

# REPORT



**147<sup>th</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**

**Luanda, Angola**

**FROM 23<sup>TH</sup> TO 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2023**

**Attended by:**

*Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne* – Head of Delegation

*Hon. Waven William*

*Hon. Audrey Vidot*

*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. Audrey Vidot  
**Member**



Ms. Emma Didon  
**IPU Desk Officer**



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## 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 Roche Caiman, Hon. Audrey Vidot and Ms. Emma Didon, Research Officer/IPU Desk Officer attended the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly in Luanda Angola.

The proceedings of the General Assembly officially began on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023 to last until Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The delegation however, began attending meetings since Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October Friday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2023. These were meetings of geopolitical groups namely the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African geopolitical group.



*Figure 1 The Seychelles delegation posing with Seychelles flag*

The entire delegation and participated quite actively in the various meetings and activities planned over the course of the five days at the National Assembly of Angola, aided, by the research officer/IPU desk officer, Ms. Didon. The Members made intervention in meetings and workshops especially those related to sustainable development and climate change mitigation as well as women and youth participation in politics. As the interim Chairperson of the Standing Committee for Sustainable Development, Hon. William led the committee's deliberations food security and partnership for climate actions.

The theme for the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly's general debate was 'Parliamentary Action for peace, justice and strong institutions: SDG 16'. A topic that saw active participation and active debate from the IPU groups especially those whose countries are plagued by conflict exacerbated by weak institutions. The report will describe and note the meetings and events in which the Seychelles delegation participated.

## **2.0. Pre-commencement of the Assembly – Geopolitical group meetings – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> – Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2023**

### **2.1. Meeting of the Speakers and Heads of delegation of the Africa Group**

The meeting of Speakers and Heads of delegation of the Africa group began the work of the Seychelles' delegation, attended by Mr. Speaker and Hon. William. During the meeting, Mr Speaker raised several points which he noted, would be addressed in the Africa geopolitical group meeting of the following day. These included the nomination of Hon. William for President of the Sustainable Committee; the fact of the revival of the Indian Ocean Parliamentary Association; and the SIDS meeting organised within the margins of the Assembly, spearheaded by the Seychelles delegation.

### **2.2. Meetings of the SADC and Africa Geopolitical Groups**

SADC group meeting took place in the Multiusos 2 at 14.30 chaired by Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne in his capacity as President of the SADC Parliamentary Forum. Discussions at the SADC meeting reflected that of the Africa geopolitical group meeting which immediately followed the SADC meetings attended by the Seychelles delegation comprising of Hon. William, Hon. Vidot and Ms. Didon, led by Hon. Speaker Mancienne.

The meetings were heavily occupied by agenda points being the emergency item(s) and the Election of the IPU President. On the latter, only 1 emergency item had been submitted in so far, being 'Countering Islamophobia and the rise in extremist Islamophobic events through understanding and education, the promotion of tolerance and interfaith harmony, and fostering an environment that encourages respect and empathy among different faith communities' brought forth by Pakistan. The SADC group came to a consensus on a proposed emergency item that more specifically targeted the Humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the condemnation of the violence taking place in the territory, that was informally brought forth by Algeria in the Meeting of Speakers and

Heads of delegation, the previous day. They agreed that they would unanimously endorse this proposal in the Africa Geopolitical group once brought forth by Algeria. In the Africa Group meeting, Algeria brought forth the proposal on the Gaza humanitarian crisis which was unanimously supported where it was also proposed that Algeria jointly draft the emergency item with South African.



*Figure 2 The Seychelles delegation at the All Africa geopolitical group meeting*

The matter of the IPU Presidency was however more contentious as 3 of the 4 candidates hailed from the SADC region. The 3 candidates were namely from Tanzania, Malawi and Somalia. One main issue discussed was the previous endorsement of Tanzania at the 53<sup>rd</sup> Plenary Assembly of the SADC-PF in Arusha, an endorsement which was contested by the other candidate countries. Unable to unanimously

endorse one candidate to the Africa Group meeting, the Speaker resolved that the SADC group might need to meet again. Debate on the matter at the Africa Group meeting was even more heated and intense especially in view that the Malawi candidate was not present at the meeting due to extenuating circumstances. After much discussion on whether the present candidates should be allowed to present themselves in view of the absent candidate, the Chairperson, the Speaker of Angola, Rt. Hon. Carolina Cerqueira decided that the candidates would speak for 3 mins. Presentations were made after which the meeting ended.

