Speech by Ambassador Barry Faure
Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Diaspora

"50 Years of Vision and Voice: Seychelles' Journey with the Global Community Toward Shared Security and Sustainable Development."

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Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, His Lordship Rony Govinden

Principal Minister

Ministers

Commissioner of Police

Chief of Defence Forces

Deputy Speaker in the National Assembly

Members of the Diplomatic and Consular Corps

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all!

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to Seychelles and to the 2026 Honorary Consuls Conference.

I extend my sincere thanks to you all, who have travelled from across the world to join us. Your presence reflects your commitment to Seychelles and your willingness to contribute to our national interests and aspirations.

This Conference is more than a meeting of Honorary Consuls. It is an opportunity to reflect on our achievements, discuss our national priorities and consider how we can work together to advance Seychelles' interests in the years ahead.

Before we begin, it is important to remember those who are no longer with us.

Since our last Conference, we have lost several Honorary Consuls who served Seychelles with distinction: Mr Francis Herbet of Normandy, France, who passed away shortly after the 2024 Conference; Mr Paolo Adelmann of Rome, Italy; Mr MD Amiruzzaman of Bangladesh; and Mr Andreas Philokyrou of Cyprus.

Their service helped strengthen Seychelles' international relations and expand our consular network. On behalf of the Government, I extend our sincere appreciation for their dedication and contribution.

I also wish to acknowledge two Honorary Consuls who have recently retired: Mr Karl Pisec of Austria and Dr Udeni Arawgoda of Sri Lanka.

We thank them for their years of service, for the relationships they built and for the opportunities they helped create for Seychelles. Their contributions remain an important part of our diplomatic history.

I. 50 Years of Vision and Voice

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, Seychelles celebrates fifty years of independence.

This milestone invites us to reflect on our journey, but it also challenges us to look ahead.

When Seychelles became independent in 1976, our place in the international community was still taking shape. Over the decades, we established diplomatic relations, joined regional and international organisations and developed partnerships across the world. Step by step, we built a distinct voice in international affairs.

Today, Seychelles has demonstrated that a country's influence need not be determined by its size.

We have contributed to international discussions on the Blue Economy, sustainable ocean governance, climate action, biodiversity, maritime security and the interests of Small Island Developing States. We have shown that a small nation can help shape global priorities when it combines clear principles with active engagement and practical solutions.

Our theme, ***50 Years of Vision and Voice***, captures both this achievement and the responsibility that comes with it.

The question before us is not simply what Seychelles has achieved over the past fifty years. It is how we will use our voice to shape the next fifty.

Our next chapter must focus on turning international engagement into opportunity, relationships into practical cooperation and shared ambitions into tangible benefits for the Seychellois people.

Each of you has an important role to play in this endeavour.

III. A New Chapter for Seychelles

Last year, the people of Seychelles entrusted a new Administration, under the leadership of President Dr Patrick Herminie, with the responsibility of guiding our country into its next chapter.

The Government has set out a renewed vision for national development. Its priorities include strengthening the rule of law, building economic resilience and promoting inclusive development so that no one is left behind.

One principle must guide our approach: **our domestic ambitions cannot be separated from our international engagement.**

For a small island state, developments beyond our borders have direct consequences at home.

The security of shipping routes affects the cost and availability of essential goods. Global economic conditions influence our resilience. International markets create opportunities for our businesses. Climate change threatens our coasts, ocean and livelihoods. Meanwhile, the skills and networks of Seychellois living abroad represent a valuable national resource.

Our foreign policy must therefore help us manage external risks, expand economic opportunities and secure the cooperation and expertise needed to support national development.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Diaspora has an important role in this process. The formal inclusion of the diaspora within its mandate reflects a broader understanding of Seychelles' international community.

This is more than a change in name. It recognises that our citizens abroad remain an integral part of our national development.

They bring knowledge, skills, professional experience, investment potential and connections to the countries in which they live. These resources can contribute to education, entrepreneurship, innovation and economic growth at home.

Our Honorary Consuls can help us strengthen these links. Many of you work in countries and communities where Seychellois live, work and study. You are well placed to promote people-to-people diplomacy, maintain contact with our citizens abroad and connect them with opportunities to contribute to Seychelles.

We must ensure that distance does not prevent our diaspora from participating in the development of their home country.

IV. The Government's Vision and Your Role

A key feature of this year's Conference is the opportunity to hear directly from members of the new Cabinet.

You will gain a clearer understanding of the Government's national development priorities and the vision guiding the new Administration. You will also be briefed on the revision of the National Development Strategy to reflect these priorities, with people placed at the centre of development.

We have made this engagement a central part of the Conference for a reason.

If we expect our Honorary Consuls to advance Seychelles' interests abroad, you must understand our national priorities, our development objectives and the opportunities we seek to create.

Our aim is not simply to brief you. It is to involve you more directly in our national development efforts.

We want to move beyond a model in which Honorary Consuls are primarily representatives of Seychelles. We want a network that is actively connected to our development priorities and able to contribute through its expertise, contacts and influence.

This calls for practical questions.

Where can you help open doors for Seychelles?

Which universities, companies, investors or research institutions could work with our national institutions?

How can you help attract investment, promote tourism and expand opportunities in technology and innovation?

Where can your professional networks help us access knowledge, skills and expertise?

And how can you help communicate Seychelles' priorities and strengthen its voice internationally?

