



**Praslin & La Digue Visit, October 2021
Summary Report**

MEDIA, YOUTH & CULTURE COMMITTEE

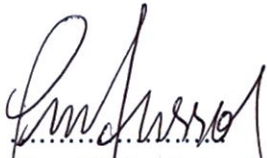
**SEVENTH ASSEMBLY
November 2021**

The Chairperson of the Media, Youth & Culture Committee submits, on behalf of the Committee its Summary Report on its visit to the Praslin and La Digue sports infrastructures:



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Hon. Wavel Woodcock
Chairperson

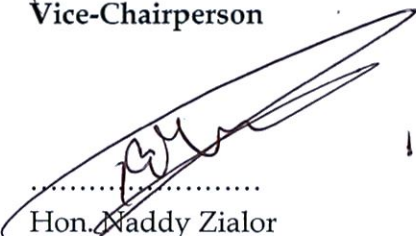
Other Members of the Committee:



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Hon. Philip Arissol
Vice-Chairperson



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Hon. Jany Letourdi



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Hon. Naddy Zialor



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Hon. Noline Sophola



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Hon. Kelly Samynadin

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Hon. Johan Loze

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1.0 Introduction

The Media, Youth and Culture Committee of the National Assembly went on its first official visit to the islands of Praslin and La Digue from Friday the 15th of October to Saturday the 16th of October 2021. The Committee was led by the Chairperson, Hon. Wavel Woodcock, and he was accompanied by other Members of the Committee including the Vice Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Philip Arissol, Hon. Naddy Zialor, Hon. Kelly Samynadin and Hon. Noline Sophola.

The Committee visited several locations on Praslin such as the Dove Centre, the Water Sport Centre, the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) Office, the Seychelles National Youth Centre and the Eve Island Swimming Pool. The Members also had meetings with groups and NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) such as the Unique Foundation, FRESH FOCUS, DIA (Diversity in Intelligence), TRASS (Terristrial Restoration Action Society Seychelles) and the PARFE Association. As for La Digue, the Members were able to visit the Youth Office and host meetings with the Board Members of L'Union Estate as well as Artits of L'Union Estate. To wrap up its visits, the Committee visited the Sport Complex at L'Union Estate.

2.0 Aim of the Visits

The main aim of these visits was to get a better understanding of what progresses, limitations and opportunities that the departments related to media, youth and culture are facing. As the Committee that has the jurisdiction 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 scrutinise matters within the Ministerial Portfolio of Media, Youth and Culture, the Members found it necessary to conduct these visits to be in a better position to carry out their mandates more effectively.

3.0 Locations Visited, Meetings Held and Main Findings

3.1 Dove Centre - Praslin

The main points raised with the Dove Centre was that it will be turned into a police academy in the future. For now, APDAR will operate by using its buses and they will have to find other ways moving forward on how to carry out its services as well as having a new suitable location. Furthermore, it was noted that since APDAR has been repealed, the staff are now considered as staff of the Ministry of Health – because of this, many of them were uncertain of the continuity of the former APDAR program and where they will be based.

The Committee was able to visit the building and its infrastructures in place; they saw that the area currently has 36 dormitories. The building also has a gym that is no longer in use and that is not in a great condition.

Further to the deterioration of the building, they are facing one major issue whereby they are low on staff. They have a limited workforce, and they cannot do as much as they wish to do given their resources.

3.2 Grand Anse Praslin Water Sport Centre and NSC Infrastructure

The Water Sport Centre was reopened in the year 2017.

The building is in dire need of renovation and refurbishment; there are rooms whereby the windows are broken, the Airconditioning do not work and there are holes in the ceilings. So far, the children that use the facilities have been lending a helping hand to keep the place clean and vibrant. Nevertheless, the Water Sport Centre lacks equipment to use for the children who wish to participate in the activities they provide. Further to that, apart from the building, the area surrounding the building also needs to be maintained and attended to, even the playing field is not leveled and cannot be used to its full potential.

The other NSC facilities opposite to the playing field are also in deplorable condition and in need of renovation. There are about 40 children that use a small room to practice Judo, and this has been the case for about 6 years now. The playing field is also in dire need of repair as well.

Moreover, the NSC building is too small to cater for the amount of people using its facilities, especially now with the Covid-19 pandemic, it has proven to be much harder to cater for certain things.

