

Toast by Mr. Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism on the occasion of the National Day of the Russian Federation

**Friday 14th June 2024
Savoy Resort, Beau Vallon**

Ambassador of the Russian Federation, His Excellency Mr. Artem KHOZIN and Mrs. KHOZINA

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, His Lordship Rony GOVINDEN

Former President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr. Danny Faure

Colleague Ministers

Leader of Government Business in the National Assembly

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good evening to you all!

It is a pleasure for me to be with you on this auspicious occasion of the Russian National Day. On behalf of the Government and people of Seychelles, I extend our heartfelt congratulations to you, Ambassador Kozhin, to the Government and people of the Russian Federation, as well as to the Russian community in Seychelles, as you celebrate this significant day in your nation's history.

This day commemorates the declaration of state sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic in 1990, a pivotal moment that has shaped modern Russia's journey towards sovereignty and progress.

Today serves as a reminder of the strength, unity, and perseverance of the Russian people in overcoming tribulations in the course of this history. We also celebrate the rich history, cultural heritage and traditions, and the remarkable achievements in science and technology that have shaped the Russian society. They are a testament to the indomitable spirit of Russia.

Forty-eight years ago, Seychelles and Russia formed a partnership that has endured over time – a partnership that has led to significant collaboration in multifaceted fields such as tourism, sports, education, capacity-building, health, culture, and science.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the prevailing global challenges, we have made significant strides in our relations in 2023. While we may hold different perspectives on certain matters, our commitment to dialogue has always been the guiding principle of our interactions, reinforced by mutual respect.

Seychelles will continue to engage with the Russian Federation on international and multilateral platforms, allowing us to navigate the complexities of international relations.

At the bilateral level, tourism remains a cornerstone of our relationship, with Russian visitors being warmly welcomed to our shores and which is not only driving economic growth but also promoting cultural exchanges between our two nations. Last year, the arrival of 38,172 visitors from Russia to Seychelles, was a noteworthy achievement showcasing a significant increase from the previous year. The current year has also shown promise, with 15,950 Russian visitors already boosting our tourism numbers. We are pleased that Russian tourists continue to choose Seychelles as their preferred holiday destination.

The year 2023 has been exceptional in strengthening our people-to-people connections through various visits and conferences held in Russia. Seychelles' participation in events such as the World Youth Festival, the 2nd Russia-Africa Summit, and the Saint Petersburg International Cultural Forum has played a crucial role in solidifying the bonds between our nations.

The current year has begun on a positive note. In March, a group of young Seychellois had the opportunity to participate in the WADF 2024 Artistic Dance Grand Prix in Moscow. During the same month, a high-level delegation traveled to Kazan for the Games of the Future.

In 2024, as in 2023, sports remain an important aspect of our cooperation. I acknowledge the significant contribution of Mr. Alexey Kozlov, a highly skilled boxing coach from Russia, in leading Team Seychelles to an outstanding victory at the Indian Ocean Games in Madagascar last year. I would also like to express my gratitude to the Russian Federation for their support in Seychelles' hosting of the Beach Soccer World Cup in 2025.

Looking ahead, we anticipate further strengthening of our collaboration through the First Ministerial Conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum, scheduled to take place in Sochi in November 2024.

Your Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, as we commemorate the Russian National Day, let us also celebrate the enduring friendship between Seychelles and Russia. Seychelles remains committed to further strengthening our bilateral relations with Russia. We believe that by working together, we can overcome the challenges of our time, such as climate change, global health crises and economic uncertainties. Through continued dialogue and cooperation, we can respectfully overcome our differences, and create a more prosperous and harmonious world for our citizens

Once again, I extend our warmest wishes and congratulations to the Government and people of Russia, to Ambassador Kozhin and to the Russian community in Russia.

Please join me in a toast to the enduring partnership between Seychelles and Russia and the continued collaboration and mutual respect that define our relationship.

Thank you.