



THE STATE HOUSE NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2016

A New Era for Seychelles

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“Today is the start of a new chapter. A new chapter because a new generation is taking the helm,” said President Danny Faure as he was sworn into office as the fourth President of the Republic of Seychelles. “What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility. A recognition on the part of every Seychellois that we have duties to ourselves and our country. None of our challenges can be solved quickly or easily. But all of them demand that we listen to one another and work together”.

In his inaugural address, President Faure underlined the necessity for national unity and a process of true reconciliation in Seychelles. He articulated the vision of a society with open dialogue and cordial understanding, a united Nation that works hard for the best interests of Seychelles and its people. He expressed the need for improved collaboration between public and private sectors and civil society, outlining his desire for open lines of communication. He introduced a new, improved work approach based on the tenets of good governance, accountability, and transparency, aimed to revolutionise public service.

It has been just over 2 months since President Faure took office, and the accomplishments of the presidency so far affirm the pledges made in his inauguration speech. In the spirit of promoting dialogue and national reconciliation, President Faure met with Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (LDS) leadership three days after his inauguration, and holds monthly meetings with them to ensure that there is a cohesive approach to various issues. Exemplifying open lines of communication, President Faure visited Anse Etoile, La Digue, and Praslin last month, to personally deliver his message of new work ethics to be implemented at district level, and encourage dialogue sessions with the local community.

Ensuring the people are at the heart of all government initiatives, the President met with SCCI, SIFCO, and CEPS in his first week of office and made them the sounding board for any new decisions: the 2017 theme was decided by a committee of SCCI, SIFCO, and CEPS members, together with the Vice-President’s Office. Demonstrating the results of greater collaboration between the public and private sector, now the Boards of STB, Air Seychelles, IDC, and the Seychelles Ports Authority, all have chairmen from the private sector. Following the vision of creating a prosperous society for all citizens, President Faure has continued enriching existing ties and pursuing new avenues of cooperation with other nations to further enhance the country’s progress, particularly in the housing, medical, and environmental sectors.

In line with President Faure’s commitment to make this an open and participatory administration, the monthly State House e-newsletter aims to serve the people with up-to-date accurate information on the presidency.

Our next issue will be released on the 24th of January 2017, commemorating the first 100 days of President Faure in Office

CABINET DECISIONS



President Faure held the first Cabinet meeting on Saturday 29th October 2016. During his address, the President announced portfolio changes and new appointments, and took the opportunity to emphasise a new work approach and good governance-related policies. “We need to work as a team and as long as we all wake up in the morning and go to work and work hard, we can transform Seychelles into the country we want it to be,” said President Faure. Condemning victimisation and corruption, the President’s new work measures aim to ensure a fair and inclusive society where the best interests of the people are at the centre of all decisions. Ministers now have fixed hours every week where they see the public and consistent days of the week where they go on site visits, to ensure services are being carried out as effectively as possible.

2nd November 2016

- Cabinet approved for Seychelles to sign the International Convention on Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance. This will require the state to criminalise the enforced disappearance of any person, undertake to investigate any disappearances, and make any reparations to the victims and their families.
- PUC was given the go-ahead to invest in a €8.2m project to purchase 8 additional containerised desalination plants that will allow the corporation to meet increasing water demand, especially during the 2 years when work will be undertaken on La Gogue Dam to increase its storage capacity.

24th November 2016

- The principles underlying the 2017 Budget were discussed, particularly the focus on promoting economic development and entrepreneurship, and on programmes that best touched the lives of Seychellois and contributed to the alleviation of poverty. Public organisations were urged to cut down on wastage and re-prioritise planned projects to mobilise required resources.

30th November 2016

- Based on agreed policies and national priorities, the Cabinet approved SCR7,796,480,879 for the 2017 budget.
- Proposals for the re-introduction of an Unemployment Relief Scheme were approved, to enable unemployed persons to make a useful contribution to society, and earn an allowance whilst also gaining work experience.
- It was agreed that a special pension for teachers, police and military, nurses, and doctors, who have served more than 25 years will be introduced, to come into operation from 1st July 2017.
- Amendments to the Constitutional Appointees Emolument Act 2008 was approved to provide for Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and any other principal representatives of Seychelles, to be eligible for a Constitutional Appointee pension.

14 December 2016

- Following a report on sustainable tourism carrying capacity for Mahé and the Inner Islands, Cabinet agreed to:
 - o Ensure that land banks or social housing are not used for tourism purposes
 - o Limit small scale developments
 - o Restore existing derelict tourism establishments such as Mahe Beach Hotel
 - o Continue the moratorium on new large hotel establishments
- There is to be a greater decentralisation of services from Mahé, so that disbursements of loans and funds from public sector agencies can also be made on Praslin and La Digue.

