



THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SEYCHELLES

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDIA YOUTH SPORT AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

2021

Seventh Assembly

The **Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee** is mandated to ensure monitoring and analysis of policy, administration, and the budget of the Media, Youth, Sports and Culture departments of the Government as well as to scrutinise the matters within the Ministerial portfolios of Media, Youth Sports and Culture. The Committee is a Select Sessions Committee, as per the National Assembly Standing Orders, 2020.

Committee Staff

The Committee is assisted by the following Parliamentary Staff of the Secretariat:
Ms. Shannon Surman (Secretary) and *Mr. Vincent Quatre* (Secretary Assistant)

Contact

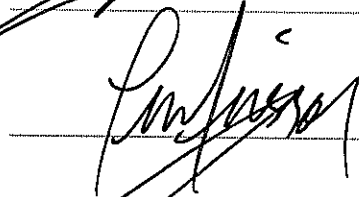
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The following Members of the Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee undersigned, submit this Report:

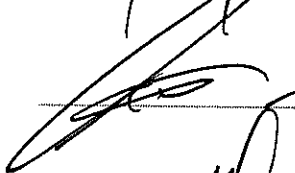
Hon. Wavel Woodcock
Chairperson



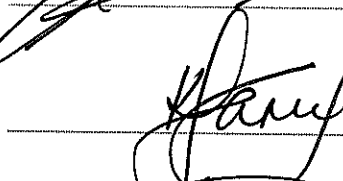
Hon. Philip Arissol
Vice-Chairperson



Hon. Naddy Zialor
Member



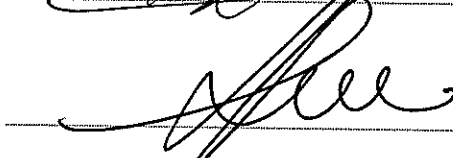
Hon. Kelly Samynadin
Member



Hon. Paul Ernesta
Member



Hon. Flory Larue
Member



Hon. Conrad Gabriel
Member




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Introduction

Work and Membership of the Committee

The Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee is a Select Sessional Committee appointed under Order 90 (1) of the Standing Orders, 2020 and the powers of which are stipulated under 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 the Committees of which Order 91 makes provisions for.

The Committee consists of seven Members as follows:

Hon. Wavel Woodcock – Chairperson

Hon. Philip Arissol – Vice Chairperson

Hon. Naddy Zialor – Member

Hon. Kelly Samynadin – Member

Hon. Paul Ernesta – Member

Hon. Flory Larue – Member

Hon. Conrad Gabriel – Member

The committee is assisted by a Secretary, Ms. Shannon Surman and a Secretary Assistant Mr. Vincent Quatre.

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, Sports and Culture related Governmental bodies.
- Conduct visits to the Departments of Culture, Youth, Sports and Media
- In the youth sector, propose and assist with capacity building and strengthen relations with local youth organisations.
- Study and review legislation within the Ministerial Portfolios of Media, Youth, Sports & Culture
- Make reports and recommendations to the House as often as possible that includes recommendations for proposed legislation or policies.

- 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.

Meetings of the Committee

During the year 2021, the Media, Youth, Sports and Culture Committee held eleven meetings. Committee meetings included those held with the Seychelles Media Commission, the Music Association, the Mayor of Victoria, the Attorney General's Chambers and the Chief Executive officer of the National Sports Council.

Meeting with the Seychelles Media Commission

On the 27th of April 2021, the committee met with representatives of the Seychelles Media Commission. The aims of this meeting were to touch base with the Media Commission as the committee responsible for Media for the 7th Assembly. The meeting also gave the Committee the opportunity to discuss matters related to the Media Commission Act and the Newspaper Act. The meeting was held at the National Assembly and several points were discussed including:

