

Address to the UN women political summit 21/ 06/2021

Theme: *Building forward: Women Political Leaders determining the new normal*

Topic: *What your country will concretely do to create a new normal, where more women political leaders have an active and equal role in decision-making and building forward.*"

As the theme of this year's summit correctly reminds us, women are the centrepiece of resiliency during this devastating pandemic that the world is going through. It is not a surprise, therefore, that we see women leaders all over the world taking this challenge heads on regardless of the difficulty and criticism.

Although there is a lot more to be done, a lot has been done where Seychelles as a small island state is now regarded to be gender equally balanced, where women are actively playing key roles in the governance and decision-making within our society. With the formation of a new government during the pandemic, the most vital cabinet position during this time, which is the health portfolio, has been rightly handed to strong and determined women, whom I am confident will lead the country to a better and new normal. This is an embodiment of an example of women leadership in our country in face of this crisis.

In the midst of this pandemic, we can see that front line health care workers, which makes up a majority of women, are the ones doing their utmost in leading us back to what we once called normalcy; They are the ones who should be commended the most and deserve our deepest respects.

From all corners of society, on a daily basis, the struggles that women face are too often disregarded and normalized, yet we still persevere with determination, as we each play our role in contributing to the health and economic recovery of our country; either in our roles as health professionals, women parliamentarians, female business owners or civil society leaders. All of our contributions, either small or big are valuable and meaningful.

Going forward, rest assured that Seychelles will remain committed in ensuring that women maintain their active role in leadership as we strive to become more inclusive

and address any inequality that still lingers within our society. I am assertive that female leadership in this country will bring us to an even better normal than what we were before. I thank you.