

Ministers, Honourable Members of the National Assembly, Steering Committee members, ladies and gentlemen – good morning to you all.

To give you a brief introduction, my name is Ahmed Al Kuwaiti and I am here today as a representative of the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council, on behalf of the Abu Dhabi Government. I am proud to be the UPC's project manager for the development of the Plan and will be based here in the Seychelles for the next 12 months.

I actually arrived in the Seychelles at the end of August and can say – honestly – that I did not know quite what to expect as the 'on-the-ground' UPC representative! However, I have been overwhelmed with the beauty of the Seychelles and the warm welcome I have received from the Seychellois. I am looking forward to calling the Seychelles my home for the next year and appreciate the opportunity to be working with each of you to ensure the completion of a successful plan.

The Abu Dhabi Government is fully supportive in ensuring that we will, together, successfully deliver a plan that combines best practice planning, stakeholder engagement and timely delivery. With the Ministry of Land Use and Housing and the Seychelles Planning Authority leading this project, I am here to support them every step of the way through every aspect of the Plan, thereby ensuring the highest quality end product that meets the needs of each of your agencies, along with the needs of all Seychellois.

All of the Ministries and agencies have a role in making this Plan a success. Your participation today shows that you are committed to preparing a high-quality plan that meets the needs of the people of the Seychelles both now, and in the future.

You have already achieved much in terms of environmental conservation and social welfare. However, development pressures and the need to enhance economic growth both result in a challenge to your environment, your economy and your resources. By providing a strategic plan and master plan for development, many of these challenges can be identified and proactively planned for so that all future decisions lead you to delivering the vision you agree for your country. This vision, and the strategy that will flow from it, will include how places will develop, where people may live, where businesses may grow, what industries may be encouraged and what environmental assets will be fully protected, to name but a few components. By layering this information into a detailed master plan for Victoria, the capital city, in particular, can become a thriving place where people not only work, but live and spend their free time.

But to get there, we must all work together. So, over the next two and half days, you will have an opportunity to listen, debate and resolve some of the concerns that you have within and among your agencies. Working as one team, we have an opportunity to develop a Plan that will make the Seychelles proud and confident as it moves forward.

I thank you for your time look forward to your contributions that will ensure a successful and productive workshop.

Thank you