order to better protect inmates and our society from drug addiction and its health consequences.