



# THE STATE HOUSE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2017

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# THE FIRST DAYS 100

Today marks 100 days since Danny Faure became the 4th President of the Republic of Seychelles. During this time the President has:

- Publicly apologised on behalf of the Government for past mistakes and announced a process of national reconciliation and unity
- Declared 5th June a normal working day
- Introduced a 13th month salary to citizens in both the public and the private sectors
- Pardoned 81 prisoners
- Held consultative meetings with the Opposition party LDS to ensure a coordinated approach to issues
- Appointed individuals from the private sector to become chairpersons of public enterprise entities
- Adopted white papers that support human rights and open access to information, and signed legislation that forces public officers to declare their assets publicly
- Reformed public sector service, amending laws to make it more transparent and efficient
- Announced a special pension scheme for diplomats and long-serving teachers, nurses, doctors, police and military
- Reintroduced the Unemployment Relief Scheme to help young people find jobs
- Provided citizens with more options to benefit from the national wealth created for them by lowering the costs of financial transactions, making shares in various companies available to the public, and introducing the high-return Esmeralda III Bond



One of President Faure's first official acts as President was to announce a process of true reconciliation, calling upon all citizens to overcome any differences and work together in the common purpose of national development. Since 16th October, President Faure has visited the districts of Anse Etoile, La Digue, Praslin, and Roche Caiman and continues his community visits to see the issues citizens face firsthand, personally deliver his message of a more unified work approach at district level, and provide an open forum for community members to voice their concerns and propose solutions. He has also visited all of the departments that fall under him, meeting with staff to understand their challenges and improve their working conditions.

The beginning of any administration is a time of many firsts. On 18th October, his second full day in office, President Faure addressed the National Assembly and outlined his people-centred approach to all policy making. On 19th October President Faure became the first sitting President to invite leaders of opposition party LDS to State House, with whom he holds monthly discussions to ensure there is a united approach to various issues. On 3rd November he reviewed his first board,



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and has revised 4 more boards since, in line with his commitment to engage experienced members of the private sector whenever possible. On 13<sup>th</sup> November, he made his first trip overseas as President, attending the COP22 summit in Morocco, following his promise to do more for Seychelles in terms of renewable energy and sustainable growth. On 28<sup>th</sup> December, President Faure pardoned 81 prisoners, the most pardons issued in a single day by any President of Seychelles. On 4<sup>th</sup> January, President Faure presented the first male Mayor of Victoria, Mr David Andre, with his instrument of appointment. On 6<sup>th</sup> January, Seychelles held its first Inter-Faith Prayer organized by SIFCO.

A 100 days – a round, arbitrary number – isn’t quite enough to implement a comprehensive agenda, but it is enough time to set the tone for the 1400 days that follow.

## In Memoriam



On 12<sup>th</sup> January, President Faure declared the first National Day of Mourning in honour of the country’s late Founding President Sir James Mancham as the country lost its first Head of State since independence. Sir James was laid to rest at State House Cemetery following a State Funeral service with full military honours. To ensure proper tribute is paid, President Faure appointed a committee to recommend to him national actions that would honour the memory of Founding President Mancham, and in particular, promote national unity and reconciliation of which Sir James was an ardent advocate.

President Faure expressed his condolences saying, “It is now up to all of us here today to fulfill his dreams for a more united, peaceful Seychelles where there is true reconciliation.”

### “One Country United by God”



Fittingly, the last official event that Former President Mancham attended was the Inter-Faith Prayer organised by SIFCO under the theme, “One Country United by God”. President Faure was the chief guest at the event that brought representatives from all major religions together to reflect on the common elements of all faiths and reinforce national unity. Closing the event, Bishop Denis Wiehe recalled President Faure’s New Year message that said, “we need to make a greater effort to follow a spiritual and moral compass that will give direction and enlighten us on the meaning of our lives”. The first 100 days of President Faure’s administration have seen actions, decisions, and policy-making that follows a clear direction to engage with people, improve their welfare and reinforce national unity.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

“When my administration took over, we promised a new chapter for Seychelles. We started a process of national reconciliation and vowed to improve the lives of Seychellois. After the first 100 days, I am pleased with the progress that we have made toward our goals.

One of our first orders of business was to introduce legislation to bring more transparency and accountability into our laws. We introduced a 13<sup>th</sup> month salary for all Seychellois workers, announced a pension scheme to reward long-serving individuals in certain professions, and reintroduced the Unemployment Relief Scheme to help young people find employment. The theme of the 2017 Budget was “Inclusive Development with Opportunities for All”, and it aimed to distribute wealth more equally and allow everyone to benefit from it. These are just a handful of our achievements after just 100 days in government.

