



THE STATE HOUSE NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2017

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“We need to be engaged, active citizens”

President Danny Faure hosted the third live Presidential press conference at State House on Wednesday 16 August 2017, continuing to promote the spirit of transparency and open access to information.

He was asked questions about a range of topical issues including the Marvin Asba disappearance, fiscal policy changes, and the debate on the legalisation of marijuana. He also discussed Governmental initiatives including public sector salary restructuring, the creation of a cohesive agency to tackle the drug issue, and a dialogue on increasing productivity.

“We lost valuable time,” conceded President Faure on the case of Marvin Asba’s disappearance. “However now we have learnt the importance of establishing a reliable regional network and will start implementing the necessary protocol.” On behalf of the country, he expressed his sincere prayers that Marvin Asba is found soon, and conveyed his sympathies to the Asba family.



“Every day there are a lot of good things happening in the country, but perhaps we choose to focus on the bad things. Every Tuesday I hold meetings with the public. They don’t only come with their problems, they come with suggestions on how to improve public services. That means we have engaged citizens. We all need to be active, engaged citizens so that not only the Government but society as a whole can face our challenges,” said the President.

President Faure announced that the 2018 Budget would be made public on 31 October 2017. The Budget sets the economic blueprint for the country for the next year, and will provide further clarity on the country’s economic policies. As he stated in his address to the National Assembly on 25 July 2017, there will be no increase on any taxes or charges and fees for next year, allowing the private sector to have more certainty in the economy. He encouraged citizens to continue saving, referring to the popularity of the recently launched Aldabra bond.

Featuring over 20 journalists from newspapers, television and radio, President Faure thanked them all for coming and participating in the quarterly event. “We need to respect journalists and the media; the free press is what helps our country and in turn helps our development. The media is the mouthpiece of the people, and informed criticism of the Government helps us perform better,” said the President.

CABINET DECISIONS

9 August 2017

- The financing of a reward system for teacher appraisal was approved.
- It was agreed that the allowance given to students on attachment while waiting to proceed on scholarships would be increased.
- A policy for the allocation of vehicles to Seychelles heads of Mission abroad was approved, in addition to a policy regarding duty and tax exemption on vehicles purchased by honorary consuls in Seychelles.
- Cabinet approved a review of the passenger allowance for cigarettes and tobacco products, giving travellers a greater choice in the tobacco products they can bring into the country.
- Cabinet also approved for the setting up of a Technical Committee made up of Government and the Seychelles Seafarers Transport Association, to discuss and agree on a common employment contract for seafarers.
- Cabinet was briefed on the proposed programme for the Kreol Festival 2017. This year's festival will incorporate the concepts from both the Kreol festival and the Carnaval Internationale de Victoria.
- A single office will now coordinate and manage all matters relating to intellectual property.
- The challenges faced by street vendors on Market Street and Benezet Street were discussed, and the need to find solutions as soon as possible.

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- Cabinet approved the repeal of the National Sports Council Act 1997 and its replacement by a new modern one.
- The weights for social welfare assistance to support families in need was reviewed, following President Faure's commitment in his National Assembly address in July that revised weights would be introduced from 1st September 2017.
- Cabinet approved a National Livestock policy for the period 2017 to 2027, improving production, productivity, and competitiveness of the livestock sector.
- Recommendations on encouraging farmers to practice agro-forestry was presented to the Cabinet.
- A protocol for dealing with persons who use drugs was approved, clarifying the role of all stakeholders involved in drug prevention, rehabilitation and demand reduction. The protocol will fall within the purview of the new Agency for the Prevention of Drug Abuse and Rehabilitation.
- The Government will request for an IMF Policy Coordination Instrument (PCI), a new IMF package designed to assist countries to formulate and implement macroeconomic policy programmes, signal commitment to economic reform agenda, and attract financing from official creditors or private investors.
- Food Temperature Control Regulation will now be drafted to ensure the protection of food from contamination, and is aimed at preventing the sale of food which may not have been kept at the required temperatures to ensure proper preservation. The draft regulations will also be published as a white paper for public consultation.
- Cabinet approved a national health mobilisation programme under the 'Health in all' banner. The principle of Health in All recognises the need for multi-sectoral involvement in the promotion and attainment of better health.
- Cabinet approved an update on policy to ensure the conservation and sustainable utilisation of the endemic Coco-De-Mer. The purpose of the policy is to promote and protect the coco de mer as an iconic species; add value to and increase benefits derived from the use of coco de mer products; elaborate the legislation for conservation, management and sustainable use of the nut and regulate trade.
- Cabinet approved for the setting up of inland clearance depots in Seychelles which are designated areas licensed to provide handling and storage facilities to facilitate the clearance of goods and export. Such depots would reduce the space constraints being experienced at the sea port and airport cargo facilities.

