

REPORT



146th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

Manama, Bahrain

FROM 11TH TO 15TH MARCH 2023

Attended by:

Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne – Head of Delegation

Hon. Waven William

Hon. Egbert Aglae

Ms. Emma Didon

The National Assembly delegation composed of the Members as listed below, submits its Report:

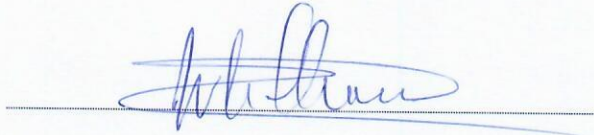
Hon. Roger Mancienne

Head of Delegation



Hon. Waven William

Member



Hon. Egbert Aglae

Member



Ms. Emma Didon

IPU Desk Officer



Contents

1.0. Introduction.....	4
2.0. Pre-commencement of the Assembly – Geopolitical group meetings – Friday 10th March 2023	5
2.1. SADC group meeting & Africa Geopolitical group meeting.....	5
3.0. Programme for the 145th IPU Assembly – General debate, meetings, workshops	5
3.1. Inaugural Ceremony	5
3.2. Standing Committee on Sustainable Development.....	6
3.3. General Debate – Hon. Speaker Mancienne’s intervention	7
3.4. Forum of Young Parliamentarians	8
3.5. Assembly decision on the emergency item	9
3.6. Panel Discussion on biodiversity	10
3.7. Panel discussion on climate oversight action.....	11
3.8. Meeting with the Ukraine delegation	11
3.9. The Drafting Committee for the emergency item	12
3.10. Bureau meeting of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development.....	12
3.11. Special segment on accountability	13
4.0. Miscellaneous.....	14
4.1. SIDS Forum	14
5.0. Recommendations	14

1.0. Introduction

The Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne, the elected member for Grand Anse Mahe and Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee, Hon Waven William, the elected member for Port Glaud, Hon. Egbert Aglae and Ms. Emma Didon, Research Officer/IPU Desk Officer attended the 146th IPU Assembly in Manama, Bahrain. The proceedings of the General Assembly officially began on Saturday 11th March 2023 to last until Wednesday 15th March 2023. The delegation began attending meetings however, since Friday 10th March 2023. These were meetings of geopolitical groups namely the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African geopolitical group.



The entire delegation and participated quite actively in the various meetings and activities planned over the course of the five days at the Exhibition World Bahrain (EWB) Assisted by the research officer/ IPU desk officer, Ms. Didon, several interventions were made in meetings and workshops especially those related to sustainable development and climate change mitigation. As the Vice Chair of the Standing Committee for Sustainable Development, Hon. William also participated in the committee’s deliberations on negative carbon balances. Bilateral meetings with other parliaments were also held.

The theme for the 146th Assembly’s general debate was ‘Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance’. A topic that saw active participation as it covered a range of issues under intolerance in national and global societies which is more prevalent in certain countries. As well as contributing to the general debate, the Seychelles delegation managed to lend

its support to the emergency item on climate change brought forth by the African geopolitical group specifically addressing the creation of a global fund for countries vulnerable to natural disasters to address loss and damage.

2.0. Pre-commencement of the Assembly – Geopolitical group meetings – Friday 10th March 2023

2.1. SADC group meeting & Africa Geopolitical group meeting

The meetings at the 146th Assembly kicked off on Friday 10th March 2023 for the Seychelles delegation. Hon. Waven William and Hon. Egbert Aglae accompanied by Ms. Emma Didon attended the geopolitical meetings of the SADC group followed by the meeting of the African geopolitical group at Paddock 6 of the Bahrain International Circuit (BIC). The meetings in question revolved around the following agenda points: The reports of the IPU Executive Committee; the Emergency items to be included in the agenda of the 146th Assembly and the vacancies to be filled during the 146th Assembly. The discussions on the emergency items were quite prevalent during the meetings as the geopolitical groups had to decide which item they would collectively support especially since there was a tentative item brought forth by the Africa geopolitical group being ‘Creation of a global fund for Disaster-vulnerable countries to address loss and damage associated with effects of climate change.’

