

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
SEYCHELLES**

Wednesday 28th June, 2023

The Assembly met at 3.06pm

National Anthem

Moment of Reflection

Mr Speaker in the Chair

MR SPEAKER

*Excellency Paul Kagame,
President of the Republic of
Rwanda,*

*Honourable Leaders and
the Members of the National
Assembly of Seychelles,*

*Our Distinguished Guests
with us today accompanying
the President, good afternoon.*

*Your Excellency, it is a
great honour for me to welcome
you to the National Assembly of
Seychelles. I reiterate the
welcome I am sure you would
have received from your arrival
in our country; and it is an
honour for us that you will be
our special guest at the
National Day celebrations.*

*Your Excellency, your
visit is a tribute to the cordial
and corporative relations, that
exists between our two
countries. Your country is an
important member of the
community of nations of
Southern Africa; and it is vital*

*that there should be a good
entente between us, so that we
can better contribute to the
development of the region and
also join our voices in
addressing international
issues that are of concern to us.*

*We hope that your
presence in our Parliament
today and the message that
you wish to share with us, will
help to strengthen our working
relationship, and our efforts in
the task of advancing our
common interest. We also look
on it as a bond of friendship
between the people of
Seychelles and the people of
Rwanda.*

*With these words
Excellency, I invite you to
address our Assembly and
also the people of Seychelles
who are following us on
television and on radio. Rest
assured Excellency, we give
you our most appreciative
attention. Please-*

PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME

*Honourable Roger
Mancienne, Speaker of the
National Assembly of
Seychelles,*

*Honourable Bernard
Georges, Leader of
Gouvernement Business,*

*Honourable Sebastien
Pillay, Leader of the
Opposition.*

*Honourable Members of
the National Assembly,*

*Clerk of the National Assembly,
People of Seychelles,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentleman.*

I am very honoured to stand before you to address this Extraordinary Session of the National Assembly of the Seychelles.

I want to thank the National Assembly, for this distinction. And I also take this opportunity to congratulate you on the 30th Anniversary of this Body. Tomorrow I will have the privilege of attending the National Day Parade.

47 years ago, the people of Seychelles, joined together with the purpose to build a prosperous and united country. As we celebrate your remarkable achievements, including your history, culture and diversity, Rwanda stands with the people and the Government of Seychelles.

The commemoration of Independence is not merely symbolic; it is a moment to remember the sacrifices made to forge a nation. Today, with the highest GDP per capita in Africa, Seychelles is making good progress on the road towards sustainable development in tourism, education, environmental conservation. Seychelles leads by example.

Learning from the past, to build a better future, without relying on external assistance alone, is something that resonates strongly with Rwandans.

Every year on July 4th, Rwandans around the world, commemorate the end of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsis and the liberation of our country.

National celebrations, are about continuing to move forward in unity, solidarity and with dignity, to transform the lives of the people we serve. It is also about renewing our commitment to seek the truth. And to stand up against injustices.

In that context, I wish to congratulate you for the important work of the Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity Commission. Partnership and collaboration are also essential to speed up progress.

Seychelles and Rwanda are the first two countries on the continent to access the International Monetary Funds - Resilience and Sustainability Trust.

As Chair in office of the Commonwealth, Rwanda is committed in supporting small islands developing states who are disproportionately impacted by climate change; public, private, partnerships like Reme Trust which Rwanda

want at COP27 can take us a long way in closing the gaps in climate financing.

This year, in partnership with BioNTech, Rwanda received its first batch of modular containers to manufacture mRNA vaccines for the African continent, in partnership with European Union.

Stronger and more resilient national health systems; fewer human capital development, the COVID pandemic was a reality check and you cannot afford to wait for the next one in order to act.

As Africa continues to grow, regional integration will always become more and more indispensable. The most serious challenges we face, transcend borders. They cannot be tackled by oppression. The persistent threat for example, is the spread of violent extremism.

In 2021, Rwanda accepted the Government Mozambique's request to work with them to assist in the fighting terrorism. Working hand in hand, Mozambique and Rwandan and four SEZ from the Southern African development community are restarting stability.

We must adhere to address problems differently and not wait on others to act on our behalf. Peace and security

are the foundation of Africa's future.

Moving forward, Seychelles and Rwanda will build on the many successes of our continent, to find solutions that benefit our people. This visit opens a new chapter in the partnership between our two countries; Rwanda and Seychelles, and we are family committed to our joint efforts.

Once again, let me thank you for the honour of addressing you today, and thank you for your kind attention.

(APPLAUSE)

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Mr President, for the words that you have expressed to us. I appreciate your commitment to some of the issues that are also very close to us; peace and security, climate change; preservation of the environment and the wellbeing of our region through regional integration.

I am especially happy that you have expressed in warm terms, the partnership between our two countries which being two smaller countries on the African continent – our own being very small – is very important to us.