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- The special meeting focused on the reform of the taxation system following extensive discussions between the Ministry of Finance and the private sector and other stakeholders – a system of Progressive Income Tax will come into operation from 1 January 2018.
- There will now be exemption from tax on payments of compensation upon termination of employment, as well as on payments of gratuity, bonuses, and the 13th month salary.

SADC Summit

President Faure attended the 37th Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit of Heads of States and Governments in South Africa on 18 August 2017 for the first time in his capacity as the President of the Republic of Seychelles. The summit serves to affirm regional commitments and encourage strategic decisions that benefit member states of the region.

In his maiden speech, President Faure reaffirmed Seychelles' commitment to the principles and values of SADC and highlighted numerous actions and efforts being implemented in Seychelles, since he took office in October 2016, geared towards creating an atmosphere of greater social cohesion, inclusiveness, and national unity through a process of genuine reconciliation.



SADC also welcomed and recognised Seychelles' contribution and proposal for the introduction of a comprehensive regional strategy to collectively address the scourge of drugs in the region. During his intervention on the Decision on HIV/AIDS at the Summit, President Faure highlighted that Seychelles has seen an increase in HIV infections due to the rise in intravenous drugs users. Consequently, President proposed the urgent need to therefore jointly address the drug problem as a region.

The SADC secretariat welcomed President Faure's proposal and have now set up a Task Force to elaborate on the issue and contribute to a strategic roadmap, which will be submitted for consideration at the next Council meeting in March 2018.

On the sidelines of the SADC Summit, President Danny Faure also met with the President of the Republic of South Africa Mr Jacob Zuma. Both leaders agreed to work on a framework of cooperation in the areas of police and regional security. This includes capacity building, exchange of expertise and assistance combating crime.

Annual Meeting of TDB

President Faure was the guest of honour at the official opening session of the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of the Trade and Development Bank on Thursday 31 August. He also chaired the special session of the Eminent and Distinguished Persons High Level Advisory Panel, a half-day working session. During the closed session the panel also discussed opportunities for expanded partnerships and resource mobilisation.

TDB financing helped Eden Island and Ephelia Resort, projects that have created numerous jobs directly and indirectly and contribute toward government tax receipts. Speaking at the opening session, President Faure said, "Regional financial institutions are important in this context, as they can pool limited human and financial resources, create strong capabilities and build the confidence of other international investors and financiers. They reinforce the values of unity and people-centred development, essential for our continent's economic and political revival."



This marks the second time that this event is hosted in Seychelles, the last time being 2010.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

President Faure Welcomes Gold Medallist Female Weightlifter Clementina Agricole

President Faure received weightlifter Ms Clementina Agricole and members of her family at State House on Tuesday 1 August, to honour her success at the African Weightlifting Championship. Ms Agricole recently claimed her first African Senior Weightlifting Championship title after winning three gold medals in the 63kg weight category in Mauritius last month.

The President congratulated Ms Agricole for her incredible achievement, marked by her perseverance despite medical challenges, and urged her to continue to be an ambassador for her sport and role model for young people.



President Faure Commends Nicholas Barra for Brave Act of Citizenship



Mr Nicholas Barra, a 42 year old former lifeguard, saved the lives of five people when he rescued them from drowning at sea during a recent incident at Anse Forbans. President Faure received him at State House and presented him with a certificate in recognition of his tremendous bravery.

Mr Barra's noble act was recognised by the President. "You were brave and courageous enough to risk your own life in order to save others. On behalf of Government and the people of Seychelles we thank you and applaud your efforts," said President Faure.

Acting CEO of NISA Appointed



President Faure appointed Mr Gerard Govinden as the acting CEO of the National Information Services Agency on 31 August 2017. Mr Govinden has served 25 years in the Department of Information and later NISA where he was appointed Deputy CEO in 2014.

