



ANNUAL REPORT

MEDIA COMMITTEE

**SIXTH ASSEMBLY
2018**

The Media Committee composed of the Members as listed below, submits its Annual Report for 2018:

Hon. Gervais Henrie

Chairperson



Hon. Flory Larue

Vice-Chairperson



Hon. Simon Gill

Member



Hon. Wavel Woodcock

Member



Hon. Paul Ernesta

Member



Hon. Jany De Letourdi

Member

Hon. Chantal Ghislain

Member



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Media Committee is a Standing Committee of the National Assembly that was established in March 2012 pursuant to Order 84 of the Standing Orders (2009) through a Motion tabled by Hon. Charles De Commardmond. Article 104 of the Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles, the Rules of Procedure for Committees and the Standing Orders (2009) provide the statutory and procedural authority for the establishment and functioning of the Media Committee.

The Media Committee is mandated to ensure fair, proper, dignified and unbiased coverage of proceedings of the National Assembly.

The tasks and responsibilities of the Committee also includes the below:

- *Enhancing the quality of media coverage of the National Assembly*
- *Ensuring maximum media coverage of the National Assembly*
- *Providing Members of the National Assembly with the right tools to interact with the Media*
- *Assisting with proper training for Parliamentary Journalists*

The Committee exercises its functions through different instruments such as meeting with Media Houses, conducting visits to the different media houses, proposing and assisting with training for Members of the National Assembly and journalists in Parliamentary Reporting & Broadcasting.

The year 2018 was a productive and busy year for the Committee in the sense that it further re-enforced its relations with Media Houses, the Seychelles Media Commission, local media experts and social media enthusiasts with the aim of promoting the National Assembly as a source of news, as well as setting the foundations for open dialogue within the media industry on the challenges at the forefront.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The current Committee is chaired by Hon. Gervais Henrie and it consists of seven Members as follows:

- Hon. Gervais Henrie – *Chairperson*
- Hon. Flory Larue – *Vice Chairperson*
- Hon. Chantal Ghislain – Member
- Hon. Wavel Woodcock – Member
- Hon. Paul Ernesta – Member
- Hon. Jany De Letourdie – Member
- Hon. Simon Gill – Member

The Committee is also assisted by a Secretary and a Secretary Assistant. During the year 2018, the Public Relations, Communications & Protocol Manager, *Ms. Alexandria Faure* started serving in the role of the Secretary and she is further assisted by *Ms. Samia Lebon* as the Secretary Assistant.

3. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

During the year 2018, the Media Committee held five meetings of which only two were held with outside parties. In addition to that, the Committee also hosted a moderated debate on the precinct of the National Assembly to commemorate World Press Freedom Day 2018 and carried out three site visits to three national Media Houses.

The list of meetings and events for the year 2018 can be seen at ANNEX 1 on page number 13.

3.1 MEETING WITH NATIONAL MEDIA HOUSES

INTRODUCTION

On Monday 23rd April 2018, the Media Committee held a meeting with representatives from the Media Houses to discuss how the working relationship between the National Assembly and their respective organizations can be enhanced. The meeting was held at the National Assembly and provided the Media Houses with a platform to express their concerns and bring forward solutions to the current challenges being faced.

AIM OF THE MEETING

The aim of the meeting was to have open discussions with the Media Houses regarding the enhancement of the working relationship between the National Assembly and their respective organisations, as well as foster stronger relations between the Media Committee and the media representatives and Editors of Media Houses. The below Agenda was discussed:

1. *Parliament as a Source of News*
2. *The New Media Rules of the National Assembly*
3. *Expansion of Collaboration between the National Assembly and the Media Houses*
4. *Training Prospects*

IN ATTENDANCE

Eight (8) Media Organizations were represented at the meeting.