### 3.0. Programme for the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly – General debate, meetings, workshops

#### 3.1. Meeting of Advisers and Secretaries

Ms. Didon, in her capacity as the Secretary and Adviser of the Committee attended said meeting on the morning of Monday 23rd October 2023. The meeting, chaired by Ambassador Anda Fillip, was brief and straightforward, pertained to various logistical matters of the Assembly specifically the Inaugural ceremony and the procedural guide on the voting on the emergency items.

#### 3.2. Meeting for Standing Committee Presidents and Presidents of Geopolitical Groups

As interim Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Hon. William attended the meeting for Presidents of Standing Committees and Geopolitical groups in the morning. The aim of the meeting is for the Presidents of the Standing Committees and geopolitical groups to share their group's contribution to the implementation of the IPU strategy objectives by acting through priority themes which are climate change and sustainable development within the broader theme of peace and international security which is the intended focal theme for 2024.

Hon. William shared that the Sustainable Development Committee would be debating on 'Ensuring global food security' which will include the participation of experts from the World Food Programme and the African Union. He informed that the committee would continue exploring the key linkages between climate change and sustainable development and peace and security in its work.



*Figure 3 Hon. William accompanied by the Secretary to the SDC*

### 3.3. Forum of Women MPs

Hon. Vidot attended the Forum of Women MPs which took place in two parts on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October which began in the morning and continued in the afternoon. Other than usual forum business, the main discussions for the morning revolved on the forum's contribution to the work of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly from a gender perspective on the specific draft resolution proposed by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human rights, entitled 'Orphanage trafficking: The role of parliamentarians in reducing harm'. As well as intervening on the matter, members could recommend gender-related amendments to the draft resolution to the Standing Committee.

In the afternoon, the main agenda was the panel discussion on 'Women in politics: To stay or not to stay?' which Hon. Vidot planned to intervene on but, unfortunately could not due to time constraints. Following the panel discussion, the forum heard the four women parliamentary candidates standing for the post of IPU president. There the participants were given the opportunity to question the candidates on their plans and vision for the IPU.

### 3.4. SIDS meeting

The SIDS meeting was initiated with the objective of revitalizing the group within the margins of the IPU, as explained by Mr. Speaker in his welcoming remarks to the SIDS in attendance who were namely Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Cabo Verde. Initialised and chaired by the Seychelles



*Figure 4 Members of SIDS present at the meeting*

delegation, discussions revolved around the unique challenges SIDS face on climate change and sustainable development as well as the group's way forward within the IPU structures.

The group also discussed SIDS representation at the parliamentary meeting at COP 28 and the importance of climate finance and development aid for SIDS. An election for Chairmanship of the group also took place as per the agenda where Fiji was nominated and voted as chairperson and



Cabo Verde as vice chairperson. They would begin presiding over future meetings of SIDS at the IPU.

### 3.5. Inaugural Ceremony



The official opening of the 147<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly took place in the evening of Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October in a majestic tent on the coast of the grand Bay of Luanda. The inaugural ceremony began with the anthems of IPU and the host country Angola with the latter being its first time played live by the Kaposoka Symphony

Orchestra, made up of Angolan teenagers from vulnerable and disadvantaged families.

The speeches of the inaugural ceremony were kicked off by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Angola, Rt. Hon. Carolina Cerqueira in her welcome message. She was followed by an address from Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU; an intervention from Mr. Parfait



Onanga-Anyanga, Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations; President of the IPU, H.E. Duarte Pacheco; and declared officially opened by President of the Republic of Angola, H.E. Mr. João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço. All the speakers addressed the theme of ‘Parliamentary action for peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16).

### 3.6. Assembly Steering Committee

Hon. William attended the Assembly Steering Committee meeting as interim President of the Standing Committee of Sustainable Development where he informed the Steering Committee on

the agenda of the Sustainable Development Committee. He relayed that the committee would have two sittings scheduled for the 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> October. The first sitting would revolve around a debate on the Committee's future resolution titled 'Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy and ensuring innovation, responsibility and equity'. While the Committee's second meeting would involve a 'Panel debate on Global Food Security' and the awaited elections for new Bureau members as well as the Committee's new President and Vice President. In addition to the meetings, there would be a meeting of the Bureau of the Sustainable Development Committee on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> October where the Bureau will discuss the IPU's work on climate change and strengthening parliamentary action on the matter. An account of the events will be detailed further down in the report.