Hon William contributed to the discussions in the Africa group meeting by suggesting an amendment to the item that would emphasise on the fast-tracking of the process of loss and damage for climate-vulnerable, developing countries promised in COP27 in 2021.

3.0. Programme for the 145th IPU Assembly – General debate, meetings, workshops

3.1. Inaugural Ceremony

The Seychelles delegation led by the Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne attended the inauguration ceremony of the 146th IPU Assembly on Saturday 11th March 2023 in the Grand Hall of the Exhibition World Bahrain (EWB). The one-hour ceremony saw speeches by several high officials

to welcome the thousands of delegates from parliaments worldwide and address the theme of the 146th Assembly ‘Promoting peaceful coexistence and inclusive societies: Fighting intolerance’.

The ceremony began with a speech by Vice Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, H.E. Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa who officially launched the 146th Assembly on behalf of his Majesty the King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa. His speech was followed by that of Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Hon. Ahmed Bin Salman Almusalam; Ms. Haya Rashed al Khalifa, Presiding officer of the 61st session of the UN General Assembly; Secretary General of the UN, Mr. Antonio Guterres via a short video; Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU and finally; President of the IPU, Mr. Duarte Pacheco.

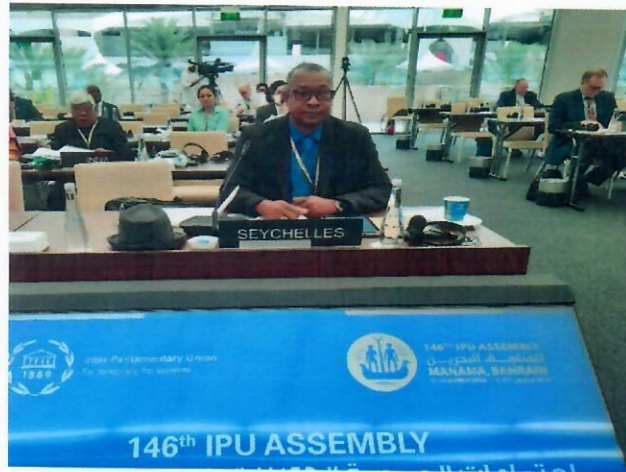


All the speeches shared a key message being the need for more inclusive and peaceful societies devoid of discrimination and hate. The speakers recognised that over the recent years, intolerance amongst peoples of the world has grown which in represent in the increase of armed conflicts, hate speech, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination. The speakers hoped that the 146th Assembly would be a good place to start this collective work and wished the parliamentarians fruitful deliberations on the topic as well as on all events of the 146th IPU Assembly.

3.2. Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

In his capacity as Vice Chairperson, Hon William attended the first meeting of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development on the morning of Sunday 12th March 2022. The rest of the delegation were attending the start of the general debate on the Assembly’s theme. At the Sustainable Development Standing Committee, discussions focused mainly on the resolution

entitled ‘Parliamentary efforts on achieving negative carbon balances of forests.’ The agenda for the resolution included presentation of the draft resolution and explanatory memorandum, debate on the resolution, drafting and adoption of the draft resolution in plenary and the appointment of a Rapporteur to the 146th Assembly.



Hon William contributed to the topic by stressing the need to sensitise, educate and raise awareness in the public on the importance of forests and trees and their management. He noted that the emphasis needs to be placed in schools so that the youth can be encouraged to aggressively take up the campaign to enable rapid results in forest management and environmental protection.

3.3. General Debate – Hon. Speaker Mancienne’s intervention

On the afternoon of Sunday 12th March, the Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne gave his intervention on the topic of the general debate of the 146th Assembly. Mr. Speaker began by expressing his full support for the call of promoting peaceful coexistence and fighting intolerance in order to build inclusive societies and continued by acknowledging the extent of the challenges faced as illustrated by the Hon. Speakers who spoke before him. With that he noted that parliamentarians must lead in seeking solutions as representatives of the people.



