

December 2019 - 3rd Edition

PARLMAN

The Official Newsletter of the National Assembly of Seychelles



MOVING TOWARDS A MODERN DEMOCRACY

This is the 3rd edition of the official newsletter of the 6th National Assembly of Seychelles. This issue of Parlman features information on the extensive committee work that has taken place during the 2nd and the 3rd Term, as well as showcasing some of the international work that members have participated in this year.

Our aim is to connect the National Assembly with the people and keep you informed on the work that continues to take place within these walls and on an international level.

The Public Relations, Communications & Protocol Unit
Information Services Department

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A MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

I welcome our readers to the 3rd edition of our Newsletter. This issue depicts our work for the year 2019 where we are focusing mainly on the work of the House Committees, the Assembly's participation on the International scene and the continuous efforts for a greener-working environment.

The House Committees have been very active this year with their meetings, hearings and visits. The FPAC again proved its worth engaging on several fronts to bring about transparency, accountability and good governance. The Committee on Assurances, COGA took the executive to task by holding several discussions and follow up with site visits on several ongoing projects. The Women Caucus has also stepped up and their involvement in the Cancer Awareness month was remarkable. The Chairperson of the former Committee on HIV/AIDS and SRHR tabled a Motion to change the Committee's name to the 'Committee on Communicable Diseases HIV/AIDS and SHRR' to enable for a wider scope of work. Two Committees managed an overseas exchange program, the IAC and COGA. Overall, there has been great appreciation from all sides at the collaboration between the House Committees and the Executive.

The year 2019 has also seen an increase in Members presence on the international fora. The Assembly participated actively in activities of SADC-PF, PAP, the IPU, and the ACP-EU. Seychelles participation in some missions have been remarkable. Members took responsibilities to Chair committees and moved Motions to set standards for regional groupings to follow. We have also signed an agreement with SADC PF for the implementation of the 2nd phase of the HIV/AIDS and SRHR Governance Project under which Members of the Committee for Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS and SRHR will draw up and implement programs. I am proud to say that the National Assembly is now well known on the international scene and able to deliver.

The Secretariat has also implemented other measures to move us closer to a cleaner and greener environment. We proudly commissioned our Roof Top Solar System earlier in the year and we are now reaping great benefits. We banned PET bottles in Chamber and are now planning to move towards E-Sittings. We are already conducting E-Management meetings and we will continue to explore other 'green' ideas that will eventually help us move closer to our goal.

Again, this year I would like to congratulate Secretariat Staffs for their tremendous efforts to maintain the institution's high standard. Though we have been very busy, Staffs have continuously showed professionalism and have risen on several occasions to deliver even beyond expectations.

I would say that 2019 has been yet another eventful year and the National Assembly has performed extremely well again. I would like to thank all Members and the Secretariat for all their hard work.

I hope that you will enjoy this issue and find it to be informative.



THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY GOES GREEN

This year the National Assembly made monumental attempts to minimize its negative impact on the environment with the implementation of several projects that have now been completed.

The Sustainability Audit

The Institution started off its green venture by launching an internal initiative which embraced the challenge of improving energy efficiency and environmental awareness by being the first organization in Seychelles to have collaborated with a local NGO, Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S), to undergo a month long sustainability audit intended to provide the institution with a detailed report on the environmental impact of its daily operations, as well as identify an action plan and recommendations on how to improve energy, water and waste management.

The National Assembly underwent an audit after making a long term commitment to reducing waste generation, water and energy consumption, as well as removing the use of plastic bottles in its daily operations. Understanding the value and monumental contribution of civil society organizations on a national level, the National Assembly partnered with S4S to identify best practices and to encourage other governmental organizations to do the same. The aim of the audit was to identify key initiatives and provide a means for assisting the institution in planning and accountability for sustainable activities across the organization.



The Inauguration of the Solar Panels

The inauguration ceremony of the solar panel system on the rooftop of the National Assembly building took place on the 26th June 2019 soon after the newly accredited High Commissioner of India, H.E. General Dalbir Singh Suhag (Ret'd) paid a courtesy call on the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Nicholas Prea. Both dignitaries led the ceremony by unveiling the plaque in the presence of the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Charles de Commarmond, the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Ahmed Afif, the Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change, Mr. Wallace Cosgrov, Members of the National Assembly, other Government officials, Management staff of the Secretariat and staff of the Indian High Commission.

Made possible through a grant from the Indian Government in collaboration with PUC, the 90kWp solar Photovoltaic system will produce about 126,000 kWh per year, which translates into annual savings of SR 616,169 on the National Assembly's electricity bill at present tariffs.

The National Assembly of Seychelles spends a significant proportion of its annual budget on generating electricity from diesel engines and since this system is connected to the grid, it is expected that there will be a large reduction in diesel consumption.

In addition to completing the sustainability audit and acting upon the recommendations brought forward, the National Assembly has made big steps by implementing a sustainability policy and devising long term action plans in reducing its environmental impact going forward.

The institution also actively made huge changes by removing the use of plastic bottles in the building, as well as implementing a rainwater harvesting system for the management of the grounds and commonwealth garden and started composting.



COMMITTEE WORK

Committees are set up under Article 104 of the Constitution, which provides the National Assembly with the powers to create Committees, which is one of the main mechanisms that the institution uses to foster good governance, transparency and accountability. A large part of the work of the Members of the National Assembly takes place in these very Committees that are Constitutionally empowered; where policy issues are considered; the work and expenditure of the Government is analysed and proposals for legislation examined and investigated.