One of the main issues the Centre faces is the fact that it does not have the necessary finance to cover a better place or make the necessary arrangements to improve the infrastructure – there isn't even insurance for the children that practice with the Centre because of financial constraints.

The Committee noted that they will have to meet with the National Sports Council (NSC) to do a follow up on these matters and the commitments made to the Assembly.

3.3 Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) - Praslin

The main constraints faced by the Office of SBC on Praslin is the lack of office space. The office is very small and barely caters for the staff around. Further to that, there is a lack of staff as they currently have two camera operators and one journalist, and a backup journalist. The staff also only have one camera to operate with which makes it harder to cover more than one activity happening on the same day on Praslin and La Digue as they are the ones that cover activities on la Digue.

The other issue that the Committee enquired about was that of some Praslinois not receiving signal to listen to the radio or to watch TV. One of the areas affected is on Zimbabwe Praslin as that is a blind spot area. These specific spots will require specific equipment to direct the waves towards them to receive signal. There is a budgetary constraint to deal with this issue that needs to be addressed.

3.4 Meeting with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) – Praslin

The main point raised for NGOs found on Praslin and La Digue is the fact that there is a lack of financial support. They suggested that the Government needs to focus more on these two islands to push forward programmes and plans to further develop areas for the Youth's use such as providing equipment and having dedicated sites whereby the Youth can come together and participate in activities that build stronger bonds.

Furthermore, they argued that it is time to beef up cooperation with NGOs and it is time to regroup and meet up with the Youth so they know what is on offer for them and how they can make the most of everything as well as mobilise them to take part in planned programmes.

A specific point was raised by the NGO – Diversity in Intelligence (DIA), whereby it was pointed out that the Education System's Curriculum is outdated and needs to be revised. So far, the curriculum does not cater for all types of intelligence that exists and only focuses on students who are academically strong and does not cater for students with other sets of skills.

3.5 PARFE Association (Praslin Artist Federation Association) - Praslin

The PARFE Association currently comprises of 11 Members on its Executive Committee with an accumulation of all sorts of artists: musicians, painters, dancers, poets and so on.

The Association organises activities for artists and make sure everything flows in an orderly manner.

There are certain wishes that PARFE has in terms of the music industry. For example, they wish to see that anything that has to do with national activities and events involving artists goes through PARFE to keep the structure and the order of things instead of anyone calling artists directly and making contact and then activities become a failure.

In addition to that, there are financial constraints. There's not enough money to have events or activities on Praslin. There is no Gallery or Kiosks for artists on Praslin to display their work.

There's a huge difference between Mahe and Praslin when it comes to giving funds to execute an event and the Association feels like Praslin is not given the same care as Mahe is given. There's also an issue whereby Artists do not have a proper structure/building whereby they can carry out activities with sitting facilities to host guests unlike on the island of Mahe.

3.6 Seychelles National Youth Council (SNYC) Praslin

The main issue raised was that the current location of the Youth Bureau is not ideal. The Bureau is too far from schools, so it is not easy for the children from school to come to come to access their services. This matter is being addressed with and they have informed the Committee that they will be moving to a building behind the Grand Anse Praslin District Administration.

3.7 Eve Island Swimming Pool

The main concerns found at the Eve Island Swimming Pool is that they lack the necessary equipment they use and need. The equipment also takes time to reach Praslin from Mahe, sometimes it may take two to three months to reach the island. This of course, slows down the training of the Children and sets them back in terms of progress that could have been made in that amount of time.

Further to that, there is a low number of staff taking care of the building and offering its services to the children/residents of Praslin. It was noted that staff have to cover a lot of grounds by themselves, and they need extra assistance to be able to fully carry out great service and help all who wish to use the facility.

Lastly, it was mentioned that the building itself still needed reparation work done as there are certain areas that are starting to become old, and office spaces are still too small and cannot cater for more staff as it is now.

3.8 Youth Office La Digue

The Main concerns of the Youth Office on La Digue were the fact that the area where their office is located is way too small and there is not enough space to provide youth services for leisure.

With Covid-19 it has become more difficult to provide the service for children to use their computers and internet. This is because social distancing must be maintained in the library – and since the room is small, only one computer can be used .

The team on La Digue argued that a new building/structure is needed for their use. The current office has no privacy for counselling – they should have enough space to carry out all their essential services to the youth in need. It was mentioned that the area that has been proposed to build a youth centre is the land opposite the La Digue district administration, right next to the pension fund building that is housing the current youth bureau.