- **The Media Commission Act**, discussing the need for an organisation that can resolve cases as the Commission itself does not have that power.
- **The Newspaper Act** mainly discussing the fact that the Act only covers printed materials and mainstream media for accredited media houses and not anything that is written online, which means that the Commission cannot act upon any complaints regarding online articles.
- **How the Media Commission handles complaints** by mainly writing to the media houses and explaining the cases, as the current Acts do not make provisions for more aggressive action to be taken by the Commission.
- **The main issues observed with media houses** with regard to the inadequacy of their standards. The representatives discussed the issue of the media houses employing unqualified people who are not assisted with consistent training once employed.
- **Plans of the Media Commission** with regard to their Act in that they will be working on giving the new Act more authority and ability to take action.
- **Defamation** as representatives stated that the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) suggested that Seychelles should remove any laws that could potentially send a journalist to prison for defamation and only keep the fines instead.
- **The Licensing Authority Act** in that the Media Commission is not recognised when the licenses of media houses are being renewed.
- **The training of journalists** with the Commission informing the Committee that they did not have the adequate resources to assist with the training of journalists.

Recommendations made included that there need to be identifiable means to tackle newspapers who have an online presence and that there should be a form of licence to be able to use the social media platforms to disseminate information as a media house, whilst maintaining credibility. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Media Commission should not be the only entity receiving complaints and that renewal of licences for media houses should first go through the Media Commission.

The Media Commission was represented by:

- Dr. Marie-Reine Hoareau – Chairperson
- Mr. Ibrahim Afif – Chief Executive Officer
- Ms. Tessa Henderson – Media Secretary

Meeting with the Seychelles Music Association

The Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee met with the Seychelles Music Association on the 24th of June 2021 at the National Assembly. The aims of the meeting were to gain a better understanding of the Seychelles Music Association and to touch base regarding musicians. The discussion points included:

- **Hotels in Seychelles and artists** in that many of the musicians in Seychelles are dependent on music as their primary source of income. This had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, requiring many musicians to seek other jobs.
- **Artists and Taxation** in that the association has tried to determine a way forward regarding taxation as musicians are contracted by hotels and cannot be dealt with as ‘employees’ when it concerns taxation matters.
- **Proposed Projects of SEYMAS** such as small performances of musicians in key places as well as having online platforms for musicians.
- **Main setback with projects** which included the inability to proceed with their projects due to the Health Authority not granting permission to the musicians as a result of the Covid-19 guidelines.
- **SEYMAS and National Arts Council** in that there are weaknesses in communication between the two entities.

Recommendations included:

- It was suggested that key departments such as the Department of Tourism and Culture, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Immigration could be consulted to identify the best mechanism to stop hotels from employing staff to do two jobs such as working as a normal staff by day and taking up the role of an artist by night.
- There should be more cooperation between the NSC and SEYMAS taking decisions collectively.
- SEYMAS was encouraged to take charge of the project to create an online platform for musicians. A collaboration with the Ministry for Finance and the Mayor of Victoria could be initiated when it comes to funding.
- The Committee recommended consultations with the Ministry of Health to identify a way forward to ensure no gathering of crowds at performances.
- A grading system for artists to maintain a high standard in their work was also recommended.

- The Chair of the Committee stated that it would be necessary to determine a way forward concerning artists and taxation to ensure that the issue of artists not being regarded as legitimate employees be rectified.

The SEYMAS representatives were:

- Mr. Thomas Knowles
- Mr. Andre Sinon

Meeting with the Mayor of Victoria

A meeting with the Mayor of Victoria, Mr. David Andre, on the 6th of July 2021 was held with the Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee, at the National Assembly. The aim of this meeting was to discuss the new structure of the Mayor's Office with regard to its links with the culture departments. Several topics were discussed including:

- **The new proposal of the Mayor which was the Institution for Culture.** The mayor stated his desire for the Culture department to be an institution of the State and not under a Ministry that can be governed by political agendas and ideologies.
- **The Seychelles National Institute for Culture, Heritage and the Arts,** as the name for the Institution which would merge all the sectors that deal with Culture to prevent any duplication of work. Under this new institution, more trainings will take place to ensure great service delivery.
- **The Office of the Mayor and Musicians** as the Committee and the Mayor discussed the challenges that musicians faced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Meeting with the Attorney General's Chambers

The Committee met with the Assistant Principal State Counsel, Mr. Stefan Knights, at the National Assembly on the 7th of July 2021. The main focus of the meeting was to discuss the issue of criminal defamation and raising the age of criminal responsibility.

