



THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SEYCHELLES

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

2021

Seventh Assembly

THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE is mandated to address any topic associated with the national foreign service of Seychelles, the conduct of tourism, international affairs and of international parliamentary affairs as per its Terms of Reference.

Powers

The Committee is a Select Sessional Committee, the powers of which are set out in the National Assembly Standing Orders, 2020, principally, SO 88-92.

Committee Staff

The Committee is assisted by the following Parliamentary Staff of the Secretariat:
Ms. Alexandria Faure (Secretary) and *Mrs. Nada Delafontaine* (Secretary Assistant)

Contact

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The Committee's email address is iac@nationalassembly.sc

The telephone number for general enquiries is +248 428 5600.

The following Members of the International Affairs Committee undersigned, submit this Report dated Tuesday 8th March 2022:

Hon. Waven William
Chairperson



Hon. Wavel Woodcock
Vice-Chairperson



Hon. Egbert Aglae
Member



Hon. Kelly Samynadin
Member



Hon. Wallace Cosgrow
Member



Hon. Philip Monthly
Member



Hon. Philip Arissol
Member



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Work & Membership of the Committee

The International Affairs Committee is a Select Sessional Committee, the powers of which are set out in the *National Assembly Standing Orders, 2020*, principally, Orders 90-91 and Part III of the *National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, 2011*.

The functions of the Committee are also governed by the *Rules of Procedure for Committees* of which Order 91 makes provisions for.

The Committee consists of seven Members as follows:

Hon. Waven William – Chairperson

Hon. Wavel Woodcock – Vice Chairperson

Hon. Egbert Aglae – Member

Hon. Philip Monthy – Member

Hon. Wallace Cosgrow – Member

Hon. Kelly Samynadin – Member

Hon. Philip Arissol – Member

The Committee is also assisted by a Secretary, *Ms. Alexandria Faure* and a Secretary Assistant, *Mrs. Nada Delafontaine*.

At the very first meeting of the International Affairs Committee on *Wednesday 11th November 2020* the Chairperson, Hon. Waven William and Vice-Chairperson, Hon. Wavel Woodcock were elected as per Procedure 4 from the *Rules of Procedure for Committees*.

In this meeting the Members discussed and agreed on the importance of revising the Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Committee and to include tourism as it was a new Department added to the portfolio of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, that falls under the oversight of the mandate of the Committee.

The amended TOR is Appendix One.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference

The Secretary to the Committee, Ms. Alexandria Faure and the Secretary Assistant, Mrs. Nada Delafontaine carried out research of Foreign Affairs Committees of Small Island Developing States and the Commonwealth.

At a meeting of 24th June, 2020, the Committee met to discuss the final draft of the TOR that had been shared via email and of which Members provided further input and amendments. The Committee discussed the draft Terms of Reference presented by the Secretary. ¹

The Committee agreed for the TOR to be presented to the House as amended.

¹ Appendix 2, Draft 2 of the TOR

Approval of TOR: The Motion tabled by Hon. Waven William to amend the TOR of IAC was passed on *Wednesday 14th July, 2021*, with 21 Members voting for, 0 against and 9 abstentions. **(Amended & Approved TOR is Appendix 1)**

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF TREATIES & INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The Committee reviewed nine (9) international agreements and treaties for the year 2021 as per below:

Treaty	Stakeholder	Date of Meetings	Ratification Date
<i>Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure</i>	Department of Social Affairs	11 th March 2021	26 th May 2021
<i>Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)</i>	Department of Trade	24 th March 2021	15 th June 2021
<i>Agreement between the United States of America and the Seychelles Concerning Counter Illicit Transnational Maritime Activity Operations</i>	Department of Foreign Affairs Coastguard	31 st March 2021	26 th May 2021
<i>SADC Agreement on Assistance in Tax Matters</i>	Department of Finance	16 th June 2021	23 rd June 2021
<i>The Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics & Optional Protocol to the Framework Convention on Tourism Ethics</i>	Department of Tourism	24 th June 2021	8 th September 2021
<i>United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons</i>	Department of Foreign Affairs	4 th May 2021	30 th June 2021
<i>l'Accord portant révision de l'Accord général de coopération entre les États membres de La Commission de l'océan Indien</i>	Department of Foreign Affairs	21 st October 2021	22 nd November 2021
<i>SADC Protocol Against Corruption</i>	Department of Foreign Affairs Anti-Corruption Commission	4 th May 2021 14 th October 2021	22 nd November 2021
<i>Multilateral Convention Implementing Tax Treaty Related Measures to Prevent Base Erosion and Profit Shifting</i>	Department of Finance	19 th October 2021	22 nd November 2021

Parliamentary Procedure For International Instruments' Ratification

The parliamentary procedure enforced is that once the National Assembly receives the '**Letter of Recommendation for Ratification**' from the President of the Republic the IAC is alerted and the Treaty is reviewed via a meeting with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Government entities concerned.

