

**STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FOREIGN
AFFAIRS AND TOURISM
MR SYLVESTRE RADEGONDE**

**THE GROUP OF SIDS' LEADERS
FIRST VIRTUAL SESSION**

**Madame Secretary General of the
Commonwealth**

**Mr Secretary General Pinto Chikati, OACPS
Commissioner Reynders**

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Seychelles is honoured to be a participant in today's event, which is also the maiden activity of the Group of SIDS Leaders (SGL). I commend my former colleagues at UNESCO, Ambassadors Carteron and Doyle, for this great initiative.

Excellencies,

As an African SIDS, Seychelles straddles the two constituencies within OACPS, namely Africa and SIDS. This dual status offers us a vantage point from which to reflect on and address issues affecting OACPS as our experience is common to both constituencies.

The theme of today's event illustrates the critical importance of EU-OACPS collaboration in the emergence of a new world order, one that is inclusive, equitable and rules-based. Such a world order can only be sustainable if anchored in societies built on solid social contracts that are rights-based and rests on the rule of law. A just globalization is one that is rules-based and anchored in rights and rule of law.

I would like here to thank EU and OACPS for having decided to scale up their cooperation, committed themselves to a fruitful negotiation process and coming up with an innovative, modular negotiation outcome in the form of the New Partnership Agreement. This new cooperation framework caters for the needs of the whole constellation of OACPS while at the same time tailored to the specificities of the 3 distinct regions, the Economic Partnership Agreement Groups and individual countries and affording special attention to countries most in need and funneling resources where aid money can be most impactful.

Congratulations to the negotiation teams led by Professor Robert Dussey and Commissioners Neven Mimica and Jutta Urpilainen, for conducting the negotiation process in a timely manner and ensuring an outcome that will make the new Partnership Agreement an example of win-win North-South cooperation.

Human rights, rule of law and good governance, one of the pillars of this New Partnership Agreement, are central to sustainable development. There is no such thing as a hierarchy of rights, nor a dichotomy between development and democracy and neither is it true that good governance is a luxury for developed countries. Human rights being universal, inalienable, indivisible and interdependent, their protection and promotion are essential in ensuring good governance, democracy and development. Sustainable development can only be democratic and rights-based. Good governance dents into inequalities and reverse damages to the environment as often times the latter two exist where corruption is rampant. Sustainable development is a deliverable of rule of law as through protection of the rights of consumers, workers and citizens as well as properties, it fosters a model of economic growth that is respectful of environmental limits and human dignity. A democratic set-up that respects human rights is most likely to be one in which there is less environmental degradation and sustainable economic growth.

- As the instrument of a comprehensive cooperation between EU and the OPCS, the New Partnership Agreement will be catalytical in promoting a more balanced and just globalisation as it will impact on such areas as international trade, climate change, peace and security and migration and mobility.

- The government I have the honour of being part of, has sterling democratic credentials. The President was elected last year in a free and fair election. When he was still in the opposition his struggle for transitional justice led to the creation of the Truth, Reconciliation and National Unity Commission which shed light on human rights abuses of the former regime. His struggle for good governance led to the setting up of the first anti-corruption body in the country. Rule of law is a strategic thrust of the programme of the new government since the fight against drug abuse and trafficking and against organized crime and the promotion of maritime security are among its priorities. Human development is a centre-piece of its strategy as efficiency gains and targeting assistance to those in need are the focus of rights-based reforms in public health, education social housing and social assistance.

Thank you