The Committees are central to the oversight role of the institution and are mandated to carry out a given function and then report back to the House with recommendations and findings.

THE MEDIA, YOUTH & CULTURE COMMITTEE



It's been a busy year for the Media, Youth and Culture Committee whereby the House approved to expand the Committee's mandate and throughout the year several visits and meetings took place with external stakeholders.

The expansion of the mandate of the Committee to include the Culture and Youth sector was the first time in the history of the National Assembly that a Standing Committee increases oversight over these two vital sectors of Government.

The Media Committee was created back in 2012 with the mandate to ensure proper, fair, dignified and unbiased coverage of the proceedings of the National Assembly. In order to streamline with commonwealth parliaments and the values of transparency, good governance and accountability, the committee discussed the need to expand their mandate to provide oversight over these two sectors, as well as responding to the important impact of the creative industries in the country's development. Hence, the Media, Youth & Culture Committee was established once approval was given by the House. In response to the UNESCO's report on the creative industries, the Committee have identified that the industry of media and culture is a key component for the economic development of the country.

The Committee have also stated that they value the importance of taking into account the current challenges facing the young population, and as one of the arms of Government, an oversight role on this sector is primordial for the proper management of youth affairs nationally. Going forward, the Committee plans to continue to establish relations with Ministries, Departments and Agencies linked to Youth & Culture to ensure monitoring and analysis of policy, administration and the budget of these sectors. The scope of work will also include making reports and recommendations, site visits, inquiries, as well as study and make proposals for the review of legislation within these portfolios.

World Radio Day Blitz

2019 started off with the first ever radio takeover in commemoration of World Radio Day! The Committee took over the radio airwaves of all four radio stations in the first ever blitz, to discuss the theme of 'Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace', as well as other topics relating to politics and the media.

The Committee chaired by Hon. Gervais Henrie were hosted by all four of the radio stations in Seychelles, namely; Pure FM, K-Radio, SBC's Paradise FM and Radyo Sesel throughout the day on Wednesday 13th February 2019.

The radio interviews provided the Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) with a platform for dialogue and democratic debate over issues, such as role of the Assembly in promoting the exchanges of ideas, open-mindedness and harmony in the community.

The Members also had the opportunity to discuss and raise awareness among listeners and inspire understanding for the way the Assembly Committees work, along with their hosts of whom included Shamir Peermohamed, Sylvie Ah-Time, Marie Claude Onyekachi and Chicco Martino.

In the spirit of celebrating World Radio Day 2019, the seven member committee which was formed during the fourth National Assembly back in 2012 sent out two people to each station to address the listeners live. Hon. Flory Larue and Ms. Alexandria Faure were guests on Pure FM's Join Shamrock on 'Breakfast 101'; Hon. Paul Ernesta and Hon. Wavel Woodcock were 'On Set' With Sylvie at K-Radio; Hon. Chantal Ghislain and Hon. Jany De Letourdie spoke to Marie-Claude Onyekachi on Radyo Sesel's 'Labyans Tropicakal'; whereas Gervais Henrie and Chantal Ghislain accompanied by Ms. Samia Lebon were live on SBC's Paradise FM with Chicco 'In Paradise'.



The World Press Freedom Day Debate

On Friday 3rd of May 2019, the Committee hosted its annual Debate held at the National Assembly to commemorate World Press Freedom Day 2019, under the theme of 'the role of media in elections and democracy'.

The theme endeavoured to encourage discussions and promote understanding and awareness about current challenges to the role of the media during elections in Seychelles and numerous media houses, independent journalists and political parties, as well as civil society organizations were invited to participate. The Debate was moderated by the Director of the Office of the Speaker, Mrs. Genevieve Morel.

The objectives of the Debate was to position the MYCC as a meaningful voice in debates concerning key media related issues on a national level; to foster an environment of healthy debates and analysis with external stakeholders; build a presence that is driven by fair and transparent processes and procedures; and that values accountability and diversity of expression; as well as connect the institution further with Civil Society & the Media.



Annual Meeting with Media Houses

The Committee hosted a meeting with representatives from the different Media Houses in the country to topics and issues relating to the media industry, the relationship of the National Assembly and the media houses, as well as ways to improve reporting on Parliament. The open and vibrant meeting involved discussions on resource constraints concerning reporting on Parliament, the need for training for media professionals and the sharing of ideas on initiatives that could improve the quality of reporting on national issues as well as the National Assembly.

The meeting was fruitful and a variety of Media Houses were present from the Print Media, Radio and Broadcasting, including the Seychelles Media Commission represented, of whom shared their views and ideas.



Multi-stakeholder Meeting with Designated Minister Mondon

The Committee met with the Designated Minister, Mrs. Macsuzy Mondon, as well as the CEOs and Chairpersons of the different entities under the sectors of Culture and Youth on Monday 10th June 2019.