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVES
Today Newspaper	Christopher Lucas
Nation Newspaper	Marie-Anne Lepathy
Pure FM	Phyllis Coeur De lion
Seychelles News Agency	Rassin Vannier
SBC	Linda Rosalie
Le Seychellois Hebdo	Lindy Vital
K-Radio	Sylvie Ah-Time
Seychelles Media Commission	Ibrahim Afif
Seychelles Media Commission	Tessa Henderson

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many recommendations were brought forward by Media Representatives and in addition many challenges in the National Media Industry were highlighted. It was expressed that now that the debates have intensified it was flagged that some Media Houses are facing human resource constraints and do not have enough staff to cover the National Assembly to the detail, as well as meet public demand for information. Certain Media Houses expressed the issue that they face in terms of not being able to dedicate a journalist on the debates of the National Assembly. It was also highlighted that most of the Media Houses do not have journalists dedicated to Reporting on Politics and the National Assembly. Lastly, the representatives discussed the challenge of obtaining qualified and trained journalists are few and this is a challenge for Media Houses.

Recommendation 1: Frequent Order Paper Revisions

It was flagged that the Order Paper changes and revisions are done so often that it can cause confusion within the Media Houses and in the public sphere. It was also brought forward that the constant revisions make it difficult for SBC to organize their news team and structure their reporting. In addition, this causes a strain on the already under staffed departments. This constraint happens especially when the Order Paper changes on Monday night.

Recommendation 2: Diversifying News

It was discussed that currently journalists are merely reporting on the National Assembly rather than investigating and delving deeper into news worthy subjects brought forward and mentioned during the debates. There is a lot of information coming from the National Assembly however it's important to investigate further especially when there are Bills & Motions to be debated on. It was suggested that journalists should seek other sources of news from documents debated on in the National Assembly and develop news further and showcase a diversity of opinions. It was discussed that the Media can increase their efforts in questioning things further and not rely on information from the National Assembly to diversify news (getting different sources for news items).

It was also highlighted that other departments of Government are not forthcoming with providing the Media Houses with information to investigate worthy news subjects further. It seems that there is a fear of coming forward and providing information to the Media Houses but it is a two way street to provide news.

Recommendation 3: Political Reporting

It was expressed that Members are criticizing journalists when news are published and they are not exactly portrayed in a positive light. The ethics of the live debates were discussed whereby members use social media and text messages as sources for their arguments. This discussion also brought into question how the national assembly carries out its work and business of parliament.

Recommendation 4: National Assembly Coverage & Media Equipment

It was suggested that due to limitations at SBC, the National Assembly could look into investing in Media Equipment to carry out its own coverage of National Assembly Sittings.

Recommendation 5: Speaker to Explain Agenda from the Chair

It was suggested that to close the gap of confusion in regards to the constant revisions of Order Papers that the Speaker, from the Chair before the Sitting commences, describes and states the agenda at hand for the day.

Recommendation 6: National Assembly Sitting Timings

It was suggested that the National Assembly come to an agreement of when the Sittings should break and stick to the schedule to prevent inconveniences with SBC.

Recommendation 7: Weekly Reporting of the National Assembly (SBC)

It was suggested that Sunday or Monday could be considered as the day to report on proceedings of the national assembly in detail.

Recommendation 8: Order Paper Revisions

It was suggested for the National Assembly to inform the Media Houses on Order Paper revisions.

Recommendation 9: Quarterly Meeting

The Majority of the Media Houses requested to have a quarterly meeting to make sure that the collaboration is enhanced and that points would be followed up and taken into consideration.

Recommendation 10: Training for Journalists for Reporting on Parliament

Now that the debates have intensified it was flagged that some Media Houses are facing human resource constraints and do not have enough staff to cover the National Assembly to the detail and public demand. It was also discussed that training is important and that the Media Houses are seeking assistance from the National Assembly to provide training for journalists.

It was also discussed that a collaboration with AMPS could also be beneficial and looked into further.

3.2 MEETING WITH THE SEYCHELLES MEDIA COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

On Monday 11th June 2018, the Committee met with the Seychelles Media Commission with the aim to establish relations with the newly formed Commission. The meeting was held at the National Assembly of Seychelles.