Regarding the issue of criminal defamation, Mr. Knights referred to the 'Law Revision Project 2021/22' which entails the revision of all the laws of Seychelles. It was mentioned that there are alternative measures to address defamatory statements such as using civil defamation rather than using criminal libel.

With regard to the age of criminal responsibility, the policy of the amendment was discussed in that it is to better protect children from the harmful effects of early criminalization whilst ensuring that any deviant behaviour of a child will be fully investigated to find out what happened. Remedial measures will also be taken to address the child's behaviour and to minimise the risk of reoccurrence.

Recommendations included that the age of criminal responsibility be raised to 14 years of age instead of the planned raise from 7 to 10 years of age. A delinquent centre was also discussed as there is currently no placement for children who have committed criminal offences.

Meeting with the CEO of the National Sports Council

The Committee met with Mr. Jean Larue, the Chief Executive Officer of the National Sports Council on the 10th of November at the National Assembly. The meeting was held as a follow up to a visit conducted by the committee to the Inner Islands of Praslin and La Digue (*see page 12*) where several sports facilities were seen by the committee. The topics of discussion were as follows:

- Feedback and action on the Committee's findings; the CEO provided an update and insight on the work being done by the NSC to improve on the facilities. The facilities discussed were:
 - The Grand Anse Praslin Water Ports Centre and NSC infrastructure
 - The Eve Island Swimming Pool at Baie Ste Anne Praslin
 - The La Digue Sports Complex

The Members of the Committee had the opportunity to pose questions and gain clarifications from the CEO. Recommendations made include:

- Facilitating maintenance responsibilities of Mr. Fanchette, the longest serving employee of the La Digue sports Complex, by providing him with a lawnmower.
- An alternative design that would prevent the roofing to be torn off instead of repairing it as it was be identified.
- Considering procuring different materials for then fencing at the La Digue Sports Complex.
- Maintenance being done on the sports infrastructure on a regular basis.
- The prioritisation of supervision of maintenance performed on sports infrastructure by the NSC.

Meeting of The Committee Regarding Amending the Terms of Reference

On the 10th of December 2021, the Committee met to discuss amendments to the TOR to include Sports. The Committee agreed that the TOR should be expanded to include the Sports sector as there are many issues regarding sports and athletes that require oversight. These issues include the conditions of sports infrastructure, youth participation, the support of professional sportsmen as well as budgetary issues.

It was also proposed that the Committee is added to the list of 'Select Sessional Committees' in the National Assembly Standing Orders under Order 90 (2).

Visits & Activities of the Committee

The Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee hosted a ‘World Press Freedom Day Debate’ in May 2021 in the lobby of the National Assembly. The Committee also held a series of visits and meetings on the Inner Islands of Praslin and La Digue in October 2021.

World Press Freedom Day Debate

Introduction

The Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee hosted a debate in the lobby of the National Assembly, to commemorate ‘World Press Freedom Day’ under the theme “Information as a Public Good”. The debate was filmed by the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) and Telesesel.

The theme was of urgent relevance to all countries across the world. It recognises the changing communications system that is impacting on our health, our human rights, democracies, and sustainable development. To underline the importance of information within our online media environment, World Press Freedom Day 2021 highlighted three key topics:

- 1) Steps to ensure the economic viability of news media
- 2) Mechanisms for ensuring transparency of internet companies
- 3) Enhanced Media and Information Literacy (MIL) capacities that enable people to recognise and value, as well as defend and demand journalism as a vital part of information as a public good

Debate theme: False news and its impact on the Public

Debate Questions: As a public good with potential for universal reach, information allows us to know our rights and prerogatives, as well as contributes to the general interest, at the service of sustainable development. Do you think False news is a threat to this trend?

