

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
SEYCHELLES**

Monday 18th July, 2022

The Assembly met at 3.12pm

National Anthem

Moment of Reflection

Mr Speaker in the Chair

MR SPEAKER

Excellency Uhuru
Kenyatta, President of the
Republic of Kenya,

Honorable Members of the
National Assembly,

Distinguished guests,
Good afternoon.

Your Excellency, it is a great honour for me to receive you in the National Assembly of Seychelles. Your visit is indeed a historic one. It is an occasion to pay tribute to the unique relationship between our countries and our peoples. We have strong ties on the political and diplomatic level to be sure, but what runs deeper and stronger, are the personal ties that have existed between our peoples for a century or more. So much so Your Excellency that the term Kenya-born remains a distinct identity for a group of our nationals.

As our closest neighbour on the African continent, Kenya has had special significance for us. When we coined the slogan – Seychelles a thousand miles from anywhere, the anywhere was Kenya.

Before we were connected to the outside world by air, Kenya was our gateway to the world with a three-day sea journey to Mombasa, which I myself took on my first venture into the wider world, followed by an overnight railway journey to Nairobi.

Your Excellency, these words speak for the past. Your visit today is the occasion to speak for the present and for the future. The formation of the earth has made us neighbours, this itself caused for us to be brothers and partners in promoting peace, stability and development in our region for the mutual interest of our nations.

We acknowledge the new ties of corporation that has been forged in the areas such as trade, maritime security and climate change action, among others. And we are sure that your visit will strengthen these ties for the future.

You joined us Excellency to celebrate of our first day in close to two years, of sittings of

the National Assembly, without face masks. It is an auspicious occasion.

I now cordially invite Your Excellency to address our National Assembly and the people of Seychelles. Please.

THE PRESIDENT OF KENYA
UHURU KENYATTA

Thank you very much.

The Honorable Roger Mancienne, Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Seychelles,

Honorable Members of the National Assembly, let me begin by wishing you all a good afternoon and I would like on the very onset, to thank you, Mr Speaker, and indeed all Honorable Members, for according me this honour of addressing this August House. And it is a testimony and a very warm and fraternal relations that exist between our two nations and our people.

I would also like to register my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Wavel Ramkalawan President of the Republic of Seychelles for inviting me and my delegation to undertake this State visit to your beautiful country and for the very warm welcome that we have received since my arrival yesterday.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, on the 29th of June this year, the Republic of Seychelles celebrated the 46th anniversary of Independence. And I take this opportunity to congratulate the Government and the people of the Seychelles for the remarkable achievement that you have made in just 46 years.

For in that short period, Seychelles has evolved into a maturing democracy and built one of the strongest and most vibrant economies on the African continent. In spite of its relatively small size the Republic of Seychelles has become a regional leader, especially in matters of Blue Economy.

Mr Speaker, I applaud and celebrate the people of the Seychelles for this great achievement. To add to this Mr Speaker, both Seychelles and Kenya, have established open and democratic states. In Kenya just like here in Seychelles, we have a vibrant multiparty democracy.

Since our Independence in 1963, Kenya has held regular elections every 5 years. And in fact, our next general election would be held 3 weeks from today on the 9 of August this year.

Having served the constitutional mandate of two terms as President, I am looking forward to handing over the mantle to the leader that the Kenyans will elect. Like Seychelles recently, we are also preparing for a peaceful transition of power.

Honorable Members, you as representatives of the people, occupy a very important place in our independent and democratic societies. As lawmakers, you have a sovereign duty to ensure that we have a legal framework, that upholds the fundamental rights and freedoms of our people, and ensures equity, justice for all and promotes the rule of law.

You are also the custodians of public resources, ensuring that our resources, are effectively deployed and utilized. Through these measures, and by holding the executive to account the legislature plays a central role in shepherding national development.

So Honorable Members of the House, it is important to note that we across the continent, are noting with concern the recent increase in unconstitutional change of power in a number of African countries. And we, therefore,

need effective parliaments such that you have here in Seychelles, to protect the Constitution and show by example that democratic governance does indeed deliver more effectively for the people.