After the review meeting, the Committee drafts a Report and once the report is finalised the Assembly Business Committee is informed in order for the Leader of Government Business to bring forward the Motion for Ratification.

The Secretariat prepares a '**Recommendations of Motion**' document, drafted by the Parliamentary Research Unit of which includes recommendations by the House and the IAC (from the Report). The Recommendations are then submitted to State House accompanied by the Letter from the Clerk's Office confirming whether the Motion has been approved or not.

CHAPTER THREE

MEETINGS WITH EXTERNAL ENTITIES & OFFICIALS

In addition to the 10 meetings held to review the international agreements/treaties, the IAC also held 5 other meetings with external entities.

WONDER WEISS

The Committee held a meeting with the non-governmental organisation, Wonder Weiss, on **Thursday 3rd December 2021**.

The below points were discussed;

- Solution based strategies to address gaps in the current maritime surveillance operations.
- The App that will be a big component of the project.
- Gaps in the current Data Protection Act concerning the protection of digital data derived from projects.
- Partnerships and collaborations with other Authorities and Departments of Government.
- The positive economic impact of the project and how it will contribute greatly to economic diversification.
- The positive responses from stakeholders that have been contacted.

TWO CONSULTATIVE MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. The Committee held its first consultative meeting with the Department of Foreign Affairs on **Thursday 21st January, 2021**.

The meeting involved discussions on the below:

- **Briefing on the Visit of President Ramkalawan to Mauritius:** The Committee was briefed on COP26, the vulnerability index, regional maritime security, Mauritius Investment Desk at SIB, air bubble creation, increase in trade, the signing of MoUs, agriculture and the SIDS agenda which were all discussed in Mauritius.
- **Discussions on the Budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs; the Constraints faced:** Involved discussions on budgetary cuts, the debt to Air Seychelles for the use of the VIP Lounge and savings made.
- **A Briefing on the Re-Structuring of the Department of Foreign Affairs:** The Committee were apprised on certain administrative issues, the position of Special Advisor to the Minister which was abolished, and the streamlined management of the Embassies. In addition, the delegation briefed the Committee on the restructuring of the staff and divisions, the role of consuls which was reviewed and the shift to re-focus on the three principles for the foreign service.
- **Closures of Embassies and Resignations of Ambassadors:** The Committee was informed that the Embassies in Cuba, Sri Lanka and Geneva have now closed. The resignation of Ambassadors was also highlighted.

- **Establishment of Frequent Consultative Meetings:** Both parties agreed to meet every three months.
- 2. The Committee held a second consultative meeting with the Department of Foreign Affairs led by the Minister, Mr. Sylvestre Radegonde and the PS, Mrs. Vivianne Fock Tave on **Thursday 21st October 2021**.

The meeting involved discussions on the below:

1. **Secretary General of the Commonwealth:** The IAC was updated on the matter of Secretary General of the Commonwealth.
2. **The Indian Ocean Commission:** The Committee was provided with an update and brief on the IOC.
 - 2.1 **Revised Victoria Agreement (l'Accord de Victoria révisé):** The Committee reviewed the instrument and addressed some questions and concerns to the delegation.
 - 2.2 **L'Association des Parlementaires de la Commission de l'Océan Indian (l'APCOI):** The Committee discussed the need for the revival of the APCOI and sought the support of Foreign Affairs for this endeavour.
3. **European Union (EU)**
 - 3.1 **Addendum to EU NAVFOR Operation ATALANTA:** The IAC were briefed on this initiative.
 - 3.2 **8th EU Political Dialogue (7th October 2021):** The Committee was apprised on the discussions that took place in the Political Dialogue with the EU Delegation and the Executive.
4. **Seychelles 3rd Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review under the UN Human Rights Council (10th May 2021):** The IAC was provided with detailed information on the periodic review.
5. **Diaspora Unit:** The Committee was briefed on the mandate of this Unit and its work going forward.
6. **SADC Parliamentary Forum - Latest Council's Decision:** The Department of Foreign Affairs provided the IAC with the current stance and developments of this.
7. **Overview of Budget 2022 of Foreign Affairs Department:** The Committee was given an update on the Budget of Foreign Affairs.

LEGISLATIVE CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Committee met with the Attorney General on **Friday 12th March, 2021** to discuss the Civil Status (Amendment) Bill, 2021 before it is finalised and gazetted.

The Attorney General, Mr. Frank Ally and Mr. Knights made an introduction on the *raison d'être* of the amendments being proposed, especially concerning the views of the diaspora.