Objectives of the debate

- Position the Media Youth Sports and Culture 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

Summary Points of the Debate

Information as a Public Good

It was highlighted that there are all sorts of information out there and that we also cannot control or manipulate the opinions of anyone. The public must be educated when and why the information is wrong. It was also highlighted that people use social media as their source of information, but the information should be reinforced by news from the Government to ensure that it is concrete.

Freedom of the Press

It was brought forward that Seychelles has a better ranking worldwide on the global index now with the freedom of the press as before the press were more oppressed. Certain participants believed that the media is freer, but the question is whether the public has enough access to the right information. Participants also mentioned that the laws for the media need to be updated.

Social Media vs Mainstream Media

It was stated that there is a difference between mainstream media and social media platforms. The main difference is that nobody is scared to publish something scandalous on social media as there are no consequences whereas mainstream media can incur consequences so therefore it must give out concrete news.

Fake News

It was also discussed that journalists need to filter information as not all information is good to report on. Some participants argued that there is a need to train and better support journalists to become professionals that can handle information correctly.

Recommendations were made where it was suggested that Annual Reports that are released by key governmental departments can be good knowledge for the public in terms of dispersing concrete information. Regarding laws, the Gazette website can be used to view all relevant information. It was also brought out that there is a necessity for more interaction between stakeholders of the media and an increase in the exchange of ideas to generate more progress.

Invitees included:

- Media Houses: The Nation, SBC, Telesesel
- The Seychelles Media Commission
- The Seychelles Human Rights Commission
- The Office of the Information Commission
- ARID – Association for Rights, Information and Democracy
- Citizens Democracy Watch
- UN Youth Seychelles – NGO
- The Office of the Ombudsman
- Seychelles National Youth Assembly
- Anti-Corruption Commission
- The Electoral Commission
- Department of Information AMPS (Association of Media Practitioners Seychelles)
- Transparency Initiative Seychelles

Visit to Praslin and La Digue

The Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee carried out a visit to the islands of Praslin and La Digue from Friday the 15th of October to Saturday the 16th of October 2021. The main aim of the visits was to gain a better understanding of what progresses, limitations, and opportunities that the departments of media, youth, and culture were facing. This was necessary to the Committee to fulfil their mandate.

Locations Visited & Findings

Praslin

Dove Centre – Praslin

The main points raised with the Dove centre was that it will be turned into a policy academy in the future. The Committee was able to visit the building and its infrastructure; with 36 dormitories as well as a gym which is no longer in use and in poor condition. Their challenges include the deterioration of its building and limited staff.

Grand Anse Praslin Water Sport Centre and NSC Infrastructure

The Water Sports Centre was reopened in 2017. The Committee were able to observe the poor conditions of the building which is in dire need of renovation and refurbishment. The Water Sports Centre also lack equipment and the area surrounding the building is also in need of maintenance.

The NSC facilities opposite are also in need of renovation and one of the main issues is that there are limited funds for NSC to cover a better place or make the necessary arrangements to improve the infrastructure. Furthermore, here is no insurance coverage for the children that practice with the centre due to financial constraints.

Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation

The main constraints faced by the office of the SBC on Praslin is the lack of office space. The Committee was also informed that there is a lack of staff as well as limited equipment with only one camera to operate with resulting in the difficulty of coverage of activities happening simultaneously.

Another issue the Committee enquired about was regarding the Praslinois not receiving signals to listen to the radio or to watch TV. Specific blind spots, it was noted, would require specific equipment to direct the waves towards them to receive a signal. A challenge to rectifying these issues is budgetary constraints.

Meeting with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) on Praslin

The lack of financial support was one significant challenge highlighted by the NGOs during the meeting. Regarding the Youth, it was suggested by the NGOs that the government need to focus on the two islands of Praslin and La Digue more in terms of developing programs and plans for the Youth such as providing equipment and having dedicated areas for the Youth to participate in

activities. Raising awareness about the NGOs and activities they have to offer to the Youth was another point raised in the meeting. It was also pointed out by Diversity in Intelligence (DIA) that the education system's curriculum needs redesign in order to cater for all types of intelligence.