Mr Speaker, Sir, our parliaments also have the critical role of promoting African integration, cognisant of this important role, the Assembly of important states and Government which is based in South Africa.

We look upon our respective national assemblies to enact laws that promote Intra-African trade and investment. Honorable Members, it is your responsibility to promote African integration and this extends to the ratification of the relevant agreements and protocols of the African Union.

It is our national assemblies that expedite the process of ratification of the agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area, and I am confident that you Honorable Members will soon complete the process of ratification of the AfCTA. And we also look forward to the PAN African Parliament to supporting the promotion of model laws across the

continent. It will make it easier for our people and our businesses to operate across the continent.

Mr Speaker, Honorable Members, turning to the recent past, the COVID 19 pandemic has caused major destructions in all our lives and in our economies in the last two years. I want to commend the people and government of Seychelles for their resilience, in dealing with the pandemic and by taking measures to curb the spread of the virus in order to protect your citizens.

Kenya is happy to have participated with you in dealing with this pandemic.

The Russian/Ukraine War also coming even before we have recovered from the pandemic, has placed additional economic stress to the world economy and particularly to us in the developing world and in small island states across the world. I do believe that these global crisis are teaching all of us a lesson. And that is a lesson of the need to be self-sufficient.

Africa can no longer afford to rely solely on outsiders to address our common challenge, especially when that challenge affects them we tend to see by ignoring the plight of those of us

who are least cause to the problem and making it difficult for us to access much-needed vaccines and resources in times of difficult.

So therefore we together need to work to create opportunities out of these crises that we see. We need to build local capacities to address needs that are specific to Africa, strengthen in to Africa trade; establish new regional markets for our goods and services.

Mr Speaker, in our discussions this morning with the President and his government, we did say that there was need for us to recognize that we are not competitors but rather partners. We need to see how we can work together to develop industries that are capable of supplying PPEs, vaccines. We need to work together to see how we can ensure that we deal with the critical problem of food shortages, food prices and how to work together to deal with the high cost of fuel, which only add to the burden of the common citizen.

Mr Speaker, we did agree that there was need for us to establish industries that were non-competing There is no reason why Seychelles cannot establish industries to produce

gloves for example, and sell those on to Kenya and have Kenya produce PPEs that would be made available to the people of the Seychelles.

So for us to achieve this, I would urge parliament to be more proactive in supporting government to implement laws that support this move towards greater self-sufficiency and integration of our economies.

So Mr Speaker, the other major challenge, that occupies all of us, and again not of our making, is that we continue to suffer significant adverse effects of climate change. Island states such as Seychelles are disproportionately affected by climate change. Islands are losing their land. Countries like Kenya are losing their valuable land as the desert expands.

This calls for much more bold climate action plans and we need our parliaments to help us enact laws that support the shift towards a greener and more sustainable future for all of us.

We also need Mr Speaker, parliaments that would join government in advocating for the more developed world, to pay a much greater higher responsibility to those of us who are affected most by

climate change and contribute the least.

I am please Mr Speaker to note that Kenya and Seychelles are at the vanguard in protecting our oceans and marine resources. And we also look forward to strengthening our collaboration in these areas following my visit to your beautiful country.

I do appreciate the government of the Republic of Seychelles for embracing the Blue Economy, through the Blue Economy roadmap. And this has earned the Seychelles the title of African Champion of the Blue Economy.

You have also done exceedingly well Mr Speaker in the protection of your Exclusive Economic Zone by achieving 10% of your marine protection, which is the fulfillment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 14.5.

I also laud the Seychelles for establishing regional mechanisms, to ensure safety and security at sea. Kenya is keen to corporate with the Seychelles on maritime security and I thank the government of Seychelles for the support it is providing to the Kenya coast guards. This we need to do to enhance our partnership between our two countries and

this will boost efforts by Kenya and the region in sustainable utilization of our ocean resources.

Indeed again, as we discuss this morning we see great opportunity by increasing our security partnership with Seychelles, having approximately 1.4 million square kilometers of EEZ – Kenya with 400 thousand square kilometers. There is great opportunity for us to work together.

