

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SEYCHELLES

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (IAC)

WORKING VISIT TO MAURITIUS

15TH – 18TH JANUARY 2019



A group photo of the NAS Delegation at the Mauritius Parliament Building

WORKING VISIT BY THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (IAC)
TO MAURITIUS

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A delegation comprising of Members of the International Affairs Committee, headed by the Speaker – Hon. Nicholas Prea undertook a working visit to Mauritius. Members of the IAC are: Hon. Jean-Francois Ferrari (Chairperson), Hon. Clifford Andre (Vice-Chairperson), Hon. Waven William (Member), Hon. Flory Larue (Member), Hon. John Hoareau (Member), Hon. Noline Sophola (Member) and Hon. Jude Valmont (Member). Accompanying were the Clerk – Ms Jutta Alexis, The Public Relations and Communication Manager & Desk Officer for EU and COI – Ms Alexandria Faure, Mrs Dolores Azemia – Secretary to the IAC and Ms Samia Lebon – Assistant Secretary to the IAC.

The aim of the visit was to revitalise the relationship between the two Parliaments and countries, boost regional partnerships and sharing of experiences. A resolution of the IAC that the first official visit of the Committee outside Seychelles would be to Mauritius.

Details of the visit are as follows:

1. Wednesday 16th January 2019

a) Meeting with the Parliament

- Delegates were received by the Mrs Bibi Safeena Lotun - Clerk of the Mauritius Parliament, followed by a guided tour of the Chamber. The group then remained in the Chamber for interactions.
- Speaker Prea highlighted that the purpose of the visit was for strengthening relationship between the two Parliaments as well as the sharing of experiences.
- Some of the points discussed were e.g. composition of the Members of Parliament, Chamber Procedures, the various Committees.
- A proposal for the NAS IT Manager to visit the Mauritius Parliament has been agreed. The purpose is to see how we can implement similar camera system for the Chamber at the NAS.
- Subsequently, a meeting was held with the IT Manager and viewing of the systems in place.

b) Meeting with the Deputy Speaker



The Delegation meeting with the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius, Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard

- The delegation then proceeded to pay a courtesy call on the Deputy Speaker – Hon. Georges Pierre Lesjongard.
- The meeting started by the introduction of Members of the Delegation by Speaker Prea. Speaker Prea then gave a short briefing on the purpose of the visit and afterwards gave an overview on the procedures of NAS Chamber sessions.
- The Deputy Speaker (in post as MP since 2000) welcomed the delegation and briefed the delegation on the various Committees of the Assembly. Sittings sessions in Mauritius are in English.
- Particular attention was made as to how to revive the “*Association Parlementaire de la Commission de l’Océan Indien, (APCOI)*”. The Deputy Speaker expressed his support for this initiative. A suggestion was also made for a joint delegation to visit Madagascar to meet the newly elected Parliament, exchange best parliamentary practices and to welcome the Malagasy Parliament as an active member of the Association.
- It was also discussed that members of the two parliaments seek closer cooperation on all matters relating to the work of the ACP-EU delegation and soliciting support for the unity of the regional ACP block.

- To conclude the meeting, an invitation was extended to the Deputy Speaker to visit Seychelles and the Seychelles Parliament.



Group photo of the NAS Delegation with the Deputy Speaker, the Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Mauritius Parliament

c) Courtesy Call on the Prime Minister

The Speaker led the IAC Members to a courtesy call on the Prime Minister – Honourable Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. It was an occasion to reaffirm the friendly ties between our two countries.

The delegation thanked the Prime Minister for his support in the negotiations on the Joint Management of the Extended Continental Shelf in the Mascarene plateau and expressed the wish to welcome him at the signature of the final agreement. The IAC offered to assist in finding a suitable date for the PM.

d) Meeting with the EU Officials

- The Seychelles Delegation met with the EU Ambassador – H.E. Mrs Marjaana Sall accompanied by other Officials from the Embassy.