AIM OF THE MEETING

The aim of the meeting was to gain a better understanding of the current Media Landscape, as well as proposed laws and programmes that the Commission plans to undertake. As this was a newly appointed Commission the Committee agreed on the importance of establishing relations with the Board. The below points from the Agenda was discussed:

1. *Sensitization on any proposed Law*
2. *Budget of the Media Commission*
3. *Cases Handled & General Media Landscape*
4. *AOB*

IN ATTENDANCE

Ten (10) representatives from the Seychelles Media Commission attended the meeting.

POSITION	REPRESENTATIVE
CEO	Ibrahim Afif
Board Chairperson	Marie-Reine Hoareau
Seychelles Media Commission Secretary	Tessa Henderson
Board Member	Jeffrey Dogley
Board Member	Mina Crea
Board Member	Sharon Uranie
Board Member	Divino Sabino
Board Member	Rosa Morin
Board Member	Sonia Mancienne
Board Member	Rose-Mary Elizabeth

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the meeting, the Media Committee proposed the following recommendations to the Commission via a formal letter:

- *Workshops to promote the Commissions Code of Ethics to encourage the public to report breaches of the code;*
- *Enter into Memorandums of Understandings with individual Media Houses to voluntarily put into practice the Code of Ethics;*
- *Organise regular media trainings in collaboration with AMPS and UniSey, as well as individual Media Houses to improve the quality of journalism locally;*
- *Increase publicity and campaigns to encourage the consumption of local media – to fosters knowledge, accurate information and foster business growth;*
- *Organise a Quarterly Editors Forum to encourage best practices for journalism and networking among local media;*
- *Spearhead the journalist accreditation scheme in collaboration with AMPS;*
- *Spearhead the drafting of the Seychelles Media Act which will consolidate all domestic media laws;*
- *Spearhead the Media Survey to furnish much needed statistics that can influence necessary changes in the industry.*

4. SITE VISITS

During the year of 2018, the Committee carried out several Site Visits to the Studios & Head Quarters of several National Media Houses with the aim of better understanding current challenges that these entities have been facing.

4.1 VISIT TO TELESESEL

On Monday 30th July 2018 the Committee went on a Site Visit to TéléSesel Head Quarters. During this visit the Committee had the opportunity of discussing challenges and successes with staff, as well as having a tour of the studios of TéléSesel.

Following the productive meeting that took place, the Committee proposed the below recommendations:

- *That TéléSesel continues to utilise the National Assembly as a source of news;*
- *That the reports not only cover what happened in the Chamber on the days of the Assembly Sittings but to continue to be the watchdog by analysing how decisions are taken by the Legislative branch of Government will and are impacting on the lives of the people;*
- *That ideas behind motions and questions are investigated further through news reports;*
- *That two major policy announcements made before the National Assembly annually are followed through. i.e the Message State of the Nation and the Budget Speech;*
- *That the work of the National Assembly Committees and their Annual Reports are scrutinised by the Media;*
- *That Members of the National Assembly are seen as community leaders, news sources and reference points for different media programmes.*

4.2 VISIT TO SBC

On Monday 30th July 2018, the Committee met with the Management Team of SBC. Following the meeting the below recommendations were proposed by the Committee:

- *That SBC continues to utilise the National Assembly as a source of news;*
- *That the reports not only cover what happened in the Chamber on the days of the Assembly Sittings but to continue to be the watchdog by analysing how decisions are taken by the Legislative branch of Government will and are impacting on the lives of the people;*
- *That ideas behind motions and questions are investigated further through news reports;*
- *That two major policy announcements made before the National Assembly annually are followed through. i.e the Message State of the Nation and the Budget Speech;*
- *That the work of the National Assembly Committees and their Annual Reports are scrutinised by the Media;*
- *That Members of the National Assembly are seen as community leaders, news sources and reference points for different media programmes.*