The multi-stakeholder introductory meeting was aimed at connecting the Committee with the representatives from the different organizations under Youth & Culture, as well as carry out open discussions on challenges and the development of projects and initiatives within the remit of these organizations. Minister Mondon was accompanied by the Principal Secretary of Youth, Mr. Fabian Palmyre and the Principal Secretary of Culture, Ms. Cecile Kalebi, as well as the CEOs and Chairpersons of the National Arts Council, the Kreol Institute, the Seychelles Heritage Foundation, the Seychelles National Youth Council and the Creative Industries and National Events Agency. Each organization got the opportunity to explain their mandate and scope of work to the Committee, as well as discuss certain challenges and future developments within their respective sectors. During the meeting both Hon. Henrie, Chairperson of the Committee and Minister Mondon, as well as the representatives present agreed on the importance of promoting and valuing youth and culture in the national development of the country; for Youth and Culture to be given its national value.



Site Visit to Today in Seychelles, CINEA & the Music Stadium

The Committee met with the Management Team of Today in Seychelles and CINEA separately on Thursday 22nd August 2019.

The meetings included site visits of the Today offices, the Music Stadium and the facilities at the ICCS. The meetings and site visits were aimed at providing the Committee with open discussions and an overview of the challenges currently at the forefront in the print media industry and the creative industry of which CINEA are mandated to develop and regulate.

In the morning, the Committee met with the Managing Director of Today, Ms. Veronica Maria, who was accompanied by Ms. Jenifer Bipat, Chief Editor, Mr. Nelson Esparon, Newsroom Manager and Mr. Christopher Lucas, Assistant Editor whereby the Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Gervais Henrie had the opportunity of explaining the new mandate and scope of the MYCC, as well as openly discuss certain challenges and future developments within the media sector.



Following the fruitful meeting with the Management Team of Today in Seychelles, the Committee then met with the CEO of CINEA, Mr. Galen Bresson, the Deputy CEO, Mr. Gustave De Comarmond and other representatives from the Organization on the construction site of the Music Stadium currently being built. The Members of the Committee openly discussed the challenges and budgetary constraints of the construction of the Music Stadium with Mr. Bresson and his team. As a result of the points raised during the site visit Hon. Gervais Henrie said that 'the committee supports CINEA's plan to ensure the completion on the Music Stadium project, however we are mindful of the agency's challenge to maximize the venue's potential so that it will be profitable venture in the long run.'

Following from that a visit of the facilities of the ICCS and a meeting with the CINEA team were held later on in the afternoon and Hon. Henrie, also went on to add that 'the committee is shocked by the current state of the ICCS and makes an urgent appeal to the relevant authorities to stop further deterioration of the infrastructure and secure appropriate funds to refurbish the centre.'



THE FINANCE & PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE



A total of twelve Committee meetings have taken place up to date.

The meetings kicked off at the beginning of the year with a seven-day live broadcast session covering a total of thirty-five Ministries, Departments and Agencies based on the report of the Auditor General for the year 2017. This took place from the 4th of February 2019. The investigation on the National Drug Enforcement Agency and Financial Intelligence Unit continued with the testimony of Dr. Peter Larose, former Minister for Finance. The investigation is still ongoing.

In May, 2019, a special hearing was held for the frozen budget in respect of the Seychelles People's Defence Forces, the Industrial Estates Authority and the Seychelles Intelligence Services. In addition, a hearing was held to scrutinize the case of the 'Special Audit of Lease and Purchase of Land and Buildings by the Seychelles Trading Company from Parti Lepep'. The investigation is yet to be completed.

In October 2019, two meetings were held in respect of the Supplementary Budget for 2019 with the central focus on scrutinising the spending and the actual additional requests by the Agency for Social Protection. A report was submitted to the National Assembly for further consideration.

The overall aim of the meetings and hearings were for the Finance & Public Accounts Committee of the National Assembly to uncover any form of corruption, financial mismanagement and to ensure professionalism by all Ministries, Departments and Agencies in adhering to established financial procedures. As a result of the outcomes of the hearings, many Ministries, Departments and Agencies have reviewed their financial procedures and have taken on more efficient ways of spending government funds.

This year the Committee has submitted two other reports to the House, namely the Auditor General Report for 2017 and Special Hearing on the Frozen Budgets 2019. The FPAC has just received the Auditor General's Report for 2018. Work on the report is set for early 2020.



THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCES



Members of the Committee on Government Assurances (COGA), chaired by Hon. Gervais Henrie, the Vice-Chair- Hon. Clive Roucou and other members, Hon. Simon Gill, Hon. Sandy Arissol, Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel, Hon. Norbert Loizeau and Hon. Wilbert Herminie were actively involved in both local and international activities in 2019. Compared to 2018 when the Committee focused on site visits to monitor projects on Mahe, Praslin and La Digue, in 2019 more attention was given to public hearings and training for its members.

As its mandate stipulates, COGA is a Standing Committee that scrutinises the assurances, promises and undertakings given by the President, Ministers and other agents of Government in Parliament from time to time and report to the Assembly.



The Committee scrutinized amongst others, the Budget Address for 2019 presented by the Minister for Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Planning, Mr. Loustau Lalanne in October 2018 and also the State of the Nation Address delivered by the President in February, 2019. The mandate of the Committee also extends to submission of information promised by Ministers on the floor of the House and the Committee introduced a deadline for submissions of these materials which is Friday (same week). Members of the Committee accompanied by support staff from the Secretariat, visited the Parliament of Botswana in April, with the aim of benchmarking the parliamentary practices and processes of Seychelles Parliament by increasing interaction with other parliaments. The Seychellois parliamentary group met with the Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana, Gladys K.T. Kokorwe, the Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, Justice and Security, Major General Pius Mokgware and his committee and the Committee on Health on HIV chaired by Gilbert Mangole was also held ahead of the delegation's visit to his constituency, Mochudi West. Two public hearing were held in June, with officials of the Ministry of Habitat, Lands, and Infrastructure & Land Transport and the Ministry of Family Affairs to have verbal feedback on progress made towards achieving the 24/24/24 Housing project, tunnel project, day care for elderly and the land reclamation project.