New Bills and Legislation



13th Month Salary

Amendments to the Employment Act, currently before the National Assembly, provide for the disbursement of a 13th month pay to all Seychellois workers in 2017, effective in Government and public sector organisations since 2016. The proposed amendment gives the Minister responsible for Employment the power to regulate the manner in which the 13th month pay would be effected in the private sector, such as specifying the categories of employer required to make the payment, the time frame of making the payment, and whether such payment would be made in full, or in instalments.

The new Act was placed before the National Assembly in time for approval during the Assembly's final term of 2016.

Right to Information Bill

The Right to Information Bill is aimed at fostering good governance by enhancing transparency, accountability, and integrity by providing clear guidelines on access to information by the public. The draft of the bill has been published as a White Paper on the Government web portal. Stakeholders and the public have up to 31st January 2017 to submit comments and suggestions.

Human Rights Bill

The Seychelles Human Rights Bill will establish a Seychelles Human Rights Commission which will operate independently of the Office of the Ombudsman, and will serve to strengthen the framework for the protection of human rights. The commission would be reporting human rights abuse directly to the President or the National Assembly.

The draft of the bill has been published as a White Paper on the Government web portal. Stakeholders and the public have up to 31st January 2017 to submit comments and suggestions.

[Click here to](#) read the President's statement on the occasion of Human Rights Day.

"Let us all take a moment today to reflect upon the significance of our inalienable human rights, the very values that are embedded in the spirit of our country. Ask yourself, what can you do today in your home, your school, your workplace, your community, to ensure that your fellow person's rights are being fully respected?"
President Danny Faure
Human Rights Day Message
10 December 2016

Declaration of Assets

The Public Persons (Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Business Interests) Act 2016 aims to bring more transparency and accountability to public officers, specifically those elected as President, Vice-President, MNA or appointed as Minister. The new Act has been placed before the National Assembly in time for approval during the Assembly's final term of 2016.

PEMC Amendment

Public Enterprise Monetary Commission amendment aims to update organisations that fall under the ministry, e.g. President's announcement that an individual cannot serve on 2 boards.

Community Visits

In November, the President visited Anse Etoile, the largest district on Mahe, La Digue, and Praslin, to personally communicate the start of a new work approach that involves providing better services at district level, and a District Administration that serves everyone in the community regardless of religious or political affiliations. The meetings gave local community a platform with which to express their concerns and suggest improvements. Consequently, the President also had a chance to hear opinions and challenges being faced by the community first-hand and discuss potential solutions.

Following the President's visit to Praslin, Vice-President Meriton returned a week later to follow up on the most pressing issues, with the Ministers responsible for Tourism and Fisheries and other public service officers. The Vice-President organised the meeting to obtain an in-depth understanding of the challenges being encountered by the island's operators and ensure that viable solutions are offered to support them.



Our Senior Citizens

On Saturday 19th November President Faure hosted the Senior Citizens Reception, traditionally celebrated every year in the State House gardens to celebrate the elderly. Coinciding with the birthday of former President France Albert René, President Faure announced that from next year it will be a national event celebrated on 1 October, also the International Day of Older Persons. Urging all those present to make time for the elderly and appreciate their contributions, the President visited Anse Royale Home for the Elderly the next morning.

The surprise visit gave President Faure a chance to spend his Sunday with the elderly in the district he grew up in, and ensure the facilities were providing the necessary comforts. After the lack of a satisfactory water heating system was brought to his attention, PUC installed a solar powered water heating system just two weeks later.



"It is important that in every home where there are old people that there should be love and affection. We cannot put our old parents aside and think of them after three or four months. We need to realize that we would not be here if it wasn't for them. We need to make time for our elderly,"

President Danny Faure

Senior Citizens Reception 19 November 2016

World Aids Day



On the occasion of World AIDS Day on the 1st of December, and being the patron of the National AIDS Council, the President visited the Beau Vallon Health Centre to set an example and get tested for HIV. He was joined by Deputy Speaker and MNA for Bel Ombre, Mr Nicholas Prea, and MNA for Beau Vallon, Mr John Hoareau. The rapid HIV test was followed by a tour of the Health Centre and the lighting of a candle in remembrance of those who lost their lives to HIV, and those that are currently affected by the disease.

Read the President's statement on the occasion of World AIDS Day here: [Click to read message](#)

"On World AIDS Day, we remember those who we have lost to HIV/AIDS, celebrate the progress made by advocates and providers, pledge our support for those at risk or living with HIV, and commit to attaining our goal of an AIDS-free generation."