This great span of water is too big for any one of us individually to police. And unfortunately even as we speak, much of the resource that exists in that area, is exploited by illegal, unregulated vessels.

We did discuss this morning the need for us to enhance cooperation and security and for us to be able to work together. There is no reason why we cannot have Seychelles vessels fishing into Kenyan waters and us collaborating together to exploit these resources, as opposed to those resources going to third parties, and our countries left earning nothing.

So we need to enhance our partnership. And I do believe that if we do so, these efforts by

Kenya and Seychelles will result in not only in the protection of our oceans, but also in the sustainable utilization of the resources therein.

Mr Speaker, our two countries have enjoyed long-standing relations over the years, notably in the Health and Education sector. I look forward to deepening the scope of our relations in other key sectors of the economy; such as agriculture, fisheries, and security. And I am confident that the Seychelles can benefit from the experience, as well as taken core capabilities of Kenya in pursuit of your food securities needs.

I also wish to inform this House, that this morning, we have also concluded several instruments of corporation in various fields, including agriculture, law enforcement at sea, maritime affairs, tourism, health, and education and sports.

And I believe that these frameworks will act as a catalyst to solidify, widen, and deepen our bilateral relations. And I urged this August House to assist us in government in the formalisation of these instruments, in order to create opportunities for our citizens.

In conclusion Mr Speaker, and Honorable Members, let me reiterate once again, how pleased I am to be here and I do truly believe, that this visit places our social-economic ties on a much higher trajectory to a mutual benefit of our people and for the growth and prosperity of our two nations states. I thank you all for your invitation and your kind attention.

Thank you. *Asante sana.*

(APPLAUSE)

MR SPEAKER

I thank you Your Excellency for your address. I will now call on the leaders of the House to deliver remarks on his Excellency's Address, I call on the Honorable Leader of the Opposition - Honorable Sebastien Pillay.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

Thank you Mr Speaker. Your Excellency, President Uhuru Kenyatta, I thank you for what was truly a presidential speech, address given before the House. And I am deeply grateful for the recognition which you gave placed on the 46 years of progress and development that my country has achieved.

And in seeing you, a Big Brother on the continent recognizing the amount of work that we as a people, have been able to achieve over many years, really sinks to us and shows us how the bonds of fraternity and brotherhood that exists amongst us Africans, leaves strongly amongst us today. I thank you for that Mr President.

I am also deeply grateful for the bonds that we share;- you mentioned the teachers that came here and I have worked alongside many Kenyan teachers and their contribution to our education system. And today amongst us, we have members of parliament who have been through the instructions given by Kenyan teachers.

And I also remember when you talked about COVID, about how the support that was given by Kenya nurses who came to work in the Seychelles.

So Mr President, the relationship that you share with us is one that goes beyond diplomacy; is one that goes beyond fraternity; is one of one people; a united Africa. One that sees Africa moving forward.

And in that respect I urge You Mr President, to continue

to be a voice of reason in recognizing that Africa, as you have said rightly so, slowly but surely we are seeing Constitutions die by a thousand cuts, whereby small changes are being made and regressions and democracy are being seen and the voices of the minorities are not being heard.

And therefore parliaments cannot play their role actively, in ensuring that the voice of the people is recognized, that it is heard. And that the value that we ascribed to the process of democracy, is not recognized.

It is essential that you use the influence that you bear, not only today but tomorrow; for I see in you a great son of Africa. Someone that can carry the voice of Africa, much further and should do so, because we need leaders like you.

Leaders that are prepared to stand by the values, values that make us who we are, the values that represent what is most important to us all; that is ensuring that all people benefit, and that we move the context of Africa that is one continent that is seen to be poor, but rather as a force – an economic force. A force that is to be reckoned with; a force that recognizes that the natural resources that

we have, should best be used to benefit our people.

Mr President having listened to you I am gladdened, I am enthusiastic. I see that we have in you, and in Kenya, a strong sense of support. And that we in Seychelles, the people of Seychelles can count on Kenya's support as and when they have need for it.