### 3.7. Meeting of the APF (Assemble Parlementaire de la Francophonie)

Hon. Vidot attended a meeting of the Francophone Parliaments and delegations in the morning of Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October. The members of the French caucuses expressed their appreciation and commitment the APF has shown towards them and expressed the importance of Continuously promoting the French language and supporting the common issues of the Francophone. Additionally, the group discussed regional disputes, their impacts and how the countries of the French caucus can best support these affected countries and regions.

### 3.8. 212<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council

The 212<sup>th</sup> Session of the Governing Council took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> October respectively, with an agenda addressing the governing aspects and decisions of the IPU which included its financial situation; Questions relating to IPU membership and observer status where the Council was informed of the arrival of the 180<sup>th</sup> member of IPU, the Bahamas; update on IPU policies; future interparliamentary meetings; the appointment of two internal auditors for 2024; the elections to the Executive committee; and the most anticipates subject of the agenda, the election of the new President of the IPU. The election of the new IPU president will be elaborated on further in the report.

### 3.9. Latvia's election to the UN Security Council

A Member of Parliament from Latvia approached the Hon. Mr Speaker Mancienne to seek the support of Seychelles on its candidacy of non-permanent member of the United Nations Security

Council (UNSC) in 2025 for the 2026-2027 mandate. Mr. Speaker assured that the matter would be brought forth to the Seychelles Foreign Affairs department for consideration.

### 3.10. Speaker's intervention on the General Debate

On the afternoon of Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> October, Mr. Speaker Mancienne gave his 6 minutes intervention on the theme of the general debate being 'Parliamentary Action for peace, justice and strong institutions: SDG 16'. Mr. Speaker began his address by acknowledging and condemning the unfortunate existence of the conflicts occurring in this modern world proclaiming that those in favour of peace needs to speak out as the world needs peace. He questioned whether we could find our way back to peace and the re-establishment of universal justice and security and proceeded to reflect on the need to reform and revitalise our institutions, specifically the world's parliaments to ensure a more lasting peace. Mr. Speaker wrapped up by pledging Seychelles' continuous commitment on securing Goal 16.



### 3.11. Forum of Young Parliamentarians

Hon. Audrey Vidot attended the Forum for young parliamentarians to discuss the challenges parliaments encounter to increase the quota of young parliamentarians and engaging young people in politics. During the debate Hon. Vidot took the opportunity to share some insights and updates from the National Assembly of Seychelles on youth participation in parliament as per the agenda of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians.

The insights shared were as followed below:

Hon. Vidot relayed that regrettably, out of 35 Members of the 7th National Assembly of Seychelles, only six (6) MPs are under the age of 40 years and old two (2) out of the six are women MPs. However, the National Assembly of Seychelles has Select committees whose terms of reference permits them to initiate outreach programs/events which targets the young people of Seychelles to engage in politics and leadership positions. The Committees are namely the Media,

Youth, Sports & Culture Committee, the Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS, and Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights Committee and lastly, the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus

Additionally, apart targeting the youth institutions, youth are also invited to the National Assembly of Seychelles by Members and can also request visits which enables them to better understand the parliamentary functions and engage with senior members of the parliament.

Regrettably, the political climate in Seychelles, the bullying on social media platforms, career risks, the lack of moral and financial support are pertinent challenges to engage young people of Seychelles in politics.

To conclude Hon. Vidot pointed out that for a population of a little over one hundred thousand, Seychelles has some intensive work to do to engage young people in politics and the support the IPU can provide to make a difference would be much appreciated.



### 3.12. Decision on the Emergency item

The decision on the Assembly was the last agenda item taken up by the Assembly for the day at 17.00 hrs. Four emergency items, as listed below, had been sent, with three submitted on the day before.

Requests submitted by the delegation(s) of:

- Pakistan, “Countering Islamophobia and the rise in extremist Islamophobic events through understanding and education, the promotion of tolerance and interfaith harmony”
- Malaysia, “A multifaceted approach to the question of Palestine: Parliamentary diplomacy and Sustainable Development Goal 16”

- Algeria and Kuwait on behalf of the Arab Group, Indonesia, Iran, and South Africa on behalf of the African Group, “Stopping the war and violations of human rights in Gaza”
- Canada, on behalf of the delegations of Argentina, Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, and United Kingdom, “Towards common ground for peace”

The last two were eventually voted on as the proposers of the first two items joined with the emergency item proposed by Algeria, Kuwait, and group. Unfortunately, due to non-attainment of a two-thirds majority of votes, no emergency item was able to be included in the agenda of the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

### 3.13. Bureau of the Stading Committee on Sustainable Development

As interim Chairperson, Hon. William chaired the meeting of the Sustainable Development



Committee’s Bureau on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The meeting is held for the members of the bureau to touch-base, communicate and plan their activities during the IPU Assemblies. Hon. William therefore informed the Bureau on its activities for the 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly.