- **Section 39a:** The Committee discussed the registration of overseas births and on certain difficulties that the Seychellois diasporas are facing to register their children in Muslim countries. The discussion involved the proposal that any Seychellois can register births outside of Seychelles and have them authenticated.
- **Ghana Diaspora Scheme:** The Attorney general raised the issue of the GDS and indicated that it would be beneficial to further review it for consideration on how Seychellois diaspora can be engaged. There was a discussion on the Ghana Diaspora scheme and how it would be beneficial to review this scheme to consider further on how the diaspora of Seychelles can be reconnected back home in terms of contributing and investing in the country. Mrs Sandra Michel from the Department of Foreign Affairs informed the Committee that the Diaspora Unit of the Department is drafting a policy that is taking in consideration these salient points discussed.

CONSULTATIVE MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR JUMEAU

The Committee met with Ambassador Ronny Jumeau on **Thursday 29th July, 2021**, to discuss the objectives of COP26, understand the Climate Change issues affecting the world and Seychelles, as well as learn more about the AOSIS as the Alliance for Small Island States.

The discussions involved the below subject matters:

- **Briefing on the Alliance of Small Island State:** The Committee was apprised on the AOSIS, the current chairmanship which is Antigua and Barbuda, Ambassador Walton Alfonso Webson and the Membership of the Alliance.
- **Briefing on COP26:** IAC was informed on the COP26 and its importance. In addition, Ambassador Jumeau provided alarming statistics on the threat of climate change, especially to small island states.
- **Briefing on the IPCC:** The Committee was provided with a detailed update on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- **The Members addressed questions to Ambassador Jumeau relating to the mitigation of climate change, fossil fuels and LNG, as well as the issue on climate refugees.**

CHAPTER FOUR

RECOMMENDATIONS & STRATEGY FOR 2022

1. Follow Ups on Recommendations on International Agreements & Treaties (Formalising a Parliamentary Practice)

In 2022, the Committee will adopt a follow up strategy which will include both more targeted meetings and visits necessary as part of its oversight role based on the work being done with the various government entities apart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Tourism. The Committee will also engage with the relevant private sector agencies concerned as the beneficiaries or as facilitators in the socio-economic development of Seychelles.

In order to facilitate follow ups, the IAC have added timelines in the recent recommendations made, more specifically in the reports on the SADC Protocol Against Corruption and the Indian Ocean Commission Agreement.

CONCLUSION

The 2021 working pace of the IAC was affected to some extent as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee is satisfied with the work done, recognising and congratulating the committee secretary and assistant secretary for their valuable contributions towards IAC achieving its goal.

The Committee would further like to thank the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Clerk and all Parliamentary staff for proving to be an efficient team despite staff shortages and increasing work load.

The Committee is looking forward to another fruitful year and in raising the bar further.

The Chair and Vice-Chair thanks all the Members for their dedication in 2021 and count on their continued motivation for 2022.

APPENDIX ONE

International Affairs Committee

Terms of Reference

The International Affairs Committee is a Select Sessional Committee that addresses any topic associated with the national foreign service of Seychelles, the conduct of tourism, international affairs and of international parliamentary affairs.

Tasks & Responsibilities:

The Committee will:

1. Review and assess the Foreign and Tourism policies and strategy of the Republic of Seychelles.
2. Assess and report on the mandate and operation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Tourism to the House, as well as any other subject matter relating to international relations and global governance.
3. Conduct oversight on the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Tourism.
4. Review and assess International Agreements, Protocols, Conventions and Treaties before Ratification and Report back to the House on any recommendations and any matters examined by the Committee.
5. Maintain and establish ties with foreign parliamentary organizations.

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 and when required.
- The Committee shall be appointed for the duration of the Session of the National Assembly.
- The Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the Committee shall be appointed by the Secretariat of the National Assembly as per Order 13 (9) of the Standing Orders, 2020.

APPENDIX TWO

International Affairs Committee

Terms of Reference

The International Affairs Committee is a Select Sessional Committee that addresses any topic associated with the national foreign service of Seychelles, the conduct of tourism, international affairs and of international parliamentary affairs.

Tasks & Responsibilities:

The Committee will:

1. Review and assess the Foreign Policy of the Republic of Seychelles, including the role and activities of the participation of Seychelles in international and regional organizations.
2. Review and assess the participation of Seychelles in International relations and international developments, including the involvement of the National Assembly of Seychelles in international parliamentary organizations.
3. The Committee is empowered to study and report on the mandate and operation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Tourism to the House, as well as any other subject matter relating to Tourism, international relations, global governance and international development.
4. Conduct inquiries into the conduct of Foreign Policy, Tourism and any other matters relating to international affairs and development.
5. Review and assess International Agreements and Treaties before Ratification and Report back to the House on any recommendations and any matters examined by the Committee.
6. Examine and have oversight of the budget of the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Tourism.
7. Work closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Tourism through regular consultations to review and assess the conduct of international affairs, tourism and diplomacy.
8. Maintain and establish ties with foreign parliamentary organizations.

Composition

- The Committee shall consist of seven Members appointed as per Article 104 (2) of the Constitution.

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