Hon Mancienne's expressed, our small island state's commitment to joining these efforts despite not being affected by nor experiencing any major threats to our national peace and our tolerant society. He did however note that Seychelles still has work to do in combating Sexual and domestic violence against women and children, promoting the inclusion of youth and women in politics, improving the participation of disabled persons in society and the protection of migrants. Also noted was the recent Cybercrime bill passed by the legislators to fight the impacts of modern communication which was otherwise unbeknownst to our society but is growing.

To conclude he acknowledge the plight of those countries plagued by conflict and ended by stating "We must all continue to be part of all efforts for peace and peaceful coexistence. The world can only meet these challenges by unity of effort".

3.4. Forum of Young Parliamentarians

Hon Egbert Aglae attended the forum for young parliamentarians on the late morning of Sunday 12th March. The agenda for the forum included promoting youth-led agenda on high level political dialogue; cyber-attack and cybercrimes; youth empowerment and unemployment and lastly; climate change, a youth led campaign. Hon Aglae made brief interventions on the topics starting with what the Seychelles is doing to advance the youth led agenda where he reported on the newly established youth elections for the Seychelles National Youth Assembly. He also noted the work of the Media, Youth Sports and Culture Committee (MYSCC) of the National Assembly alongside the health committee are actively engaging in national dialogue, awareness programmes and oversight work targeting the welfare of the youth.



On youth empowerment and unemployment, he emphasised the role of the parliament in questioning the employment department on their policies and programmes on youth inclusion in the work force. To conclude his intervention, Hon Aglae addressed the topic of cybercrime explaining that the concerned authorities of the government are working on amending cybercrime related laws which goes beyond social media. He noted that the country needs to consider the importance of introducing protection laws in the future.

3.5. Assembly decision on the emergency item

Five emergency items were submitted by the 12th of March for a voting in the Assembly where the whole Seychelles delegation was present. This began by a test of admissibility were all the below emergency items were heard and considered eligible for voting.

1. “The urgent need to combat violence against women in politics, particularly in light of the proliferation of hate speech, fake news and violent incidents” submitted by Argentina
2. “Criminalising contempt for religions and the spreading of hatred, and promoting coexistence, tolerance, peace and international security” submitted by Qatar
3. “Raising awareness and calling for action on the serious humanitarian crises affecting the peoples of Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Yemen and other countries and on vulnerability of women and children” Submitted by Argentina, Chile, Germany, Netherlands and Ukraine, with the support of GRULAC and the 12+ Group.
4. “Creation of a global fund for countries vulnerable to natural disasters to address loss and damage from climate change” submitted by the African Group

5. “Call for urgent action to stop aggression, occupation and massive human rights violations in the DRC in order to preserve its sovereignty and territorial integrity” by the DRC.

The Assembly was then invited to vote on the emergency items. Seychelles had 8 votes for each emergency item whereby the delegation decided to give all its votes to emergency items 3 and 4 and abstained in the remaining three items. In the end, the 3rd emergency item, submitted by Argentina, Chile, Germany Netherlands and Ukraine prevailed with a total of 801 votes for their item followed by Qatar’s submission of with 756 votes.

3.6. Panel Discussion on biodiversity

Mr Speaker, Hon. William and Hon. Aglae attended a panel discussion on ‘Parliamentary action on biodiversity: Translating global commitments into national action’ on Monday 13th March. Hon. Speaker Mancienne gave a short intervention on Seychelles’ actions on preserving its biodiversity.



He noted the important work carried out with the youth in Seychelles through environmental clubs in schools. This has highly sensitised children about the preservation of our unique biodiversity where they grow up to become champions of biodiversity and even mitigate adults’ harmful actions. He recognised the challenge of protecting the coastal areas of the Seychelles and the work to be done there. Hon William also emphasised on the importance of sensitising the public and on biodiversity preservation. He explained that parliamentarians have major roles to play in undertaking oversight on the national planning of the country taking serious account of risk reduction, which is key to minimising the effects of climate change.

