

# REPORT



**139<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF INTER-  
PARLIAMENTARY UNION (IPU)  
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND FROM 12<sup>TH</sup> TO 18<sup>TH</sup>  
OCTOBER, 2018**

**Attended by:**

Hon. Speaker Nicholas Prea  
Hon. Jany Letourdi  
Hon. Waven William  
Mrs. Tania Isaac  
Mr. Roberto Legaie

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Nicholas Prea headed a delegation comprised of Hon. Waven William-Member for Grand Anse Mahe, Hon. Jany Letourdi –Member of the National Assembly, Mrs. Tania Isaac-Deputy Clerk/IPU Desk Officer and Mr. Roberto Legaie-Speaker of the National Youth Assembly to the 139<sup>th</sup> Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) held from 12<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2018 in Geneva, Switzerland. The Members took part in different forums and side meetings including making interventions in the General Debate, successfully co-chaired the SIDS meeting, made speeches in the Women Parliamentary Forum, form part of the drafting Team for the Climate Change Resolution and also presented the draft Resolution before the Assembly for approval. The collective and proactive participation of the delegation pushed the agenda of SIDS grouping despite very little presence of the SIDS participation within the IPU.



**The delegation of Seychelles at the 139<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of IPU**

## **2.0 The Programme of the General Assembly/Side Meetings**

### ***2.1. Side Meeting of the African Group/SADC PF Group***

The Programme of the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU General Assembly (Annex 1) began on Saturday the 13<sup>th</sup> with different Committee meetings held ‘in Camera’. At the same time, the delegation of Seychelles took part in regional side meetings including the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the African Parliamentary Union Meeting. Both meetings dealt with the same issues on the Agenda of IPU as followed:

- Report of the Representatives of the African Group/SADC PF Group in the IPU Executive Committee

The representative of the African Group/SADC PF Group reported on the decisions and discussions of the IPU Executive Committee. Members were updated on subscriptions fees, the issue of salary for the Secretary General, the performance of IPU at the United Nations, the financial expenditures of IPU and a matter to be brought before the Assembly regarding a Standing Committee. The Assembly will vote on whether the Assembly influence the agenda of a Standing Committee.

The President of IPU, Hon. Gabriel Cuevas attended the African Group Meeting and during her brief presentation she informed the meeting that she will be touring the African continent in 2019 and her Office will share this information with the Office of the African Parliamentary Union soon.

- The Emergency item to be included on the agenda of the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly

There were four Emergency Items on the Agenda : (1) Addressing UNRWA's serious budget deficit problem in order to ensure the continuity of its services to Palestinian refugees, discussing the repercussions of the US decision to cancel all its aid to UNRWA, and assessing the impact of this decision on the Palestinian issue as a whole; (2) Redoubling efforts to end the proliferation of nuclear weapons: The role of parliaments; (3) Restoring peace and security in the Sahel: The role of parliaments; (4) Cutting off aid to UNRWA: A humanitarian blockade and violation of international law.

- Amendments proposed by the Executive Committee

The meeting heard the amendments being proposed by the Executive Committee to be presented for adoption before the Assembly.

- Vacancies to be filled during the 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly

There were several vacancies on different Standing Committees. The Standing Committee on Protection of Humanitarian Law and the Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs had vacancies to be filled from Members of the SADC PF and African Group in General.

- Elections of the Bureau of the African Group Meeting (Presidency from Southern Africa)

The African Group decided to elect a President to preside over its meeting at IPU compared to the past when it was the coordinator of the African Parliamentary Union who presided over the meetings. It was decided that Presidency will be for a period of 2 years per region. Southern Africa was to elect a President.

## **2.2. The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Meeting**

The SIDS meeting took place on Sunday the 14<sup>th</sup> from 1.15 p.m. to 2.30 p.m. in Salle Genève and was attended by Seychelles, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga and the Federal States

of Micronesia. Hon. Waven William took the lead in the discussions during the meeting with strong emphasis on the Climate Change issue which is becoming an urgent matter before the European Union, Commonwealth and also the United Nations. The Committee agreed to draft a Resolution on Climate Change and present it as an Emergency Item before the Assembly for adoption. The draft resolution was submitted to the IPU Secretariat for inclusion as an Emergency Item on the agenda. Hon. William had the honor of presenting the Emergency Item before the Assembly and appealed for the support of all countries present to take the Climate Change issue seriously as all countries across the world are experiencing its impact. He explained that SIDS and coastal lying countries are bearing the brunt of it, because of the sea level rise, coral bleaching which have a direct effect on the economic potential of these countries.

On Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup>, the Climate Change draft resolution entitled “*Climate Change – Let’s not cross the line*” was brought before the Assembly for approval as the Emergency Item. Coincidentally, just before the draft resolution was moved a powerful moving documentary on the effects of Climate Change was presented by Mr. Henk Rogers, the Founder of the Blue Planet Foundation, who was a guest Speaker invited by the IPU Secretariat.



**Mr. Henk Rogers, Founder of Blue Planet Foundation with the SIDS Grouping**

The IPU rules and statutes makes provision for only one emergency item that can be adopted for resolution of the General Assembly, it has to be an issue of urgency that calls for the support of IPU and the global community’s immediate response.