- After the introduction of Members of the Delegation and Officials from the EU side – the interactions were followed.
- “APCOI” was again on the agenda during discussions and was highlighted that every effort has to be done and the necessary support be given to Seychelles’ demand to revive it.
- As for the Fishing Agreement, a proposal was made by delegates that the IAC be part of the negotiation team. It was pointed out that when MPs are not involved, the recommendations are not properly looked at.
- Members in general, pointed out that they value the partnership of the EU. Added that at the Post Cotonou Meeting held in November 2018 – there was a proposal to break ACP into regional blocks, Africa, Caribbean & Pacific and member countries are not in favour as this will weaken their negotiating power and votes.
- Members expressed their wish for more technical support from the EU and that the matter is taken to Brussels. Amb. Sall advised that any requests for assistance have to be submitted to SS Faure by which time decision will be taken as to which project to prioritize.
- Concerns were raised about delays in accessing EDF.



The NAS Delegation in the meeting with the European Union Office in Mauritius



Hon. Speaker Prea exchanging gifts with the EU Ambassador, H.E. Mrs Marjaana Sall

e) Meeting with the Seychelles Honorary Consul General

The Speaker and the IAC Members were also received by Mr Guy Fok, the Seychelles Honorary Consul General upon arrival at the airport.

Mr Fok assisted with the coordination of some of the meetings and also had a meeting with the Speaker and the Members at the Office of the Seychelles Consulate General.

Mr Fok hosted the delegation to lunch.

2. Thursday 17th January 2019

a) Meeting with the Indian Ocean Commission Secretariat

- The Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Mr Hamada Madi Boléro, welcomed the delegation and then proceeded with the introduction of the Members and Officials of the IOC.
- Then the Speaker briefed the IOC Team on the purpose of the visit.

- Discussions focused on reinforcing partnership in the fisheries sector among the islands in the Indian Ocean.
- Fishing is seen as the second oldest profession in the world and yet it is a fact that other countries benefit more instead of the regional countries.
- Piracy has been a problem as well and IOC recognizes that Seychelles has played an important role to that effect.
- Members of the delegation were briefed on the *APCOI* – its working procedures and composition of the structure of the Organization.
- Members from Seychelles Parliament representing on *APCOI* are: Hon. Nicholas Prea, Hon. Waven William and Hon. Flory Larue. The members were nominated in December 2016 and are due to be considered for re-appointment.
- The Seychelles delegation pressed the IOC for an early meeting of *APCOI* to re-launch activities.



The NAS delegation meeting with the Indian Ocean Commission



b) Meeting with the Leader of the Opposition

- The delegation was received by the Leader of the Opposition of the Mauritian Parliament – Honourable Charles Gaetan Xavier-Luc Duval.
- The meeting was carried out in a very cordial manner and there again, points discussed were around ways to better the relationship between the two Parliaments.



The NAS delegation in a meeting with the Leader of the Opposition, Honourable Charles Gaetan Xavier-Luc Duval

c) Visit to the Aapravasi Ghat World Heritage Site

The delegation was briefly received by the Chairman – Mr. Dharam Yash Deo Dhuny and was followed by a guided tour of the museum and site.

The Aapravasi Ghat, are remains of an Immigration Depot build in 1849, where indentured labour disembarked to take up contract work on the island replacing the slaves as slavery had been abolished.

3. Friday 18th January 2019

Meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade

- The delegation was received by the Foreign Secretary – Mrs U. Dwarka-Canabady.
- Following the introduction of members of the delegation, the Speaker briefed the Foreign Affairs team on the purpose of the study tour.
- Suggested points by the Seychelles side were as follows: reinforcement of the relationship between the two countries and not to allow any suspicious feelings affect its relationship. Highlighted that Seychelles cannot compete with Mauritius though Seychelles is doing better in fishing. Briefed about the meeting with IOC. Other topics touched on were: exchange visits; trade; Joint Parliamentarian delegation to attend meeting in Madagascar; collaboration with MPs to get things done by the Executive; sharing in the domain of services/offshore; cultural; training; Friendship Association Groups to look into various aspects/sectors e.g. teachers, architects, etc. on a voluntary basis.
- Suggestion was made about extending invitation to regional representatives on special occasions.



The NAS Delegation in a meeting with the Foreign Secretary Mrs U. Dwarka-Canabady.

4. Conclusion

The visit has overall been very fruitful. We are therefore looking forward to the revitalising of the relationship of the two Parliaments and countries for the purpose of better cooperation, sharing knowledge and exchanging of experiences and best practices. We look towards better interactions with the international organizations, namely IOC, EU and the reviving of APCOI.