Negotiations with the Ministry of Lands will have to be undertaken to find a way forward.

3.9 Sports Complex La Digue

There were quite a few concerns raised at the Sports Complex on La Digue. The Sports Complex was built back in 1997. It was seen that there isn't enough office space to accommodate for existing staff and they do not have a proper store to keep all the equipment they use. The equipment is currently being stored where the staff sit.

Furthermore, there is a lack of manpower to take care of the large area – there's currently on 3 staff who are taking care of the Complex and its property. It was expressed that this is in fact not an easy task as there's a lot of ground to be covered.

Moreover, the building is seen to be very dangerous for the children who use it to practice sports: for now, the tennis court is off limits for use as the iron sheets can come off the roof and fall on the tennis court with strong winds because they are very old and fragile. The tennis court hasn't

been renovated for about 5 years. Further to that, the slabs that surround the field where the running takes place is unstable, old and can cause severe injuries if anyone should fall in while running. The Sports Complex faces other budgetary constraints – there isn't enough funds to develop the Complex or fix what is broken.

In addition, the staff noted that the salary for staff is not up to par when compared to the amount of work that is needed to be undertaken by one person alone. The salary packages have not changed or been revised for a few years now.

3.10 Meeting with Artists at L'Union Estate

The Artists that attended the meeting with the Committee pointed out that one of their main requirements to further develop their business and earn better would be to have kiosks to sell their work in. So far, artists have been giving their work to shop merchants to sell it for them, but this isn't beneficial as in the end they have to give a commission. They suggested that the kiosks can even be rented to them just in case someone can't afford to buy one.

Further to that, the artists argued that there should be an area/structure/gallery that can cater for artists and provide a space for them to promote and sell their goods. This would bring in more visitors and give their work the value and attention it needs.

One main complaint received from those present was the fact that their crafted original work were being copied and sold at a much cheaper price. This causes a problem as tourists end up buying the cheap plastic ones instead of buying theirs at its original price. They mentioned that certain sellers are importing these goods and products from overseas and that something should be done about it.

At the end of the meeting it was recommended by the Committee that the Artists finalizes its Association for La Digue and make it legal that way even copyright issues as mentioned above can be dealt with more accordingly as we move forward.

3.11 Meeting with representative from Board of L'Union Estate

The Board Members of L'Union Estate informed the Committee that there is a Master Plan for L'Union Estate that has been devised to help move L'Union forward in the long term. The Plan includes ideas such as an Artisanal area and workshop area for skills sharing whereby kids can learn skills from artisans and artists.

Board Members noted that if the current group of artists truly form an Association as discussed prior to the Committee's meeting with them, then the artists could take up the workshop and lead it themselves, that way it's concrete, formal and solidified and they can also benefit from it by selling their goods.

The Committee was informed that the Board carried out visits to see what can be done for everyone in terms of growing the tourism industry in the area whilst incorporating Culture and the Youth. A Project Committee was created that is being led by the Board itself that will oversee such progress.

The issues raised by artists whereby they state that they need kiosks to sell their goods were also addressed by the Board. They stated that there are also artists that don't want a permanent kiosk, but they'd like to rent one instead for set/specific days. This is a proposal that is also under consideration and being reviewed. The Board also stated that they are aware of the issue of copyright and the import of goods, which is why when they make the contract to rent out kiosks, they will ensure that the clause states that the crafts being sold must be local artisanal crafts and not fake ones otherwise the vendors cannot use the kiosk to sell their goods.

4.0 Conclusion

During the visits, several Departments put forward some noteworthy points. The main concerns expressed by the several Departments were based around the financial constraints they face which hinders the amount of activities they wish to do. Furthermore, many places were struggling with deterioration of their infrastructure which causes concern for the safety of staff as well as those that use their facilities. Moreover, many raised the point of having limited staff, and that this makes

it harder to manage certain given tasks which they wish to complete in a timely manner. These are issues that they noted have been lingering and persistent for many years.

Some Departments expressed that though they are facing some of the above-mentioned issues, they have started to mobilise and have formulating concepts and plans to try and find the best way forward. They have been having meetings, consulting and cooperating with partners to see what can be done to improve on their existing shortcomings.

The Media, Youth and Culture Committee will be organising meetings with all the relevant and key Departments of the Government to follow up on the matters discussed throughout the visits and meetings held on both islands.