The Speaker has told me that I have to give a remark. It is custom as a parliamentarian to talk more than I am asked to talk. I will try to be as short as possible and ask you to do this;

Today I find myself in the opposition and I call upon all great leaders such as yourself, to ensure that the influence which you bear, ensures that the Constitution that we have – and indeed as a Member of parliament over the years, I have looked at the similarities, the many similarities that exist between the Kenyan Constitution and that of ours, to ensure that the spirit of those Constitutions leave on.

I thank you Mr President and I welcome you to the Seychelles. And I hope that you have a pleasant time in my beautiful country. Thank you, Sir.

(APPLAUSE)

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Honorable Leader of the Opposition. I would now call on the Leader of Government Business – Honorable Bernard Georges.

HON BERNARD GEORGES

Mr Speaker,
Excellency President Kenyatta,
Fellow Members of the National Assembly,
Distinguished guests,
It is a real pleasure and an honour to be invited to say a few words in response to the address of the of the President of Kenya to the National Assembly. Events such as this one are few and far between and therefore a real thrill for us when they happens.

On a personal note Excellency, your presence is doubly pleasing. The son of a father born in Nyeri and husband of a wife born in Nairobi and who grew up in Thika. I am the proud Leader of a caucus comprising two Kenya-born members - Honorable Doyace Porice hails from Kisumu and Honorable Phillip Arissol from the capital city Nairobi.

(APPLAUSE)

HON BERNARD GEORGES

Our Assembly is the richer for having been graced by your presence; especially at the juncture when our Assembly Members on both sides of the Chamber, are taking on new responsibilities in terms of PAN African Parliament which has been mentioned this afternoon and our respective countries are gearing up to the challenges of regionale and continent-wide trade following the signature following the AfTCFTA.

We thank your for having taken the time this afternoon to address us and for your kind and (dare I say) weighty words. You have challenged our Assembly to take the lead in many areas. We want you to depart today knowing that we will rise to your challenges.

Kenya has long been – as has been said – our closest neighbour in many senses, other than the purely geographic. Kenya was the source of many of our new foods as we were growing up. I remember apples and Kenya butter for instance and a source of employment as you have already learned of many Seychellois aspired to a much better life than this small island could offer them.

Sporting exchanges were common and, finally, seeing as we are today assembled in a political Chamber, it would be remiss of me if I failed to mention that your country was the training ground for multiple politicians of several generations.

The obvious warmth of the mutual greetings, we witnessed yesterday on your arrival between you and President Ramkalawan, showed clearly that the closeness of this connection has not diminished one bit.

In return for your visit to our National Assembly, allow me Excellency on the part of my caucus and all the Members assembled here today, as well as on the part of all the constituents that we represent, to wish you a pleasant stay in our small islands and to express the hope that you will be able to find the time once you leave the hurly-burly of politics, to return and visit us for a longer period.

Know Sir, as you leave our Assembly, that,
Kenya imekuwa rafiki wetu wa thati kwa muda mrefu.

‘Kenya will always be our special neighbour.’

I thank you and wish you well.

(APPLAUSE)

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Honorable Georges. In my turn on behalf of the Whole of our National Assembly, I wish to thank President Kenyatta for his address, but especially for the warm words that he has expressed in regards of our country.

The words of our friendship, the words of appreciation, for the achievements that we have been able to records but most importantly for the words of encouragement for the future.

I thank His Excellency for having engaged in discussions with our government on so many vital topics for our development. I think there is no doubt that we begin a new future of closer rapport, corporation, and collaboration on shared goals against the many challenges that our countries face.

Your Excellency I trust, that we will deliver on the calls that you have made for the Assembly to play a vital role in development as we move forward. And I thank you for recognizing the vibrancy of our democracy and I am sure this

will be a strong hand to play as we go forward.

Finally I wish you a very memorable stay in our country. I would like to share with the House that this is the 2nd visit that His Excellency has paid to our country – one many years ago as an unofficial citizen of Kenya. But I am sure together Your Excellency, they add up to a memorable souvenir which you will take back with you to your own country.

Thank you for taking the time to be with us and I wish you all the success that you deserve in the future.

Thank you all. The House will now adjourn.

(ADJOURNMENT)