The Committee will meet early in 2020 to plan its activities for the year.

THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



Members of the International Affairs Committee (IAC), is Chaired by Hon. Jean-Francois Ferrari, the Vice-Chairman -Hon. Clifford André, and other members are Hon. Waven William - Ex-Officio, Hon. John Hoareau, Hon. Flory Larue, Hon. Noline Sophola, Hon. Jude Valmont and Hon. Churchill Gill.

The Committee kicked off 2019 with an official visit to Mauritius in Mid-January. The delegation was headed by the Speaker, Hon. Nicholas Prea, all the Committee Members, the Clerk - Ms. Jutta Alexis, the EU & COI Desk Officer/Public Relations & Communication Manager - Ms. Alexandria Faure, the Secretary and Secretary Assistant of the IAC - Mrs. Dolores Azemia and Ms. Samia Lebon. The Delegation held meetings with the Deputy Speaker - Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard, the Clerk - Mrs Bibi Safeena Lotun of the Mauritius Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition - Hon. Charles Gaetan Xavier-Luc Duval, the Prime Minister - Hon. Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs - Mrs. U. Dwarka Canabady, the Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOM) - Mr. Hamada Madi Boléro, the European Union (EU) Ambassador- H.E. Mrs. Marjaana Sall, and the Seychelles Consul General, Mr. Guy Fok. The delegation had the opportunity to attend a guided tour of the Aapravasi Ghat - a World Heritage site.



Meetings with the visiting dignitaries are as follows:

- The Chairperson, Hon. Ferrari met with Mrs. Christine N. Umutoni, UN Resident Coordinator accredited to the Republic of Seychelles and based in Mauritius.
- The Committee met with the outgoing EU Ambassador, H.E. Mrs. Marjaana Sall.



- The Committee met with Mr. Fernando dos Santos, Director General from the African Regional Intellectual Property (ARIPO), Ms. Julita Nhane, Program Officer and Mr. Getachew Mengistie, Intellectual Law Consultant and Attorney from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
- The Committee met with a seven-member delegation from the Lianong Province of China headed by Mr. ZHANG Tiemin, Vice Chairman of the Liaoning Provincial People's Congress.

Overseas Mission undertaken by the Members are as follows:

- Hon. Clifford Andre participated in the ALDEPAC Annual Conference "Towards a Free Trade Agreement between Africa and the EU" that took place in Cape Town, South Africa from 1-4 March.
- Hon. Clifford and Hon. Waven William participated in the 37th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly that took place in Sinaia, Romania from 13-20 March.
- Hon. Waven William formed part of the delegation headed by the Hon. Speaker Prea to the 140th General Assembly of the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) that too place in Doha, Qatar from 6-10 April.
- Hon. Waven William formed part of the IPU delegation, headed by the Hon. Speaker Prea to participate in the 141st IPU Assembly that took place in Belgrade, Serbia from 13-17 October.
- Hon. Jean-Francois Ferrari participated in the Liberal Reflections towards Free Trade in Africa within the Context of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement Meeting that took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 17-18 October.
- Hon. John Hoareau and Hon. Noline Sophola participated in the 2019 NEAPACOH Meeting that took place in Kampala, Uganda from 29 October-1 November.
- Hon. Clifford Andre participated in the 55th Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and 38th Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly that took place in Kigali, Rwanda from 14-21 November.

During 2019, the Committee had various meetings with local stake holders mainly the Department of Trade, Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Fisheries.

THE WOMEN'S PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS



The Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Collaboration with Multi-Stakeholders Brought Cancer Awareness to the Forefront

In commemoration of cancer awareness month in October 2019, the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the National Sports Council, the Women and Sports Association, Ladies Circle and the Cancer Concern Association hosted several activities to sensitize and to educate the public on the nature of cancer and the importance of early detection during the month of October.

All the money that was raised during the month have gone towards a cancer centre that will offer awareness workshops, training for staff and on site counselling, as well as accommodation for people living on other islands who come to Mahe for their chemotherapy treatment.

The very activities that kick started the month long awareness campaign was 'Brave the Shave', an event the first of its kind to be held in Seychelles, raising funds for the cancer centre. The activity was held in front of the post office in Victoria on the 5th October 2019. Ten ladies courageously shaved off their hair as a sign of solidarity for cancer patients and victims. Locals and visitors gathered to encourage the women and the men who were shaving their hair for charity. T-shirts and books were also on sale as part of the fundraising activity. The Vice-President, Mr. Vincent Meriton, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Nicholas Prea, the Minister for Health, Mr. Jean-Paul Adam and some Members of the National Assembly also participated in the charity activity.

The monumental Cancer Campaign included radio interviews and spots, as well as screenings, sports activities and a special Motion presented by Hon. Chantal Ghislain to the House. The Caucus dedicated the month of October to Cancer Awareness, providing an excellent opportunity to demonstrated a commitment towards the cause and showing support to the communities affected. The statistics of cancer are startling and the Caucus in collaboration with stakeholders aimed to promote greater public awareness about early detection of breast and cervical cancer.