Seychelles Coast Guard Base



As the Commander-In-Chief of the Seychelles People's Defence Forces, President Faure visited the Seychelles Coast Guard base for the first time on Saturday 3rd December. The visit provided him with an overview of the incredible responsibilities the SCG handles in terms of protecting the country's sovereignty and alerted him to the challenges affecting their operations. Talking to all of the officers after the tour, the President thanked them for their sacrifice and pledged his full support to the management and improving staff welfare.

Work places

Department of Public Administration
Department of Legal Affairs

Following on from his decision to visit all of the departments for which he is responsible, the President visited the Department of Public Administration, and the Department of Legal Affairs on the 9th of December. President Faure was able to meet all the staff who work within the organisations and commend them for their hard work.



"All of us who work with people and for people must have the compassion. People are not merely a name or a number on a file. People have feelings. They have expectations. And the service we give and the work we do have an impact on their daily lives."

President Danny Faure
Address to National Assembly 18 October 2016

COP 22



President Faure's first official overseas mission as Head of State was to Morocco, where he attended the COP22 summit in Marrakech in the second week of November. COP22 strategized how to put the Paris Agreement on Climate Change into force and meet its aims. In his high level segment address, President Faure called on the international community to recognise the imperative need of Small Island Developing States like Seychelles for successful implementation of the Paris Agreement, and funds for climate financing.

Whilst at COP 22, President Faure and his delegation attended the African Action Summit designed to address the impacts of climate change through sustainable development projects. At this summit, Seychelles was

awarded chairmanship of a new island commission that aims to mobilise greater international solidarity in addressing the vulnerability of Africa to climate change.

The margins of COP22 also provided the opportunity for bilateral talks with various Heads of State. President Faure was able to meet the Prime Minister of Morocco, Abdelilah Benkirane, and discuss avenues for greater cooperation and prosperity between Seychelles and Morocco such as the health sector. The possibility of a medical professionals' program whereby Moroccan medical specialists visit Seychelles was discussed. The President also held bilateral talks with the Prince of Monaco and the Prime Minister of St Vincent and the Grenadines at COP22.

Abu Dhabi

On the 22nd of November, President Faure flew to Abu Dhabi following an invitation from His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, to strengthen and consolidate existing relations between Seychelles and the UAE. The two leaders shared their vision of progress and prosperity for the Seychellois people and discussed the scope for cooperation that exists in pivotal sectors like education, health, housing, and renewable energy.



Francophonie 2016

Two days after returning from the UAE, the President flew to Antananarivo in Madagascar for the Francophonie 2016. Bringing together the Heads of State from all French-speaking countries in the world, the summit was designed to strengthen the Francophone community particularly in the Indian Ocean region.

Whilst in Madagascar, President Faure was able to strengthen bilateral relations with the Prime Minister of Mauritius, the President of Madagascar and the President of Comoros. These partnerships will strengthen the health sector, the battle against substance abuse, the fishing and agricultural sectors, and improve rehabilitation programs.



ACTIVITIES OF VICE-PRESIDENT

Visits to his Departments

Following his accession to the Vice-Presidency, one of the first tasks undertaken by Vice-President Vincent Meriton were familiarisation visits to all of the entities under his portfolio. Vice-President Meriton had the opportunity to meet all the members of staff at the Department of Investment and Industries, the Seychelles Investment Board (SIB) and the Industrial Estate Agency (IEA), and appraise the level of satisfaction in what they do. All three entities play a catalytic role in creating business in the country and enhancing development.

Whilst expressing his appreciation for the commendable work that has been carried out in structuring the business environment, by the Department of Investment and Industries and SIB, Vice-President Meriton suggested various improvements to the system to ease the creation of business further.



His visit to the Providence Industrial Estate managed by the Industrial Estate Agency allowed him to see the plans for the much-awaited road repairs. Following a lengthy interactive session, the 13 employees were reminded of their role as service providers and that all their actions should be in line with policy objectives formulated to promote investment.

The IEA also manages the micro-enterprise sites of Anse Boileau, Grand Anse Mahe, Plaisance, and Union Vale.

Internships in the Blue Economy

With the creation of the Blue Economy Department, the vice-presidency is seeking to tap into the immense economic potential of the vast Exclusive Economic Zone of Seychelles. With waters that are more than twice the size of the Republic of France, a number of initiatives are being explored to attract investment, create employment and stimulate growth.