4.3 VISIT TO THE NATION NEWSPAPER

On Thursday 27th September 2018, the Committee carried out a Site visit to the Head Quarters of the Nation Newspaper which is under the National Information Services Agency and its printing press. Following the visit and meeting, the Committee proposed the below recommendations:

- *That SBC continue to utilise the National Assembly as a source of news;*
- *That the reports not only cover what happened in the Chamber on the days of the Assembly Sittings but to continue to be the watchdog by analysing how decisions are taken by the Legislative branch of Government will and are impacting on the lives of the people;*
- *That ideas behind motions and questions are investigated further through news reports;*
- *That two major policy announcements made before the National Assembly annually are followed through. i.e the Message State of the Nation and the Budget Speech;*
- *That the work of the National Assembly Committees and their Annual Reports are scrutinised by the Media;*
- *That Members of the National Assembly are seen as community leaders, news sources and reference points for different media programmes;*

- *That the engagement of the National Assembly on the Regional, Continental and International stage is given ample coverage;*
- *That due considerations to international conventions, Agenda 2063, the SDGs etc are looked at closely in relation to decisions taken in the legislative process;*
- *That the Public Relations Office of the National Assembly remains the main point of contact for communication, information and clarifications from the media.*

5. WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY, 2018 (ANNUAL HOSTED EVENT)

INTRODUCTION

To mark this year's World Press Freedom Day 2018, under the theme of '**Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice & Rule of Law**', the Media Committee endeavoured to encourage open discussions and promote understanding and awareness on the current challenges to freedom of expression as well as achievements.

In the digital age, online data has become the new currency of communication, journalism, policy making and diplomacy. The Media Committee recognised the open nature of the Internet; the benefits of freedom of expression that comes with it, as well as the risks and challenges. Furthermore, in light of the recent reports of defamation, fake news and the leaking of personal information, the Committee hosted an open debate with Media Houses, Civil Society and Government Officials, addressing these very issues and challenges in a friendly and open atmosphere; echoing the path of the National Assembly, as it continues contributing towards a progressive and democratic future.

AIM OF THE EVENT

The Media Committee endeavoured to address pressing challenges to freedom of expression and discuss ways of strengthening journalism as a central actor in building fair, responsible and inclusive societies.

The aim of the event was to position the Media Committee as a meaningful voice in debates concerning key media related issues on a national level; foster an environment of healthy debates and analysis; build a presence that is driven by fair and transparent processes and procedures that values accountability and diversity of expression; and connect the institution further with Civil Society and the Media Houses. Overall the intended outcome of the Debate was to foster a better understanding among stakeholders, as well as respond to contemporary challenges affecting the press and online freedom in Seychelles.

IN ATTENDANCE

Twenty (20) Organisations were represented at this event with thirty three participants attended the event and participated in the open discussions that took place.

ORGANISATION	REPRESENTATIVES
Today Newspaper	Rita- Joubert Lawen
Nation Newspaper	Gerard Govinden & Patrick Joubert
Pure FM	Nelson Esparon
Telesesel	Allen Boniface, Bertrand Tirant & Patsy Athanase
SBC	Berard Dupre, Angele Low & Linda Monthy
Le Seychellois Hebdo	Lindy Vital

CEPS	Michel Pierre & Steven Rose
Transparency Initiative Seychelles	Marie-France Watson
Seychelles Media Commission	Ibrahim Afif, Marie-Reine Hoareau, Divino Sabino & Sharon Uranie
ARID	Jules Hoareau
AMPS	Rassin Vanier & Tessa Henderson
Rotaract Club Mahe	Joanna Pouponneau
Stand Up Step Up Seychelles	Trevor Louise, Veena Andimignon, Hitcham Hoareau & Juliette Alissop.
Global Shapers Victoria Hub	Kellie Orphe
LGBTI Association	Fabianne Bonne
Seychelles National Youth Council	Marc Hoareau
British High Commission (Observer)	Ashleigne Antao
Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority	Darel Antat
National Council for Children	Jean-Claude Matombe
Gossip Corner	Michael Sabadin
Journalist	Sharon Telemaque

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the feedback from participants, the Media Committee agreed to host a Debate annually to commemorate Word Press Freedom Day. The discussions were productive and fruitful.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Based on the meetings and site visits held throughout the year with media stakeholders and representatives, the Committee is proposing the below recommendations in order to enhance the procedural framework of Standing Committees of the National Assembly, as well as provide a resources and access to media professionals covering the National Assembly of Seychelles.