On Saturday 12th October some Members of the National Assembly; y and Secretariat Staff participated in the Cancer Awareness Sports Day at Freedom Square! The teams participated in the Fun Run, Volleyball and the football matches!

The Caucus alongside other stakeholders wrapped up the one month of activities with a Sunday Mass that was held on Sunday 27th October 2019 at the Parwas Lespri Sen, Perseverance.





Cancer Awareness Sports Day at Freedom Square

On Saturday 12th October 2019 some Members of the National Assembly and Secretariat staff participated in the Cancer Awareness Sports Day at Freedom Square! The teams participated in the Fun Run, Volleyball and Football matches!

The event was an opportunity for the club and work organisations to show their support for and pay tribute to local people affected by breast cancer and cervical cancer. Altogether the fourteen organisations who participated has an amazing day showing support!

Pink was the colour of the day with supporters, players and the club itself 'pinking up' for the occasion. the Minister for Health, Mr. Jean-Paul Adam addressed the participants and afterwards Bishop French Chang Him blessed the crowd.

It was touching to see the community embrace the event with such enthusiasm as the activities kicked off with a warm up session, followed by a Fun Run across Victoria.

As the group made their way into Freedom Square, the sports events started whereby the teams battled for the first, second and third place in the Netball, Volleyball, Relay and Football matches.

The youth were not left out of the activities and they participated in the relay, arts activities and bouncy castles.

The day started at 9am and finished at around 6:45pm with a prize giving event.





THE TRUTH, RECONCILIATION & NATIONAL UNITY COMMITTEE



In a short and symbolic ceremony held on Friday, 9th August 2019 at the National Assembly of Seychelles, files containing classified grievance forms from different complainants brought before the National Assembly Committee on Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity, were officially handed over to the Chairperson of the Truth, Reconciliation & National Unity Commission - Mrs. Gabrielle McIntyre, by the Chairperson of the Committee - Hon. Wavel Ramkalawan.

With this handing over ceremony, the work mandate of the Commission was also officially launched. At the helm of the Commission is Mrs. McIntyre, as the Chairperson, Mr. Michael Green as the Vice-Chairperson. The other Commissioners are Archbishop James Richard Wong Tin Song, Mrs. Marie-Therese Purvis, Mr. Jacques Kouli Gbilimou and Mrs. Marie-May Leon, all of whom were appointed following recommendations made to President Faure by the Constitutional Appointments Authority.

Mr. Pierre Rosario Domingue, one of the appointed Commissioners, recently submitted his letter of resignation to the Commission.

The files were handed over in the presence of the Speaker of the National Assembly of Seychelles, Hon. Nicholas Prea, the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Ahmed Afif, the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Charles De Commarmond, the Deputy Clerk, Mrs. Tania Isaac and other Members of the National Assembly Committee and of the Commission.

The Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity Committee was created with the aim of helping the people of Seychelles put closure to many sad events that had happened as a result of the Coup D'Etat of the 5th June 1977. The Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity Commission Act and laws which was drafted will greatly assist the work of the Commission to hopefully put closure to those past events.

During the ceremony, Hon. Ramkalawan had special works of thanks to Mr. Basil Hoareau, a former Member of the National Assembly for his assistance with the formation of the Act; Pastor Christian Lodewyk, who guided the Committee with his own experience on the South African Truth & Reconciliation process, and Mr. Richard Rogers who also provided great legal advice on the drafting of the Act in 2018.

The handing over of the files also formally marked the end of the work mandate of the National Assembly Committee, although Members remain available to provide their support to the independent Commission, should it be required.



COMMITTEE ON REFORMS & MODERNISATION



Reforming and Modernizing the Legislative Branch of Government for the Modern Legislators

The Committee on Reforms and Modernization headed by Speaker Hon. Nicholas Prea, met on several occasions in 2019 to review internal policies and guidelines of the National Assembly with the aim of updating them taking into consideration the current political landscape in the country.

The Committee reviewed the Dress Code policy, which included guidelines on the proper attire for Members and visitors to the National Assembly. Thus, it is now compulsory for all male Members and Officials to wear long sleeve shirts and ties in the Chamber and at Committee Hearings.

Another decision of the Committee was to push for the National Assembly to become the leading institution in reducing carbon footprint by adopting environmentally friendly practices. The Secretariat implemented this decision by replacing plastic bottles with glass jars in all Committee rooms and the Chamber, harvested rainwater, created a flower nursery, carried out an environmental assessment with the Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S) NGO, formulated an environmental policy, started composting and commissioned the roof top solar panel.

Some of the projects still under discussion are geared towards the modernization of the Legislative branch of Government by adopting Commonwealth best practices to create a more conducive environment for Members to perform.

The modernization of the Chamber will include new recording & transmission technology that will enhance the work of Members and create more space. The second task is to reassess the privileges of Members to bring them at par with the Executive and the Judiciary in terms of their remuneration, incentives and prominence. Members also believe that the Secretariat can create a more conducive environment for social interactions at the precinct.

The other members of the Committee are Hon. Waven William - Vice Chair, Hon. Bernard Georges, Hon. Charles de Commarmond, Hon. Sebastien Pillay, Hon. Sandy Arrisol, Hon. Stephen Pillay, and Hon. Francois Adelaide.

THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE



Comprehensive revision of the Standing Orders undertaken by the Standing Orders Committee

The National Assembly recently celebrated its Silver Jubilee and ten years have elapsed since the last comprehensive revision of the Standing Orders. In the meantime, the political landscape in the country has changed considerably and, since the 2015/2016 elections, a culture of transparency, fraternity and consensus has pervaded both the relationship between the Executive and Legislature and that between the two parties represented in the Assembly.

Additionally, the balance of power between the two principal political parties has, for the first time, produced Assembly Committees where the representation is more balanced than it has been since the advent of the Third Republic. For the above reasons, the Standing Orders Committee felt that this would be an opportune moment to revise the Standing Orders as a whole instead of reporting on piece-meal issues and after-the-event proposals. It was felt that allowing some time to pass since the beginning of the Session of this Assembly in September 2016 would ensure that the work of the Assembly would settle down and the issues which would require tackling would emerge. And so, it turned out to be.

The Standing Orders Committee is comprised of Hon. Bernard Georges as the Chair, Hon. Clifford Andre, the Vice Chair and other Members are Hon. Regina Esparon, Hon. Simon Gill, Hon. Sebastien Pillay, Hon. Waven William and Hon. Wavel Woodcock. The meetings of the Committee were attended by the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, the two Leaders in the House, Clerk and Deputy Clerk and, on occasion, Members interested by a subject under discussion.

The Committee met more or less regularly over the past year to consider every Order consecutively. The nature of the work undertaken meant that meetings of the Committee had to be held over relatively long sessions. As a consequence, meetings were generally held on Saturdays, when the Committee sat for a half day, or a full day, as required. The work of the Committee proceeded as follows:

First, all the Standing Orders were examined in chronological order and amendments made as required; Next, matters referred to the Committee during debate on the floor of the House were considered and amendments to the Standing Orders made as required; Finally, the Committee considered the Standing Orders of Mauritius and Zambia, two Commonwealth countries with different types of Government (Mauritius having a Parliamentary system and Zambia a Presidential system) with a view to comparing the Standing Orders there and amending ours where it was felt that these countries did it better.

During the whole exercise, Members had frequent occasion to consult numerous academic and parliamentary works with regard to the operation of parliaments in other parts of the world.

As part of the exercise, and given the overlap between these and the Standing Orders, the Rules of Procedure for Committees were also revised. A new Standing Order (87) making this link official has been proposed for consideration.

The Report of the Standing Orders Committee was submitted to the House earlier this year and a Statutory Instrument (SI) will be drafted for the scrutiny and approval the House.

THE BILLS COMMITTEE



The Bills Committee considers every Bill published in the Official Gazette. The past year has seen a very active Bills Committee, tackling sixteen Bills in all, fifteen Public Bills and one Private Members' Bill.

The House met for a second time at Committee Stage in a three-day public session to revise the Civil Code, in the presence of international experts and the Attorney General. It is now about halfway through the Second Reading and it has been agreed that time will be allotted in the near future for the Assembly to complete work on this important enactment.

The Committee adopted an acceptable modality of work in the past year when considering complex Bills by inviting the promoter of the Bill and the legal draftspersons, as well as interested Members, to Committee meetings, with the result that amendments could be comprehensively tackled in Committee.

This process proved expedient as time in Committee of the Whole Assembly, considering typographical and drafting amendments was cut back considerably. Major changes to the Bill in terms of policy were addressed ahead of the Second Reading, leading to greater coherence, and sometimes radical changes, in the enactment. Two examples are the changes to the Tourism Development Bill and Physical Planning Bill and Members of the House were free to focus on the broad issues in the enactment and not on trivial matters.

After Every Bill considered, other than short amending Bills, a report of the Committee on the Bill collated by the Chair was submitted to the House ahead of the Second Reading. The report included matters highlighted for the Minister promoting the Bill and Members to pay greater attention to. In addition, for longer Bills, a tracked version of the Bill with amendments and suggested alternative wordings was circulated – and at times projected – for ease of debate in Committee Stage.

During the year, the Committee was able to welcome the new Legal Advisor for the National Assembly's Secretariat, Ms Iris Carolus. As a lawyer with drafting experience, Ms Carolus has been able to take on some of the Committee's work and has been useful in the preparation of Committee reports on Bills as well as proposing amendments, both stylistic and substantial, to Bills.

THE COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, HIV/AIDS AND SRHR



This Committee of the 6th Assembly, formerly titled the Committee on HIV/AIDS and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), convened for the first time as a Committee on 01st February 2017. The raison d'être of the Committee was, and still is, to meet the requirements of the Southern African Development Community-Parliamentary Forum vis-a vis the battle against HIV/AIDS and issues of SRHR. Hence the Committee is first and foremost guided by the Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) which has developed a project to work with and strengthen the capacity of SADC national parliaments to advocate for and influence national responses to SRHR and HIV.

The first length of the project, which was approved in the SADC PF 35th Plenary Assembly Session in Mauritius, spanned over a four-year period from 2014-2018. Because of great demand and for continuity in work purposes, the project has now been renewed for a further 3 years effective July 2019. The National Assembly of Seychelles has once again committed itself to participate actively in various Health programmes relating to HIV/AIDS and SRHR under the project.