One such initiative is the Blue Economy Internship, organised by the SIDS Youth AIMS Hub with the support of the British High Commission and the Commonwealth Youth Council. This program aims to entice young people to take up employment directly in the Blue Economy Sector or set up enterprises therein by offering a 2-3 week placement in any one of the Blue Economy companies or organisations. The internship will be followed by familiarisation visits to ocean-based agencies in Mauritius, with workshops and mentorship sessions.

At the launch of the program in the presence of the interns, sponsors, and the British High Commissioner, the Vice-President congratulated SYAH for spearheading the idea and taking the initiative to advance the Blue Economy agenda. He also thanked the British High Commission and the 13 organisations and companies taking part in the program for their support.



NGOs and other entities of Civil Society have proved to be essential partners to the government in addressing the spectrum of societal challenges that have emerged as a result of globalization. Through their participation in multi-sectoral programs ranging from Social Renaissance to combating climate change, the Vice-President is now overseeing the affairs of the Inter-Faith Council SIFCO, and CEPS.

The Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS), which succeeded LUNGOS as the representative of all civil society organisations, commemorated its 2nd anniversary recently with a one-day festival held to raise awareness on their contribution towards sustainable development effort. The Vice-President was on hand to give his support to the 40 or so NGOs showcasing their services on the occasion. Vice-President Meriton also attended the first edition of the CEPS Volunteer of the Year Award, which was won by Mrs Rosemary Elizabeth for over 40 years of service, and Marie-Nella Azemia was runner-up. Read more here:

NISTI National Institute of Science, Technology, and Innovation

In his address following in his swearing-in, Vice-President Meriton stated that the fundamental principle for national development should focus on putting the people at the center. His key message was that all policies and strategies should



answer the needs and inspirations of every Seychellois.

On 17th November, the National Institute of Science, Technology, and Innovation (NISTI) held a half-day workshop to validate a draft policy and strategy that will support the transition of Seychelles from an economic-efficiency-driven economy to a knowledge-and-innovation-based economy in the next ten years. NISTI's CEO, Mr Xavier Estico, highlighted the importance of investment in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) in the socio-economic transformation of a country that is able to meet international goals and commitments to the UN SDGs, SADC STI protocol, and other international conventions.

Vice-President Meriton emphasized the importance of the inclusion of STI in all national socio-economic sectors and programs, including the emerging sectors such as the Blue Economy and Renewable Energy. Most importantly, the Vice-President stressed the necessity for STI to be included in community development, so that its aims are clear to all citizens.

SPOTLIGHT

Every edition the State House newsletter aims to give attention to a particular individual whose work and aspirations are exemplary. This month we focus on Joshua Sofola, a first year A Levels student completing an internship as part of the SYAH Blue Economy Internships program.



**Read more about
Joshua's experiences on
the next page**



Joshua exploring the coral reefs

“The ocean is the key to mostly every door in Seychelles, it could be because you want to open your own shop (let me point out that the supplies will come on a ship that will float over the ‘ocean’) or you could simply want to be a hotel manager. One way or the other it all connects to the ocean. So think again...how important do you think the blue economy is? How important is the Blue Economy to your future? I’ll answer the question. Very, Very...Very (there aren’t enough very to put before important) and extremely important. Tourism and Fisheries the two main pillars also depends on the Blue Economy.”

Excerpts of Joshua’s blog post during the Seychelles Chapter of the Blue Economy Internship

To read more [click here](#).

SPOTLIGHT (continued)

Joshua Sofola has dreams of becoming an entrepreneur and is excited for the workshops and mentorship sessions SYAH’s Blue Economy Internship program offers him. He first became interested in the marvels of the ocean during his early years in secondary school when he had to overcome the traumatic experience of the Indian Ocean Tsunami.



The Blue Economy Interns at the place they love the most, the beach.

Following his mother’s advice, Joshua overcame his fears and took up swimming lessons and got involved with the ‘Academy by the Sea’ and ‘Save Our Seas’ programs. He soon realized that the ocean was not something frightening but to enjoy to the maximum.

Joshua completed his internship at Petro-Seychelles in the hope of eventually setting up his own enterprise that recycles materials otherwise hazardous to the ocean. He is now in Mauritius for the second part of his Blue Economy Internship. By joining SYAH, he has embarked on a mission to sensitise his peers on the incredibly good fortunes of the Blue Economy and the opportunities it presents.



The Blue Economy Ambassadors before their flight to Mauritius

The State House e-newsletter is a digital publication released on the last Friday of every month. Being a newly refurbished publication, we welcome thoughts and feedback of readers with regards to the format or improving the content at newsletter@statehouse.gov.sc

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