3.7. Panel discussion on climate oversight action

This panel discussion on climate change, was attended by Hon. Mr. Speaker, Hon. William and Ms Didon where the oversight and accountability framework on climate change was discussed amongst attendees. Hon William contributed to this panel discussion by highlighting the possible work of the oversight committees of the National Assembly of Seychelles on climate change. The committees that could potentially take up the task on oversight of climate change mitigation and adaptation at the NAS would be Committee on Government Assurances, Finance Public Accounts Committee, International Affairs Committee and the Food Security and Sustainable Development Committee.



3.8. Meeting with the Ukraine delegation

The Seychelles delegation, apart from Hon. William attended a bilateral meeting with the Ukraine delegation on the afternoon of Monday 13th March. The meeting began with the head of Ukrainian delegation thanking Seychelles for its support in the Ukraine-Russian war to which the Speaker reaffirmed the support of the Seychelles government. Despite of this however, Hon Mancienne noted that Seychelles still have some links with Russia and cannot simply break all ties as the Russian Federation contributes to our tourism industry. On this point, the delegation also requested that Seychelles support their cause for an international tribunal against the Russian aggression that would hopefully be endorsed by the International Criminal Court. To this, Mr Speaker expressed that Ukraine had Seychelles' consideration as this is not a decision, he could make alone.



The delegations also sympathised with each other’s ecological and climate issues where Ukraine also noted their support for the emergency item on loss and damage brought forth by the African group.

3.9. The Drafting Committee for the emergency item

On the afternoon of the Monday 13th March, Hon William joined the drafting committee for the emergency item decided upon by the Assembly the day before. This is quite a notable achievement which represents the recognition of Hon William’s impartiality in the work he has carried out in the IPU Assemblies.

3.10. Bureau meeting of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

Hon William attended the Bureau meeting of the sustainable development committee on Tuesday 14th March. There he stressed the importance for the IPU to create a mechanism responsible for conducting oversight on the agreed COP action plans and commitments so that they can become operational. Hon William noted that through the right oversight pressure, developed member states can influence their governments. This recommendation will be taken to the relevant IPU body. The bureau also discussed the proposed topics brought to the committee by different countries to be taken up at the 147th Assembly in Angola.



The topic that was agreed upon was a combined proposal from India and the UAE on the role of parliament to ensure equity, responsibility towards affordable renewable energy and reducing fossil fuel production. The committee also decided that a food security session, linked to climate change will be held in Angola. Hon. William insisted, finally that there be scientific views so to know the global status quo.

3.11. Special segment on accountability

On the last day, before the conclusion of the Assembly on Tuesday 14th March, Hon. Aglae participated in the accountability segment where each member parliament reports on its progress in relation to a previous IPU resolution, in this case, focusing on climate change.



Hon. Aglae gave a brief presentation on the work of the National Assembly's Environment Policy Implementation Committee (EPIC) of the Secretariat specifically since last October where EPIC have been aiming to realise the Mangrove restoration project. This began with the adoption of the mangrove area adjacent to the precinct. Hon. Aglae explained that EPIC is now planning to apply for a grant with SeyCCAT to bring the project to life with a mangrove nursery and boardwalk where the restored habitat can be experienced and where students and delegates can learn more about the climate mitigation usefulness of mangroves.

4.0. Miscellaneous

4.1. SIDS Forum

The subject of a SIDS meeting and/or forum was once again raised throughout the 146th Assembly especially through the active advocacy of Hon. William joined by Fiji. The two small islands states took the initiative to connect with other SIDS present such as Tonga, Maldives, Mauritius, Kiribati, Comoros, and Samoa in order to successfully revive the IPU SIDS forum. It was agreed that this would officially be redynamised in Luanda, Angola for the 147th Assembly.

5.0. Recommendations

The following recommendations are commitments that the IPU NAS desk officer must initiate on behalf of the 146th IPU Assembly delegation and to present to the National Assembly of Seychelles.

- Business cards for IPU desk officer
- Organise SIDS meetings for the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda, Angola.