However, in a bid to broaden its scope of work at the national level the Committee met and found it necessary to change its name to become the Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS & SRHR Committee. With this also came the necessity to adopt a new terms of Reference (TOR) which came through a Motion tabled by the Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Clive Roucou on Wednesday 09th June 2019.

Since its conception, to the end of the project period in September last year, the Committee has been involved in various activities and has participated in various regional and international forums. Even after the closure of the project in August 2018, the Committee did not dissolve and has remained active to date hence the recent change in its name and TOR.

As it stands now, the role of the Committee for Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS and SRHR is to advocate and influence responses to Communicable Diseases, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights and HIV/AIDS in Seychelles and also in line with the SADC PF SRHR, HIV/AIDS and Governance project funded by the Swedish government.

The Committee collaborates with the Ministry of Health and HASO to Spearhead HIV testing at the National Assembly.

The former HIV/AIDS and SRHR Committee, in collaboration with the National AIDS Council and HASO, organized a HIV testing day for all Members and Secretariat staff of the National Assembly as part of the activities on its 2019 programme.

The National Assembly Committee organized the activity in a bid to educate and sensitize Members and staff on the significance of knowing their status. Members also used this event to set the example by being role models for their constituents.

The event, was held on Wednesday 05th June 2019 from 10am-4pm at the National Assembly whereby staff and Members participated actively in the rapid testing for HIV. Through this activity, the Committee hoped to raise awareness on the value of testing for HIV, as well as support the worldwide zero discrimination campaign.

Participation was at 73%.



Participation in SBC Live 'Programme Bonzour Sesel'

Both the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson of the Committee have appeared live in SBC's 'Bonzour Sesel' as guests on 'Topik Konversasyon.'

The Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Clive Roucou, was invited by the programme's host on 16th July 2019 where he gave a detailed account on the work of the Committee under the SDAC PF Governance Project. He also talked about the current challenges revolving around adolescent health, drug abuse (heroin), and HIV/Hepatitis C co-infection and the relatively high rate of teenage pregnancies amongst 15-19 year olds, explaining that these challenges are due in part to the age of sexual consent being 15 years, yet adolescents cannot access health services without parental consent until they are 18 years old.

The Vice Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. John Hoareau, appeared on 'Bonzour Sesel' on 22nd October 2019 where he was invited to talk about the Committee's participation at international forums. He highlighted that Members' participation at these forums equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to push for the Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS and SRHR agenda in Seychelles, provide them with a platform for the sharing of information with other countries of the SADC region to work towards a common agenda, assist them with regards to the implementation of laws and best practices to attain relevant SDGs, the sharing of lessons learnt to address challenges as well as build their capacity with regards to accountability and leadership.

Participation at international forum- NEAPACOH WORKSHOP

Hon. John Hoareau and Hon. Noline Sophola participated in the network of African Parliamentary Committees of Health (NEAPACOH) workshop which took place in Uganda from 30th to 31st October 2019. This was the eleventh meeting, in a series, organized under the auspices of NEAPACOH under the theme "Building the capacity of African policy makers for enhanced implementation of ICPD PoA and improved reproductive health outcomes: Challenges and Opportunities". The forum provided space for discussions between and among policy and decision makers and implementers to develop concrete actions and commitments aimed at improving reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP) outcomes in the context of implementation of ICPD PoA and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



NEWS & UPDATES



Another Historical Commemoration for World Children's Day 2019

For the second time in the history of the National Assembly a child addressed the House on the 20th November 2019 to amplify the voices of all children in Seychelles in commemoration of World Children's Day 2019.

Mr. Misael Bristol, a secondary student from Mont Fleuri school, supported by the National Council for Children addressed the House urging the leaders and the country as a whole to reflect on issues affecting children and to take concrete actions.

The National Assembly of Seychelles Actively Makes Climate Change Take Centre Stage at the Inter-Parliamentary Union General Assembly in Geneva

The National Assembly delegation to the IPU is headed by Speaker Hon. Nicholas Prea and include Hon. Jany Letourdi, Hon. Waven William and Mrs. Tania Isaac, Deputy Clerk/Desk Officer for IPU. At the last three Inter Parliamentary Union General Assemblies the Seychelles team has actively pushed for actions on Climate Change backed by the voice of the Small Islands Developing States (SIDS).

The subject was proposed as an Emergency Item to be included on the agenda of the 139th Assembly held in Switzerland by the SIDS grouping at IPU led by Seychelles and Fiji. Hon. Waven William was chosen as the representative of the SIDS group to assist with drafting and also defending the proposal entitled "Climate Change-Let us not cross the line", which was competing with three other proposals before the Assembly, including the Palestinians, peace and security in the Sahel region and ending the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Climate Change proposal made history by receiving the most votes as the Emergency Item and was also unanimously voted as a Resolution of the 139th General Assembly. The same enthusiasm was shown at the 140th Plenary Assembly held in Qatar when Seychelles provided its support by seconding, chairing the resolution drafting Committee and voting on the Emergency Item brought by the Netherlands calling on urgent international action to support Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe who were hit by Cyclone Idai. Again, the arguments around the Cyclone Idai were relating to the impact of climate change affecting the Southern African continent.

By then Seychelles had built a reputation for championing the climate change agenda and when the subject became an Emergency Item again at the 141st General Assembly held in Serbia, Seychelles supported it. For a third time, climate change was the common topic that united all national parliaments across the world.

