

Diplomatic Cocktail

Friday 07 February 2025
Fisherman's Cove Resort

Speech by Mr Sylvestre Radegonde
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism

"Bridging Oceans, Building Connections: Seychelles at the Heart of Global Dialogue"

- **PRESIDENT WAVEL RAMKALAWAN, FIRST LADY, MRS RAMKALAWAN**
- **VICE-PRESIDENT AHMED AFIF, MRS AFIF**
- **SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**
- **CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT**
- **COLLEAGUE MINISTERS**
- **DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS**
- **MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR CORPS**
- **THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**
- **COMMISSIONER OF POLICE**
- **CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCES**
- **MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**
- **DISTINGUISHED GUESTS**
- **COLLEAGUES**
- **LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**
- **GOOD EVENING**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to our annual diplomatic reception this evening.

It is an occasion for us to thank you for the valued partnerships between our nations and to reaffirm our commitment to deepening our cooperation.

I would like to firstly pay tribute to Mr. Patrick Pillay, who sadly passed away last year. We remember him for his contributions to Seychelles, including as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Ambassador Azais, chère Alexandra, – Merci!

As Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, your contributions are appreciated by all at the Ministry and by our wider diplomatic community.

I want to welcome Ambassador Sakuta Makoto as the first resident Ambassador of Japan to Seychelles. We hope that you will feel at home on our islands during your tenure.

I also wish to welcome Mrs. Lizette Martinez Luzardo, Vice-Minister of Culture of the Republic of Cuba.

Bienvenida señora Viceministra de Cultura

Es un honor y un placer tenerla entre nosotros esta noche.

Excellencies, distinguished guests,

We are so very privileged to be surrounded by friends and partners who have come to know Seychelles very well.

Come to know our people, our culture, our particularities. And, I hope, what makes Seychelles special.

In serving your own countries, you have become a valued part of our community and done so much.

Through the support you have given to us in our times of need and through all the programmes and services you provide – you help to keep us connected with all corners of the world.

On behalf of President Ramkalawan and the people of Seychelles, we are truly thankful.

It is these connections that I would like to focus on. Maintaining as well as strengthening them.

In a world facing increasing uncertainty, Seychelles will always be a friend.

A frank and honest one, but a friend.

Winds may change but where you find in us a willingness for dialogue and cooperation, you will also find a people resolutely committed to safeguarding our national interests.

Excellencies, distinguished guests,

We have only been able to get to where we are because we are uncompromising on matters that are critical to us. And guided by principles which we set for ourselves and reflect who we are as a people.

We have the highest GDP per capita in Africa.

The highest human development index in Africa.

We are consistently judged to be among the least corrupt countries in Africa.

We are a recognised global leader in ocean governance, having been the first country in Africa and fourth in the world to ratify the BBNJ Treaty. We pioneered the blue bonds and protected thirty percent of our territory ten years ahead of schedule.

It is not by coincidence, nor is it by chance.

Our determination to pursue our interests and objectives **on our own terms** is how we deliver for our people and remain a reliant partner to all who wish to work with us.

We are proud of our accomplishments. But we rue that safeguarding them is not solely in our control. We are helpless against the external factors that threaten our development: foreign conflicts, economic shocks, climate change.

Our priorities are simple.

We will continue to use our voice to drive meaningful conversations that contribute to solutions and push for action that protects vulnerable states.

This is what we did for the MVI which was finally adopted by the UN General Assembly last year and now call for its meaningful implementation.

We will continue to advocate for climate justice. We know all too well that the world is not fair and we will play our small part in pursuing what is right.

We will push for the operationalisation of the loss and damage fund to compensate those who have contributed little to climate change, yet suffer the most.

Last year, we made our case before the ICJ in its advisory opinion proceedings and we expect the Court to clarify the obligations of states with regard to climate action.

This is mankind's greatest challenge and we must all rise to meet it.

Excellencies, distinguished guests,

There is a rising tendency to stray from multilateralism but Seychelles will not.

Its failures can only be attributed to short-sighted acts of self-interest and we should instead measure it by its successes. Not by the conflicts we fail to resolve but by the ones that never occur.

It gives us the frameworks for development to reduce global poverty and sets the international norms and standards that govern our conduct.

Development may be slow but it is sure and it is steady. And requires all of our participation.

Multilateralism provides the fertile soil for cooperation to grow and the grass is greener where you water it. We will continue to water it.

To continue with this analogy, it is our garden to tend to. When it falters, it is up to us – **collectively** – to diagnose and to reform it in accordance with new realities.

We will uphold the principles of international law, territorial integrity and respect for human rights – **for all people, everywhere.**

The protection of our vast maritime zone remains our biggest logistical challenge and we cannot overcome alone.

Seychelles remains committed to protecting its waters as we assume chairmanship of the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities later this month.

Excellences, mesdames, messieurs,

En tant que président de la Commission de l'océan Indien (COI), les Seychelles ont joué un rôle clé dans la promotion de la résilience régionale, de l'unité et du bon voisinage. Sous notre leadership, la COI a accompli des progrès significatifs dans la gestion des défis communs tels que la sécurité maritime, le changement climatique et le développement durable.

Alors que nous nous apprêtons à transmettre la présidence à l'Union des Comores, nous sommes fiers de laisser derrière nous un cadre solide pour une coopération régionale continue. Par ailleurs, notre adhésion active à La

Francophonie souligne l'importance que nous accordons à la diplomatie culturelle et au multilatéralisme, renforçant ainsi le rôle des Seychelles sur la scène mondiale.

Excellencies, distinguished guests,

It is an immense honour, privilege and out of a sense of duty to my country, that I serve as Minister.

Mr. President, thank you for your trust, your confidence in the vision that we have for Seychelles, and your help and support to get us there.

My colleague ministers for their unfailing encouragement and support.

My principal secretaries, Vivianne and Sherin, whose leadership and support ensure that the foreign affairs and tourism departments perform at their best.

And of course to the staff across both departments; they know that I have high expectations and I am grateful for their contributions and their professionalism.

Our honorary consuls. Their commitment and hard work ensure that Seychelles is represented further than would otherwise be possible. We are truly appreciative.

Last but not least, my wife Doty and our sons.

You guys are my rock and greatest cheerleaders.

Few will know the sacrifice we have made as a family for me to be able serve my country.

I shall forever be grateful for your unfailing love, encouragement and support.

Excellencies, distinguished guests,

As you are all aware, our job does not get easier. No sooner is one hurdle overcome that we are confronted by several more. There is no finish line and our work is never really done. But we meet these challenges willingly in pursuit of a better quality of life for our people.

I am reassured that as we move forward down more difficult paths, we do so with friends and partners such as yourselves.

I now invite you to raise your glass.

To the spirit of friendship and cooperation that allows us to turn challenges into opportunities.

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