PARFE Association – Praslin Artist Federation Association – Praslin

The PARFE Association organises activities for artists. The PARFE association expressed their wishes that anything to do with national activities and events involving artists goes through PARFE to keep the structure and order of things instead of calling artists directly and making contact which may result in the activity being a failure.

Challenges that the association is facing includes financial constraints which result in difficulty to have events and activities of Praslin. Moreover, the Committee were informed that there is no gallery or kiosks for artists on Praslin to display their work. The association also felt that there is a disparity between Mahe and Praslin regarding the funds given for events. There is also the issue of artists not having a proper structure or building with seating to carry out activities.

Seychelles National Youth Council

The main issue raised was that the current location of the Youth bureau is not ideal. The bureau is too far from schools so accessibility to their services is strained. The Committee were informed that the matter will be resolved with the move of its offices to a building behind the Grand Anse Praslin District Administration.

Eve Island Swimming Pool

The main concerns found at the Eve Island Swimming Pool is that they lack the necessary equipment they require. There are also delays in the time it takes for equipment to reach Praslin from Mahe; this may take two or three months which in turn results in delays in training of children. The staff are also limited, and the current workforce are burdened by a heavy workload resulting in their need of extra assistance to fully carry out a great service. It was also mentioned that the building itself still needed reparations as there are areas that are old and office space is too limited.

La Digue

Youth Office La Digue

The main concerns of the Youth Office on La Digue were the fact that the area where the office is located is too small and there is a lack of space to provide adequate youth services for leisure. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the provision of computer services and internet were found to be difficult as a result of social distancing requirements in the library where only one computer can be used.

The team on La Digue argued the need for a new building for their services as they should have enough space to carry out their essential services. It was mentioned that the area that has been

proposed to build a youth centre is the land opposite the La Digue district administration, next to the Pension Fund building.

Sports Complex

There were a few concerns raised at the La Digue Sports Complex built in 1997. It was observed that there is a lack of office space to cater for existing staff and they do not have a proper store to keep all the equipment they use. Furthermore, there is a lack of staff to take care of the large area. The building is also seen to be 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 old and fragile among other reparation needs. The Sports Complex faces a significant challenge in developing or fixing the complex as a result of budgetary constraints.

Meeting with Artists at L'Union

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. The artists argued that there should be a structure that can cater for them to promote and sell their goods.

One of the main challenges for the artists was that their original work was being copied and sold at a much cheaper price resulting in tourists purchasing cheap plastic ones. The Committee recommended that the artists finalise their association for La Digue and make it legal so that copyright issues may be handled accordingly.

Meeting with representatives from the Board of L'Union Estate

The Board Members of L'Union informed the Committee of a master plan for the L'Union Estate which has been devised to help move L'Union forward in the long term. The plan includes an artisanal area and workshop area for skills sharing purposes.

Board Members also noted that if the current artists form an association, the artists could take up the workshop and lead it themselves. The Board also stated their awareness of the copyrights and imports issues the artists are facing which is why they will have contracts to rent out kiosks ensuring that in the clauses it is stated that the crafts being sold must be local artisanal crafts and not fake ones.

To conclude, the meetings and visits carried out on Praslin were fruitful for the Committee as the Members were able to gain insight on the challenges that such entities were facing. These challenges mainly concern financial constraints, deterioration of infrastructure as well as limited workforce.

Conclusion

For the Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee, 2021 was a fruitful year despite setbacks faced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Committee faced limitations regarding the number of visits that they wished to carry out to different departments. Many such visits are scheduled for 2022.

Aside from fulfilling all other aspects of its mandate, in 2022 the Committee will amend the TOR to include Sports. The committee also wishes to be added to the list of 'Select Sessional Committees' in the National Assembly Standing Orders, as previously mentioned; all undertakings for 2022.