6.1 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE INQUIRY PROCEDURES

As the Committee plans to expand its Terms of Reference (TOR) to include the Youth and Culture department, this will result in policy analysis and the hosting of public enquiries – requiring oral and written evidence. The Committee proposes that a procedural framework be drafted as part of Committee Procedures to better guide Committees and the Secretariat to handle enquiries and evidence in the most transparent and ethical manner.

6.2 NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

The work of Committees are increasingly expanding to include site visits, participations at parliamentary conferences overseas and local events centred on their remit. Providing budget allocations for Committees within the structure of Committee procedures will allow committees to better strategize and outline their plans of action each year, resulting in targeting events and effective oversight.

6.3 A MEDIA ROOM FOR MEDIA HOUSES

Media Houses have expressed the need for a Media Room at the National Assembly to better facilitate their work whilst they are covering news and events at the National Assembly.

6.4 FILMING OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS, EVENTS & HEARINGS

The Media Committee recognises the improvements of the graphics on the National Assembly YouTube channel and propose that the Channel be used more by posting educational videos, filming's of events, committee work and meetings to increase visibility of the work carried out by Committees.

6.5 ONLINE APPLICATIONS FOR MEDIA ACCREDITATION

The Committee proposes that an online application for media accreditation be introduced for the facilitation of applications for media houses and international journalists/media professionals with the aim to streamline the process and to assist in the management of press attending major events at parliament.

6.6 MEDIA TRAINING FOR JOURNALISTS, SECRETARIAT STAFF & PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Committee proposes that trainings be provided with the aim of exposing journalists to comparative experiences to help create awareness and to facilitate implementation of practices learned in Parliamentary/Political Reporting. In addition, mentoring or guidance workshops be explore for journalists to help them develop their skills in Parliamentary Reporting. The Committee also proposes that the National Assembly consider providing media training and capacity building for Secretariat Staff & Parliamentarians in the work of Parliamentary Democracy and Committee Procedures.

7. STRATEGY OF WORK FOR 2019

7.1 EXPANSION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee has recognised the need for oversight into other sectors such as Youth, Arts & Culture, especially relating to policies and future projects planned to be put in place. The untapped potential of the creative industries is the roadmap from which the Committee wishes to scrutinise and would require the cooperation in these key sectors to improve the conditions of governance and the integration of culture in sustainable development strategies.

7.2 WORLD RADIO DAY 2019 OUTREACH

With the aim to raise awareness on the value and importance of different media platforms the Committee plans to organise and participate in outreach activities relating to media related issues on a national level. On Wednesday 13th February 2019, the Committee plan to take over the Radio in an interview blitz on all radio stations to; sensitise the public on the role of the Committee; increase the visibility of the Committee; discuss key issues relating to the media landscape; and participating in important discuss with media professionals.

7.3 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY 2019 DEBATE

Friday 3rd May 2019 is the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day under the theme of '*the role of media in elections and democracy*'. The Committee endeavours to explore the theme by hosting a Debate with the aim of encouraging discussions and increasing awareness about current challenges to the role of the media during elections and in democracy as a whole.

The Media Committee recognises the essential role of the Media to democracy, and a democratic election – acting as a crucial watchdog.

