

**Speech by Mr Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism,
on the occasion of the Launching of the National Diaspora Policy 2024-2029.
Savoy Resort and Spa, Beau Vallon
Tuesday 30 July 2024**

- President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr. Wavel Ramkalawan and Mrs. Linda Ramkalawan
- Vice President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr. Ahmed Afif
- President of the Court of Appeal, Hon. Justice Anthony Fernando
- Colleague Ministers
- Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Seychelles, H.E Mr. Oskar Benedikt
- Representative of the Office of the Regional Director for Eastern, Horn and Southern Africa of the International Organization for Migration, Mr. Justin McDermott
- Chief of Mission of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) for Mauritius and Seychelles, Ms. Alia Hirji
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Everyone joining us online
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to this important occasion as we officially launch the first National Diaspora Policy of Seychelles. A special greeting also to our diaspora following the live stream.

This National Diaspora Policy, spanning from 2024 to 2029, is more than just a document. It reflects our commitment to acknowledging and harnessing the invaluable contributions of our fellow Seychellois abroad.

Beyond our Foreign Policy, this initiative seeks to further promote and protect the rights and interests of Seychellois abroad, assists citizens in distress, and explores the diaspora's contributions. It aligns seamlessly with Vision 2033, which aspires to ***“A resilient, responsible, and prosperous nation of healthy, educated and empowered Seychellois living together in harmony with nature and engaged with the wider world.”***

Our fellow Seychellois abroad play a crucial role in our national development. Scattered across the globe for various reasons—economic, political, educational, matrimonial or the pursuit of “greener pastures” - they bring with them diverse forms of capital: cultural, economic, human, and social. They are not just contributors but integral parts of our national fabric.

Their experiences, skills, and knowledge enrich Seychelles beyond mere economic terms. They are ambassadors of our culture, values, and Creole identity. This policy

aims to strengthen these bonds, ensuring that the diaspora remains connected and valued, regardless of where they are in the world.

The policy's vision is to enhance coordination and connections with our diaspora. Its mission, now adopted by the Government, is to sustain an inclusive and efficient system of engagement with tangible, measurable impacts.

Implementation will involve collaboration among various government departments and agencies, the private sector, civil society and international partners. The governance and operational frameworks outlined in this policy will ensure effective monitoring and evaluation.

I am pleased to announce the forthcoming establishment of a multisectoral Governance Council, led by the office of the President with the Foreign Affairs Department as vice-chair, to oversee diaspora engagement and policy implementation.

Our goal is to lay the foundation for long-term engagement with our Seychellois abroad. This policy will evolve and improve over time, though significant impacts may take quite a while to manifest. By adopting a forward-looking approach, we are creating a sustainable framework that will benefit future generations and strengthen Seychelles for decades to come.

A key component of this policy is the Diaspora Unit within the Foreign Affairs Department. Since its inception in July 2021, the unit has been pivotal in developing and now driving the implementation of this policy. To date, over 2,000 Seychellois abroad have registered their details. Despite being small, the unit serves as the bridge between the government and the diaspora, ensuring their needs, concerns, and contributions are recognised and addressed to the extent possible.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I call upon every Seychellois to actively participate in implementing this policy. Your involvement is crucial for its success. We value your insights and expertise for the continued development and progress of Seychelles.

I also appeal to our international partners to assist us in our journey of diaspora engagement. With this policy, Seychelles is ready to contribute to the Global Diaspora Policy Alliance, reinforcing our commitment to global collaboration. These affiliations will enable us to learn from global best practices and share our experiences with the international community.

To the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), thank you for making the elaboration of this policy possible. From initial discussions, study tours, and the expert guidance of Dr. Martin Russell, to numerous associated activities, your support through the EU-funded South African Migration Management (SAMM) project has been invaluable. We value our collaboration in addressing migration challenges and capitalising on its benefits. Seychelles remains committed to safe and orderly migration.

To the European Union, thank you for being a continued partner to Seychelles and our region. The SAMM project has facilitated numerous IOM-led initiatives in Seychelles.

Our appreciation also extends to the local stakeholders who actively participated in consultations and to the diaspora members who took part in the online survey. Your contributions have guided us and reassured us that our intentions align with your expectations.

Last but not least, thank you, President Ramkalawan, for spearheading this initiative, for your continued guidance, and for making it a practice to meet with Seychellois communities during your overseas visits. To my colleague ministers, thank you for your unwavering support for this policy in Cabinet, making today's launch possible.

In closing, I would like to reiterate the significance of this policy for the future of Seychelles. This policy is for you, our diaspora. It recognises your invaluable contributions and commits to ensuring that you remain an integral part of our nation's journey towards development, progress and prosperity.

Mon bannerekfrer, isi ealetranze,

Annou regard ver en fitir kot sa lyen antre noui pli for kizanmen. Annou regard laveniravek en nouvolizye. Parey Prezidan Ramkalawan ti dirdan son dernyenmesaz pour la fetlende pandans: « **Nou lekeri bat pour Sesel e noufyer pou apelnou Seselwa, nenportkilandrwa kot nouete** ». Wi, nou Seselwa, e nenportlandrwa dan lemonn, nou pou fer monte nou paviyontou zourpli o !

Mersi.

Thank you.