Being Seychellois, this earth we stand on, is greater than any political agenda. We share common hopes and aspirations and goals for our country. We must continue to live together as “one Nation under God”. I think we are off to a good start, but it’s just a start. I’m pleased with our progress, but I’m not satisfied. Many Seychellois are without homes, the cost of living continue to rise, and the government is still not as I want it to be. But all this means you can expect an unrelenting effort from this administration to strengthen our prosperity and make sure that this country is what it can be. I want to thank you all for your support and patience during this time, and I look forward to working for you in the second hundred days, and the third hundred days, and all the days after that.”



# THE FIRST 100 DAYS in Pictures





# ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT

## Blue Economy

The Blue Economy portfolio was transferred to the Vice-President's office during the last 100 days, and Vice-President Meriton has actively been orientating himself with its various dimensions. He attended several national events as part of the 2016 Oceans Festival celebrated in December 2016, opening the one-day seminar on Sustainable Fishing on 6<sup>th</sup> December. He also supported the launching of the Blue Economy Internship programme as part of the SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH) on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2016. Ongoing projects for 2017 include:

- the completion of the Blue Economy Roadmap (2017-2030), facilitated by the Commonwealth
- finalising the first "Blue Bonds" with the Ministry of Finance, Trade and Economic Development which is linked to the World Bank SWIOFISH project on sustainable fisheries management
- the drawing up of maritime boundaries of ocean space with Seychelles' neighbours – such claims under this portfolio secure the social and economic welfare of the Seychelles people for generations to come
- supporting and encouraging national blue economy related projects from various sectors including tourism, ports development, fish processing, science and research, and innovative financing



## Enthusiasm Around 'The Right To Know'

The White Paper of the Right to Information Bill, announced by President Danny Faure soon after his inauguration, is being received with a lot of enthusiasm by stakeholders and members of the public.

The bill aims to make information more widely available to the public proactively and allows the populace to request for all the unrestricted information they need. The final bill is expected to be submitted to the National Assembly in March.

The Department of Information under the Vice President's Office and the Office of the Attorney General are holding consultations with various groups including CEPS representing the civil society, the Chief Executives Forum and the Association of Media Practitioners of Seychelles (AMPS) to explain the proposed bill and collect their views.

## DICT

The Department of Information, Communications and Technology (DICT) continues to work hard to improve the Information and Communications sector, where the level of data usage is continuously increasing. The last 100 days have seen the launch of several new projects that stand to benefit the population at large.

DICT has been very busy working on a communications bill, regulations on service standards for broadcasting and telecommunications services, and public Wi-Fi internet access. The Communications Bill is in its final stages of being drafted and will go into its White Paper stage soon, where the public can give feedback through the government portal. To ensure that there is a high standard of service across all media, a consultation process with the different operators and relevant stakeholders has been undertaken to finalise a Quality of Service with regards to Regulations on broadcasting and telecommunications. The most exciting project is the installation of free WiFi access points for the public, for which the tender for the provision of the service has already been launched.



# Africa-France Summit, Mali

The Vice-President went on his first overseas mission since taking office for the 27<sup>th</sup> edition of the Africa-France Summit, held in Bamako, Mali. The theme of the Summit was on “Partnership, Peace, and Emergence”, and a declaration was adopted where all Heads of State committed to prevent and combat all threats to peace and stability such as radical extremism, organised crime, and maritime threats.

In his address, the Vice-President stressed democracy, good governance and the rule of law as the basis for sustainable development, peace, and security. He highlighted the importance of the blue economy in ecologically sustainable and socially inclusive economic growth, seen by the African Union in its Agenda 2063 as ‘the future of Africa’ and called for the implementation of the promises of the Paris Agreement and COP22 in the fight against climate change.

In line with Seychelles’ own development goals, all attendees of the summit agreed to include their actions in the framework of the Addis Ababa Program of Action on Financing for Development, the objectives of sustainable development of the United Nations, the Paris on Climate Change and the African Union Agenda 2063. Commitment to intensify the fight against poverty and inclusive economic growth was also reaffirmed, echoing the theme of the 2017 Budget in Seychelles, ‘Inclusive Development and Opportunities for All’.



VP Meriton and PS Volcere in Bamako, Mali

## FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

“The Vice Presidency, with its several portfolio responsibilities and special assignments delegated to it from time to time by the President, is strikingly different from a ministerial function.