The principal functions of NISA are to serve as an information outlet for the Government, national institutions and the public, as well as to promote the economic, political, social and diplomatic interests of Seychelles at home and abroad.

Appointment of CEO and Deputy CEO of SBC

President Faure presented Mr Bérard Duprès with his Instrument of Appointment as the Chief Executive Officer of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation on Friday 11 August, and Mr Jude Louange as Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

The appointments were recommended to the President by the SBC Board, and following the recommendation, as per the SBC Act 2011, he consulted the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court before making the appointments.



Appointment of Land Compensation Tribunal



On Monday 14 August 2017, the President appointed an administrative Tribunal to resolve all cases of compensation related to land in line with Part III of Schedule 7 of the Constitution. This was announced in President Faure's address to the National Assembly on 25 July 2017.

The establishment of the Tribunal is in line with a Court of Appeal ruling of 7th December 2012, in which the Executive arm of Government was invited to set up such a Tribunal.

Deputy Commissioner of SRC Appointed

President Faure presented Mr Fred Morel with his Instrument of Appointment at State House on Tuesday 1 August 2017, as the new Deputy Commissioner of the Seychelles Revenue Commission.

Mr Morel has over 18 years of experience working in Revenue Administration and his appointment is for a period of 3 years.

President Receives Report of the Committee's Investigations on Staff Complaints at the National Cultural Centre

President Danny Faure was presented with a report from the investigative committee on the staff complaints at the National Cultural Centre by Chairman Mr Divino Sabino and Dr Jastin Bibi at State House on Thursday 31 August 2017.

The Committee was established by Instruments of Appointment signed by the President of the Republic on 18 April 2017 and spent over 4 months gathering extensive information and held interview sessions with over 100 members of both current and former staff at the building. The report is a thorough investigation and assesses staff complaints and claims for compensation. It also includes recommendations on remedial actions..

Praslin and Curieuse

Following a meeting with the Praslin Business Association on 13 July 2017, the President visited two sites on Praslin and Curieuse islands on 3 August 2017 to consider prospective locations for redevelopment projects with all concerned stakeholders.

The visit to Praslin included survey of the proposed road link between La Plaine Hollandaise and Pasquère, which is expected to boost economic activities on the island. The President confirmed the Government's support for the project and committed the necessary funds for its implementation before the end of the year.

President Faure also visited sites on Curieuse earmarked for a road link, sea turtle research centre, and a restaurant. The projects are meant to maximise revenue generation through more activities on the island. The President was keen to emphasise that all proposed projects for both islands will have to be done within the parameters of ensuring sustainability and environmental conservation.



Mont Buxton and St Louis

As part of his weekly community visits, President Faure viewed ongoing housing and redevelopment projects in the two districts with community leaders and key Government representatives. He also personally visited some of the homes requiring relocation and Government assistance.

Following the visits, he issued immediate directives to relocate families and individuals in critical need through Governmental social welfare schemes. He emphasised the need for coordination between partners to ensure success.



ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Every Home for Christ National Director's Conference

Vice-President Vincent Meriton gave the keynote address at the Every Home for Christ National Director's Conference which was hosted in Seychelles on Monday 21 August 2017.

Every Home For Christ is an international missions organization that equips local churches with the resources to reach citizens with the Gospel and make disciples. Speaking at the opening session, Vice-President Meriton said, "Almost 90% of Seychellois are Christians. Faith is an important part of our lives. It defines who we are and it guides us to a better way of living and being. It is therefore inspiring to see a Christian-based organisation working within our midst and in our communities."

The organisation has donated a container of 8000 pairs of shoes for schoolchildren in Seychelles and is keen to help bring a positive message to address various societal challenges. "We are counting on the support of the religious community to play an active role in a national effort to overcome the many social challenges that we are facing," said the VP.



Thank You Ceremony to NISTI Participants and Partners

Vice-President Meriton hosted a ceremony on Friday 18 August 2017 to honour the NISTI participants and partners that were involved with Beau Vallon Secondary School's participation in the First Global Challenge.

The robotics competition is an initiative to promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) Education and encourage students to develop the ability to solve complex tasks through team effort.