I would now like to give the word to the Leaders of the Assembly to address a brief

message in response to His Excellency's Address. I call on the Leader of the Opposition Honourable Sebastien Pillay.

HON SEBASTIEN PILLAY

Thank you Mr Speaker. Good afternoon once again. And I would like to thank His Excellency Mr Paul Kagame for Your Address before the Assembly. It is indeed a rare privilege and an honour to receive such a distinguished statement from Africa, addressing our very small Assembly.

Colleagues and Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, today is a very important occasion for us to reflect on the shared history, which we all as Africans we share; but also to listen to the words of a statesman that has gone through different processes in his own country and that has realised that unity, solidarity and dignity are the cornerstone of building a very strong nation.

Indeed it is very important that we focus on our shared histories, but also – also we resist every attempt to rewrite history; because our history underscores who we are; underscores our culture and underscores what makes us a people.

For too long as Africans, we have allowed others to

write about our history. I believe it is you who once said, "You are not British, you are not American; these are the things they do, you are Rwandan."

In my case Mr President, I am not British, I am not America, these are the things they do, I am a Seychellois and proud to be.

Mr President, unity, dignity and solidarity, can only happen when we foster democracy. And democracy needs to be fostered because it can easily be extinguished by attempts to listen to others that wants us to believe that our history does not matter to us.

You mentioned Mr President, that Seychelles has reached high income per GDP and the development that we have achieved, has been through the hard work of the Seychellois nation. Each and everywhere, every Seychellois person that contributed to achieving this great result, is a tantamount – is a testament to our ability, as a nation to overcome.

After COVID-19 hit us, just like it hit other countries in Africa, we came together as Africans to resolve the problems that this poses for us; but the issues that faced us, have now changed.

We now face geopolitical concerns, by stronger powers

than us, to decide on the destinies of our nations. And I believe Mr President, you will join Seychelles in ensuring that we will resist those attempts, to change the context of where we want to take our bi collective peoples.

Mr President, as we celebrate our independence, allow me to also remember, those people who fought for our independence. I remember today Mr President our former President, the founding President of my party, Mr France Albert Rene who was a precursor and all of the other individuals who led the fight for independence in my country.

I also remember Sir James Mancham, who was also a politician at the time, who also played his part, but he was on the opposing side. The point I am making Mr President, is that whether you are on the opposing side, or whether you led the struggle, we all contribute to making our nation greater and better for the future.

I call upon you Mr President, to use your influence, to ensure that the flames of democracy as it burns today brightly in other countries, do not show any regression in countries, such as Seychelles, which is small and very vulnerable.

I thank you for addressing this Assembly and I thank you for your Esteemed Presence here today.

It is a testament to how much we have achieved as a nation, but is also a testament of our shared friendship between our sister countries. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MR SPEAKER

Thank you Honourable of the Opposition. I will now call on Leader of Government Business of the Assembly. Honourable Bernard Georges.

HON BERNARD GEORGES

Thank you Mr Speaker. Good afternoon. On behalf of the Government Members of this Assembly, I wish to thank you Your Excellency for your inspiring words to our institution this afternoon, and to wish you a pleasant remaining few days in our country.

We are a small nation, and a long way from the African continent, but our heart beats with that of the continent, from which a significant portion of our population originates, and to which our umbilical cord is still firmly attached.

Many of us have had the privilege of visiting your

country, and seeing the rapid development which Rwanda had undergone under your stewardship. That Rwanda will not be forever be defined by the events of 1994, but that it will look to a future, where it can show that the past does not have to be a chain inhibiting progress, but that it can be a uplifting wind, allowing nations to soar higher, is perhaps the singular message that your country gives to the continent in particular, and to the world in general.

A few years ago, I had the privilege in another capacity to be present in Kigali on the occasion of the signing of the agreement establishing, the African Continental of Free Trade Area; and of seeing the upbeat and forward-looking vision of the continent displayed on that occasion.

It is no coincidence that the country chosen for that event, was your own, the country which has shown that with good governance and enlightened leadership, every country in Africa, has the capacity to lead the world. In a sense - as I'm sure you will agree - ours is an equally good example of this reality.

We look forward to putting our country on display tomorrow at the National Day Parade and hope that you will

Your Excellency, return to Rwandan with happy memories of your stay in our cherished islands. I thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

MR SPEAKER

I thank the Leaders of the National Assembly for the words on behalf of our Members.

Mr President, it remains for me to thank you again, for sharing your wisdom with us, and I also want to take special care to wish you a Happy Continuation of your stay in Seychelles.

And I certainly hope that your days you have had with us, have been pleasant and will provide good memories for you to take back to Rwanda. I am sure we will be very honoured to see you at the National Day celebrations tomorrow, where you will join our people in celebrating independence of the Republic of Seychelles. Thank you Mr President, and I wish you Happy Continuation of Your Stay and a very good return to your country.

The Assembly will now adjourn. Mr President, I will ask you that you will join us in a photo session in the hall, to conclude the occasion. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

(ADJOURNMENT)