**The Members of the SIDS from Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Seychelles and Fed. State of Micronesia**

The Climate Change Emergency Item was chosen, with 1106 votes for, 311 against and 248 abstentions and the following countries, Fiji, India, South Africa, Cuba, China, Federal States of Micronesia, Chad, Uganda, Carbo Verde, Kuwait, Jourdan and Indonesia shared their views on Climate Change in support.



**Hon. William representing Seychelles on the drafting Team for the Resolution on Climate Change**

Hon. William also formed part of the drafting team to finalize the Climate Change Resolution that was unanimously endorsed by the 149 member countries present at that time in the General Assembly on Wednesday the 17<sup>th</sup> (Annex 2).

### ***2.3. The Governing Council***

The Governing Council which is composed of the President of IPU-Hon. Gabriella Cuevas, the Secretary General of IPU-Mr. Martin Chungong and all Member countries met on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> October to be updated on the activities of IPU including the

Financial situation of the IPU and draft Budget for 2019; Report of the President; and the Interim report of the Secretary General. The issue of the increase of salary of the Secretary General was discussed at length and it was decided that the matter be brought to the Executive Committee for further deliberations.

#### **2.4 The General Assembly Debate**

The Start of the General Debate on the theme “*Parliamentary Leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change*” began soon after the meeting of the Governing Council and Speaker Prea was 28<sup>th</sup> on the speaker’s list for intervention. When he took the stand, the Hon. Speaker shared the different ways that the National Assembly of Seychelles is embracing technological innovations. He stated that there is a digital divide between the developing and developed countries as well as SIDS. He appealed to the international community to provide assistance in Research and technological innovations to SIDS, so that they are better equipped at combating the effects of Climate Change. Speaker Prea also mentioned that SIDS’s way of life is being threatened by climate change. He also informed the General Assembly that National Assembly of Seychelles will also need assistance to formulate policies to combat Climate Change. He also got the privilege of presiding over the Assembly general debate in the afternoon session.



**Hon. Nicholas Prea, Speaker of the National Assembly of Seychelles presiding over the General Assembly**

#### **2.5 The Women Parliamentary Forum**

Hon. Jany Letourdi participated in the Women Parliamentary Forum and intervened in the Parity debate on “*Ensuring that children enjoy their rights and grow up protected from violence*”. She gave an overview of the laws passed by the Seychelles Parliament over the years to protect the children of Seychelles from all types of violence. She

further urged all countries to honor their commitments to the implementation of the different Conventions signed on the protection of women and children.



**Hon. Jany de Letourdi and other Members of the Seychelles delegation posing with the panelists of the Women Parliamentary Forum.**

## **2.6 The Forum of Young Parliamentarians at IPU**

The delegation of Seychelles which included the Speaker of the Seychelles National Youth Assembly, Mr. Roberto Legaie attended the Forum of Young Parliamentarians as an observer. The exposure is very important especially for networking and experiencing what positions youth parliamentarians are taking on global issues.



**Mr. Roberto Legaie, the SNYA delegate at the 139<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**

## **2.7 Meeting with the Secretary General of IPU**

The delegation met with the Secretary General, Mr. Chungong to discuss technical assistance for the National Assembly of Seychelles by IPU and also for the SIDS Grouping. Mr. Chungong expressed his support to the SIDS meeting and informed the delegation that all countries of all sizes have the same voice within IPU. He



assured the Speaker that IPU Secretariat will provide all necessary assistance required by SIDS to continue their side meetings as well as having their voices heard.



**The delegation meeting with the SG of IPU Mr. Martin Chungong**

The IPU Secretariat will send a delegation to Seychelles in April, 2019 to provide technical assistance to Members and staff on parliamentary procedures; oversight role of parliament and interaction with the Media. A list of possible Resource persons will be proposed by the IPU Secretariat and shared with Seychelles Parliament for consideration.

### **3.0 Resolutions of the 139<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to be localized by Members of IPU**

The 139<sup>th</sup> General Assembly adopted the following Resolutions:

- Climate Change- *Let us not cross the line*
- Strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation on migration and migration governance in view of the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
- The role of fair, free trade and investment in achieving the SDGs, especially regarding economic equality, sustainable infrastructure, industrialization and innovation
- Parliamentary leadership in promoting peace and development in the age of innovation and technological change.

### **4.0. Conclusion**

The delegation from the National Assembly contributed immensely to the overall activities of the General Assembly. The Members actively participated in committee meetings and forums throughout. The unanimous adoption of the resolution on Climate Change by the Assembly was a victory for Seychelles and Fiji who co-chaired the SIDS meeting. The resolution was a strong call by the IPU Members to save our planet.

## **5.0 Recommendations from the delegation**

Following this successful mission, the delegation would like to propose the following recommendations;

- that the Report of the 139<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of IPU be presented to the President of the Republic of Seychelles for consideration,
- that the President of IPU, Hon. Gabriella Cuevas include the Seychelles as one of the countries for visiting on her IPU presidency summer tour in 2019 in the Africa region,
- that the National Assembly of Seychelles adopt the Resolutions of the 139<sup>th</sup> IPU General Assembly especially the one on Climate Change,
- that on the occasion of second International Parliamentarians Day, invite the Founder of the Blue Planet Foundation, Mr. Henk Rogers to make a presentation on Climate Change to Members and school children,
- that the National Assembly of Seychelles makes the topic of Climate Change one of the oversight agenda focus item, with regards to the National Determined Contribution (NDC) targets as a signatory country to the Paris Agreement.