### 3.14. 1st sitting of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

The meeting was Chaired by Hon. William and the below were discussed:

- Debate on the theme of the next resolution *Partnerships for climate action: Promoting access to affordable green energy, and ensuring innovation, responsibility, and equity.*
- Preparations for the *Parliamentary Meeting at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the United Arab Emirates.*

### 3.15. Workshop: Parliamentary climate action platform against Methane

Mr. Speaker and Hon. William attended the workshop on climate action against methane on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October.

### 3.16. 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development

Chaired by Hon. William on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October was the 2<sup>nd</sup> sitting of the Sustainable Development Standing Committee. The below activities took place:

- Expert hearing on the theme ‘Ensuring global food security’
- Elections – Here, Hon. William was voted in as President of the committee for a period of 3 years.



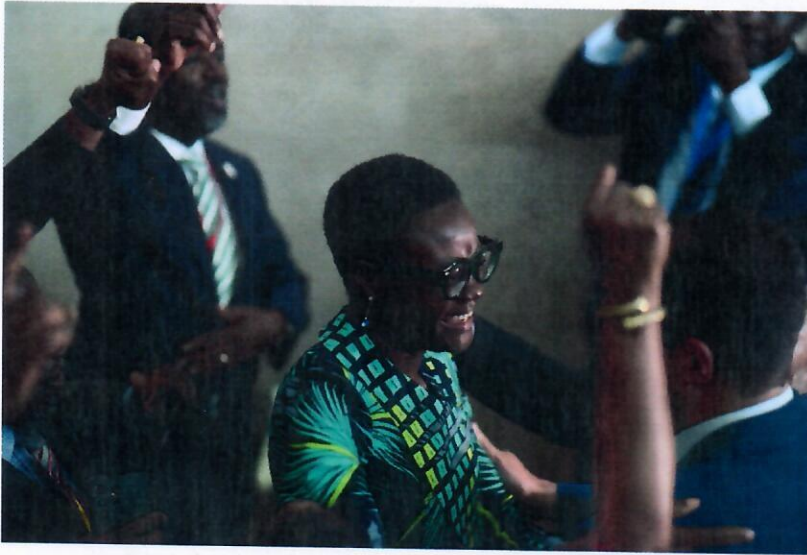
### 3.17. Hearing of Presidential Candidates

Attended by Mr. Speaker, Hon. Vidot and Ms. Didon, the hearing was an opportunity for the delegation to hear the four Presidential candidates from the Africa geopolitical group namely being:

- Ms. Adji Diarra Mergane Kanoute, MP from Senegal
- Ms. Catherine Gotani Hara, Speaker of Malawi
- Ms. Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the United Republic of Tanzania
- Ms. Marwa Abdibashir Hagi, MP Somalia

### 3.18. Election of the new IPU President by the Governing Council

The 147<sup>th</sup> Assembly ended with the Election of the new IPU President which took place in the grand chamber of the Angolan Parliament. The entire Seychelles delegation attended and voted by secret ballot at the elections.



The Rt. Hon. Tulia Ackson, Speaker of the United Republic of Tanzania won the election for President of the IPU with the landslide result of 172 from a total of 303 votes cast.

#### **4.0. Conclusion**

The 147<sup>th</sup> IPU General Assembly was an overall success for the Seychelles delegation. The successful election of Hon. William as President of the Sustainable Development Committee, to begin with, increasing the country's reach on the international stage and input on matters of conservation, the environment, climate change and sustainable development which are particularly important to the socio-economic development of the country. The SIDS group meetings, initiated and organised by the Seychelles delegation, was also a successful reboot of the grouping, demonstrated great promise within greater IPU platform.

The delegation has also managed to retain its full voting rights as it now, comprises of both male and female parliamentarians compared to the previous Assembly in Bahrain. The IPU Seychelles group should therefore remain as is until the next Assembly.

The smooth and eventful success of the Assembly in Luanda will surely carry over to the 148<sup>th</sup> Assembly, in Geneva to be yet another interesting and successful one especially now that there is a new President, the first African woman from the SADC region to hold the post.