Seychelles was the youngest team coming from the smallest participating country and ranked 105th overall and 25th out of 40 countries representing Africa.



The achievement was a result of an exemplary co-operation between the Department of Education and the National Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation, NISTI. Vice-President Meriton commended NISTI for their support as national coordinator and commended them for winning the Bronze Award in the Outstanding Support Organisations' category.

Launching of Second Blue Economy Internship Programme

Vice-President Vincent Meriton attended the launch of the highly-anticipated second edition of the Blue Economy Internship Programme on Saturday 19 August 2017. The second edition follows a collaboration between the Department of Blue Economy and the dynamic SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH).

Funding from the private sector and the Blue Economy Department allowed for the 2017 edition to happen, while the commitment of the James Michel Foundation was secured for the sponsorship of the third edition of the programme.

“A zot tour, koman bann vre pionnye e gardyen nou lespas oseanik, mon ti a kontan demand zot pou sezi sa loportinite pou aprann e ogmant zot konnesans dan tou laspe e splander Lekonomi Ble. Nou swe, se ki zot ava kapab benefisye avek en vwayaz inoubliab dan nou losean resours san limit ; ki zot a aprann bann valer soutenab ki avar diriz zot tou dilon zot lavi e kit zot a kapab benefisye avek en leksperyans anrisesan ki ava ekip zot pour swazir en karyer prometer asosye avek aktivite maritim.”

-Vice-President Meriton



Speaking at the ceremony VP Meriton said, “Getting our young people meaningfully involved in an undertaking is of utmost significance to our identity as an ocean state and of its wellbeing. Young people must continue to take a decisive role in shaping the future they want to see.”



SPOTLIGHT

Every edition the State House Newsletter aims to give attention to a particular individual or cause whose work or aspirations are exemplary. This month we focus on Annarose Clarisse, a 23 year old trained lawyer working at the Central Bank. She is an active proponent of youth empowerment and passionate about making a difference and inspiring others to do the same. She is the founder of UN Youth Seychelles and Co-Founder of AIESEC Seychelles, and recently attended the UN Youth Conference in New York with 7 other young Seychellois.

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Annarose grew up at La Misere with her mother and older sister, strong female figures that pushed her forward and helped develop her sense of independence. “I faced many issues as a child revolving around bullying, loss, feeling people didn’t care, and a lot of it had to do with how I negatively portrayed a situation. My greatest lesson as a child was to stop taking everything personally and analyse things in its own right, to depend on myself first to feel good, and realising that I am 100% responsible for the outcome of my life. Through my childhood friendships I learned how to give without expecting anything and always wish and do good to others.”



Annarose is passionate about the law, art, volunteering, the SDGs – she does not believe in having to focus on one passion. She is the founder and president of UN Youth Seychelles, an NGO which aims to promote and contribute towards the sustainable development conversation through community work, advocacy and participation at national and international meetings on the subject. She is also the co-founder and legal Assistant of AIESEC in Seychelles, the world’s largest youth-led NGO aiming to build peace and sustainable development through internships and volunteer exchange. She is also an aspiring visual artist.

“For the future I have great hope and vision in what youths can do in Seychelles. We may be 20% now but a 100% future. The thing is like any other vision it comes with work. So my hope for future doesn’t end with just me hoping, but working for it. Likewise it rests with many people and organisations doing their part to ensure we at least explore the various potentials youth have and empower it.”

“About four years ago I vowed that I would not complain about anything, but if I do, then it’s conditional to what I am going to do about it. If I cannot suggest a better alternative I try to learn to find a way around it. This always keeps me motivated and having an open mind.”



After extensive study of the UN during her law degree, Annarose wanted to experience it, not just read about the successes and failures. She was the first Seychellois to attend the UN Youth Assembly last year after taking the initiative to apply, find sponsorship, and fund her way there. She describes the fusion of information collaboration at the conference key to progress, as one person or organisation cannot do everything alone. The experience ignited her passion to spread the word locally and she started an NGO in December 2016 with the aim of seeing more young Seychellois participation at national and international UN-related events. This year, a group of 8 young people attended the event in New York.

What is her motto in life? “Practice being positive, be responsible for what happens to you in life, and DREAM. Dream big like you’re shooting for the stars. You might just land on the moon.”