Over the past three months much time has been dedicated towards managing the affairs of the Office and conducting high level inter-sectoral meetings and familiarization visits to organisations under my watch. This is an urgent necessity as the need to develop an insight of the workings of the various entities which form part of the Vice President’s Office cannot be over-emphasized. From Investment, Industries, the Blue Economy, the Inner & Outer Islands, ICT and Information as well as associated Agencies, they all have considerable impact on our socio-economic landscape. Amid a tight schedule, the maintenance of appointments with members of the public remains a vital obligation, as it enables me to keep in touch with people and help deal with their concerns. The Office works in close collaboration with the Seychelles Interfaith Council (SIFCO) and the Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS) to address the societal challenges of our time. It is vital at this important crossroads of our country’s development, to intensify the search for new opportunities and solutions to the catalogue of emerging issues coming our way.

Given our in-house capabilities and our continuous efforts in facilitating the operating environment for the players across the entire national spectrum, I have every reason to be optimistic about our ability to deliver efficiently, with the end result of making a positive difference in the lives of our citizens.”



# SPOTLIGHT

In this edition of the State House newsletter we focus on Danny Faure, the President of the Republic of Seychelles, a “servant of the people”, to learn more about his life before the presidency.

## Family Values

Danny Faure grew up in Anse Royale, in a close community based on strong family values and strong Christian values. “My childhood can be compared to that of any ordinary citizen, I led a very active life going to school, going to church, and doing a lot of sports. Looking back, I don’t know how we had the time to do it all, but we really put our efforts into doing good things,” recalls President Faure.

Every morning, President Faure would clean the house, which included brushing the floor with *bros koko* before going to school. Consistently driven by the goal of “serving the people”, as a boy President Faure dreamed of becoming a priest and serving his community, before choosing to start a foundation year in teaching. During this time, President Faure was also very active in church and training every day in the National Athletics team. It was catching President Albert Rene on the radio one day that changed everything. “He was speaking about action-oriented social justice, and it echoed my own values completely,” says President Faure.



A young Danny Faure in action

## Further Studies & Career

Deciding not to pursue his career in teaching, President Faure accepted a scholarship to Cuba with the sole objective of getting more knowledge on how to serve his community. “Being a politician was never part of the plan – I went to Cuba to come back and work in the areas I could do good for the country, and help serve the people,” said President Faure. Soon after his return, Danny Faure joined the Ministry of Education and he was later appointed Director of the NYS. “It was my time at NYS that really opened my eyes to the problems of Seychelles. I met with a lot of students, I saw a lot of parents, and this is where I really got to know the challenges that many people face,” recalls President Faure.

President Faure first entered ‘politics’ when he was appointed Leader of Government Business in the National Assembly in 1993, and he then spent 8 years as the Minister of Education. “These were 8 years I will never forget, I still miss the sound of the children from Mont Fleuri school. It was in my time that there were the highest number of students qualifying for Government scholarships – more than 100 students in 1 year. I have always emphasized the need to study, study, and study. This is something that as President I want to go back to – ignite that passion in the youth to realise their dreams and priorities,” says President Faure.



With dad Jean Faure and brother Barry



“My focus has always been on the people”



LGB in the National Assembly in 1993



Faure was appointed Director of NYS in 1989

Danny Faure climbed through the ranks of Minister of Finance and Vice-President to eventually take the Presidential Oath in October 2016, 100 days ago. “Being President was never my main objective when I started my career. I always considered myself a servant of the people, and I remain faithful to this. As Head of State, Head of Government, and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, I am the servant of the people, and this is what I will always remain,” says President Faure.



Selfie with mum, Violet Faure



With his children, Camilla, Lorraine, Tara & Dan (L-R)



Story time with grandson Zachary

## Laughter is the Best Therapy


How does a President relax? “Every night I have dinner with my children, and every Sunday I see my mum. I look forward to these times to catch up with my family. I also laugh a lot – my children make me laugh, my grandson makes me laugh – this is what breaks the stress level.”

## Aspirations & Hope

President Faure wakes up at 4am every day, meditates, thinks through the day ahead, reads, and watches a range of international news channels before reaching the office by 6.15am. He is true to his aspirations to serve his people, “I read every letter addressed to me, I feel people’s pain, I feel their joy, I note every suggestion. I wish I could fix all their problems today – I have to tell myself that I cannot do it today – but I plan for it to happen as soon as possible, and these are the plans I will explain further in my address on the 14<sup>th</sup> of February,” says the President. “My hope for Seychelles is a country where we have a spirit of brotherhood, where we respect one another irrespective of our political and religious beliefs. My hope is to see shared prosperity among our people. This is a unique country, one with great natural beauty, and kind people. We are kind, we are special, and this is what we need to remember to become a more harmonious nation.”



The next issue of the State House e-Newsletter will be released on the 24th of February 2017 and will include a comprehensive summary of the President’s State of the Nation Address, scheduled for the 14th of February 2017.

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