The National Assembly of Seychelles will continue to champion the cause of Climate Change. The Seychelles delegation believes there is no plan B and there is no Planet B. This is why all efforts should be concentrated to save our planet now!



NEWS & UPDATES

Two Major Projects Moving the Parliamentary Information Technology Unit Forward

The National Assembly is setting up robotic cameras for filming Sittings and Committee meetings that take place in house. This means that camera images and video directing is done by the National Assembly and as such video feeds will be able to be used by all local broadcasters for live transmissions or otherwise.

Additionally, digital research and archiving systems where all documents of the institution can be access online for ease of research and referencing is also being implemented. This means that through a digitization process where articles, acts and bills are converted to digital formats; the use of metadata, tags, description and keywords to enhance an indexing system. This system is expected to be an integral part of the parliamentary IT system of the National Assembly in the near future.

Team Building Activity Brings Staff Closer Together

The National Assembly organized a Team Bonding Workshop for all staff on Friday, 27th September 2019 with the aim of:

- *Enhancing teamwork and collaboration skills through team activities*
- *Emphasizing the importance of positivity in the workplace*
- *Building on the good practices that we already have*
- *Communicating better as a team*
- *Creating trust among the staff*
- *Recognizing individual strengths, styles and skills*
- *Enhancing interpersonal relationships and cooperation*
- *Giving staff a well-deserved boost of energy!*

The Team Bonding Workshop was carried out by the **CTF Consultancy Firm** and it was a real success. We were able to achieve all the workshop's objectives and more! The open and frank dialogue ensured that the workshop was a valuable learning opportunity for all staff. The workshop itself was engaging, fun. Our facilitators – Mrs. Patricia Francourt, Mr. Craig Francourt and Mr. Nicole Lesperance had a clear understanding of our team bonding issues at hand, which were central in making the day a wonderful success.

About CTF Consultancy

CTF Consultancy offers services in staff training, impact evaluation, workshops and social media support across the public, private and charity sectors. We collaborate closely with clients to understand their needs; designing and implementing innovative solutions that are comprehensive, cost-effective, evidence-based and impactful.





NEWS & UPDATES

Hon. Regina Esparon & Hon. Audrey Vidot Participate in Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

The Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), African Youth and Adolescent Network on Population and Development (AfriYAN), Restless Development and the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), convened a Youth Indaba for delivering on political commitments on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV and gender equality in the SADC region through youth-led accountability, in Pretoria, South Africa from 15th to 17th October 2019.

Honourable Audrey Vidot represented the National Assembly of Seychelles at the Youth Indaba, in Pretoria, which gathered 60 youths below the age of 35 years, including young parliamentarians, youth advocates and researchers from 16 SADC countries to learn, discuss, share best practices and evidence to improve the delivery on political commitments on dignity and human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), HIV/AIDS and Gender Equality, Place and Mobility, Governance. The purpose was to advance the goals and commitments set out in the SADC-PF Youth Development Policy Framework (YDPF), which was adopted by the 39th Plenary Assembly Session and the SADC-PF Youth Development Programme Five Year Strategic Plan, adopted by the 42nd Plenary Assembly Session.

The advancement of the goals and commitments was done by, inter alia, strengthening the knowledge, capacity and skills of young Parliamentarians and youth in the SADC region to hold decision-makers accountable, especially in relation to commitments on sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and gender equality within the context of universal health coverage (UHC). Participants consisted of young Parliamentarians from Eswatini, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and of course Seychelles, together with youth activists and young professionals from SADC Member States.

The programme of the Youth Indaba included an intergenerational dialogue between the youth participants and senior Parliamentarians and development partners, focusing specifically on the unfinished business of the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA) and placing young people at the centre of development, including supporting meaningful youth engagement and youth-led accountability.

Honourable Regina Esparon was invited by the Youth Indaba to attend the intergenerational dialogue as a Senior Parliamentarian and also in her capacity as a Member on the SADC PF Standing Committee on Gender Equality, Women's Advancement and Youth Development.!



PHOTO GALLERY

German Delegation Visit

The first high level delegation from the German Parliament to visit Seychelles met with the Speaker, Hon. Nicholas Prea. The delegation was accompanied by H.E Mrs Annett Günther, the Ambassador for the Federal Republic of Germany to Seychelles.

The friendly and open discussions focused on strengthening the partnership between the National Assembly of Seychelles and the German Parliament. The Speaker was accompanied by the Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee, Hon. Jean-Francois Ferrari and Ms. Jutta Alexis, the Clerk of the Assembly. The delegation also met with the Leader of Government Business, Hon. Charles De Comarmond.



PHOTO GALLERY

Chinese Delegation Visit

A high level delegation led by Ms. Yin Yicui, Chairperson of the Standing Committee of the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress from Shanghai (SCSMPC) met with the Speaker, Hon. Nicholas Prea.

Ms. Yicui was accompanied by Ambassador GUO Wei and high level officials from the difference Committees of the People's Congress. The discussions focused on strengthening the partnership between the National Assembly of Seychelles and the Shanghai Municipal People's Congress.



PHOTO GALLERY

Parliamentary Group Visits Throughout The Year



PHOTO GALLERY

Parliamentary Group Visits Throughout The Year



PHOTO GALLERY

Courtesy Calls from Ambassadors & Government Officials



PHOTO GALLERY

Courtesy Calls from Ambassadors & Government Officials