Objectives of the Debate:

- Identify and explore the numerous ways in which the media ensure democratic electoral processes.
- Position the Media Committee as a meaningful voice in debates concerning key media related issues on a national level
- Foster an environment of healthy debates and analysis
- Build a presence that is driven by fair and transparent processes and procedures, and that values accountability and diversity of expression
- Connect the institution further with Civil Society the Media

The Media Committee endeavours to address pressing challenges relating to the role of the Media during elections, as well as their role in democracy; and discuss ways of strengthening journalism as a central factor in building fair, responsible and inclusive societies.

7.4 VISIT TO TODAY NEWSPAPER

The Committee plans to visit Today Newspaper to meet with the journalists and the editor to better understand their working environment and challenges.

7.5 VISIT OF SBC STUDIOS

The Committee plans to visit the Studios of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation to better understanding their working environment, as well as engage with media professionals working with the institution.

7.6 POLITICAL MEDIA REPORTING AWARD

The Committee plans to spearhead the idea of hosting an annual reporting award with the aim of encouraging Journalists to report on Parliament and on Politics in the country.

7.7 WORKSHOP ON STANDING ORDERS FOR JOURNALISTS

Based on the recommendations brought forward by Media Houses at the annual meeting last year. The Committee will be carrying out a workshop for journalists on the Standing Order and legislative function of the National Assembly.

ANNEXURE

ANNEX 1: List of meetings and events held in 2018

i. Committee Meetings & Events

DATE	ACTIVITY	VENUE
19 th March 2018	Committee Meeting	National Assembly
23 rd April 2018	Committee Meeting with the Media Houses	National Assembly
2 nd May 2018	Moderated Debate	National Assembly
21 st May 2018	Committee Meeting	National Assembly
11 th June, 2018	Committee Meeting with the Seychelles Media Commission	National Assembly
30 th July 2018	Meeting with Management & Board of SBC	Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation
30 th July 2018	Site Visit & Meeting	Telesesel
18 th September 2018	Committee Meeting	National Assembly
27 th September 2018	Site Visit & Meeting with Management of NISA	NISA

ANNEX 2: Proposed Terms of Reference

Hon Gervais Henrie – Member for Mont Buxton

Pe demann sa lasanble pou aprouv lamannman dan Term Referans Travay (TOR), Komite Media avek bi pou elarzi son manda.

Terms of Reference

Media, Youth & Culture Committee (MYCC)

Role & Purpose

The main purpose of the *Media, Youth & Culture Committee* (MYCC) is to ensure monitoring and analysis of policy, administration and the budget of the Media, Youth and Culture Departments of the Government, as well as to scrutinize matters within the Ministerial Portfolio of Media, Youth and Culture.

Tasks & Responsibilities

The Committee will:

- Propose and assist with training for Members of the National Assembly and journalists in Parliamentary Reporting and Broadcasting
- Conduct inquiries into areas of interest within its remit such as new or existing developments in media and digital infrastructure.
- Carry out an oversight role on future projects of all media organisations partly or fully funded from the national budget; and partly or fully owned by the Government of Seychelles.
- Conduct inquiries into the distribution of funds by Media, Youth and Culture related Governmental bodies.
- Conduct visits to the Departments of Culture, Youth and Media
- In the youth sector, propose and assist with capacity building and strengthen relations with local youth organisations.
- Study and make proposals for the review of legislation within the Ministerial Portfolios of Media, Youth & Culture
- Make reports and recommendations to the House as often as possible that includes recommendations for proposed legislation.
- Review and assess programmes and policies of the Ministries and departments and the effectiveness of their implementation

Composition

- The Committee shall consist of seven Members appointed as per Article 104 (2) of the Constitution.
- The Committee shall elect its own chairperson as per Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedures for Committees of the National Assembly.
- The Committee shall meet at least once a month, or as and when required.
- The Committee shall be appointed for the duration of the Session of the National Assembly.
- The Secretary and Secretary Assistant of the Committee shall be appointed by the Secretariat of the National Assembly.
- The Committee may co-opt any person with interest in Media, Youth & Culture to serve in this Committee.