These are not merely questions for discussion. They should guide our efforts to identify concrete opportunities and establish lasting cooperation.

V. From Representation to Results

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This brings me to a principle that should guide our discussions throughout the Conference: **our international relationships must deliver results.**

Representation matters. Relationships matter. Visibility matters. But their real value lies in what they enable us to achieve for Seychelles and its people.

This year's Conference builds on previous meetings while placing greater emphasis on practical outcomes and follow-up.

The District and National Sector Partnership Programme, formerly known as the *Adopt a District* initiative, has been reviewed with this objective in mind.

We want to move beyond a fixed district-based approach and give Honorary Consuls greater scope to contribute according to their expertise, professional networks and areas of interest. At the same time, we must preserve meaningful links with our communities and ensure that cooperation responds to their needs.

This approach will allow us to connect international expertise with local priorities. It will also encourage more targeted contributions in areas such as education, healthcare, skills development, environmental protection and entrepreneurship.

The programme before you has also been designed to facilitate direct engagement with Government ministries, departments and agencies.

This is an important step towards aligning the work of our consular network with national development priorities.

I hope that, by the end of this Conference, we will have identified specific opportunities for cooperation, agreed on practical next steps and established clear channels for follow-up.

We should measure our progress not only by the relationships we maintain, but also by the initiatives we develop, the opportunities we create and the benefits we deliver.

Dear friends,

For years, you have come to Seychelles. More and more, Seychelles is now coming to you.

Officers from the Consular Affairs Division have since last year began undertaking Consular visits to several of our Honorary Consulates. I thank those of you who received them and generously assisted with their accommodation and other logistical arrangements. Seeing your offices and communities in person told us more than any report could.

We now intend to extend these visits across the network, to see what works well and where you need our support. I hope you will all welcome our teams and facilitate their travels. The Division will be in touch to plan these visits with you.

VI. Global Challenges, Resilience and Maritime Security

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We meet at a time of considerable international uncertainty. Conflicts, geopolitical tensions and disruptions to major maritime routes continue to affect global trade, energy supplies and economic stability.

For Seychelles, these developments are particularly significant. Our prosperity depends on reliable international connections, secure maritime routes and the sustainable use of our ocean resources.

These challenges remind us that resilience requires preparation, cooperation and the ability to adapt. They also demonstrate why small states must remain actively engaged in regional and international affairs.

Seychelles has shown that a small country can make a meaningful contribution to international security. Our current chairmanship of the Contact Group on Illicit

Maritime Activities (CGIMA) is one example of our commitment to addressing shared maritime threats through cooperation.

Protecting our maritime domain requires more than national capacity alone. It depends on information-sharing, technical expertise, effective coordination and sustained cooperation with regional and international partners.

During this Conference, you will have an opportunity to learn more about Seychelles' role in CGIMA and consider how your networks and professional contacts could support this work.

Your contribution could help identify technical expertise, facilitate institutional links and encourage cooperation with organisations working in maritime security and ocean governance.

More broadly, we must continue to build international relationships that strengthen our resilience, protect our national interests and create opportunities for sustainable development.

For Seychelles, international engagement is not an end in itself. It is a means of safeguarding our sovereignty, improving the well-being of our people and preparing our country for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

VII. La voix des Seychelles dans le monde

Chers amis,

Alors que nous célébrons cinquante années d'indépendance, nous devons réfléchir à la place que les Seychelles souhaitent occuper dans le monde au cours des prochaines décennies.

Notre engagement en faveur du multilatéralisme, de la coopération régionale et du respect du droit international nous a permis de bâtir une identité reconnue sur la scène internationale. Malgré sa petite taille, notre pays a démontré sa capacité à contribuer aux débats mondiaux et à la recherche de solutions aux défis communs.

Nous devons poursuivre cette voie avec indépendance, détermination et ouverture, en défendant nos intérêts tout en restant fidèles à nos principes et attentifs aux préoccupations de nos partenaires.

Notre diplomatie doit avant tout servir le développement économique, la sécurité et la résilience de notre pays, tout en portant nos priorités sur des enjeux majeurs tels que la protection des océans, la lutte contre le changement climatique et la préservation de la biodiversité.

Cette ambition exige une mobilisation collective, associant le Gouvernement, nos partenaires internationaux, le secteur privé et notre diaspora.

Vous avez, à cet égard, un rôle essentiel à jouer. Grâce à votre expérience, à votre connaissance des pays où vous exercez vos fonctions et à vos réseaux, vous pouvez promouvoir les Seychelles, faciliter de nouvelles coopérations et contribuer à identifier des opportunités au service de notre développement.

Ensemble, faisons de notre engagement international un véritable levier de progrès pour les Seychelles et contribuons, à notre mesure, à un monde plus pacifique, plus juste et plus durable.

VIII. Looking to the Next Fifty Years

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Fifty years ago, Seychelles began its journey as an independent nation.

Today, we stand at another point of transition.

As we begin the next fifty years of our national journey, I would therefore ask each of you to think not only about how you represent Seychelles, but also about what you can help Seychelles achieve.

Let us leave this Conference with fewer general commitments and more practical ones.

Let us identify opportunities, establish connections, and agree on actions that can be followed up after you return to your respective countries.

Because ultimately, the strength of a partnership is not measured only by the goodwill expressed around a table.

It is measured by what that partnership makes possible.

I hope that this Conference will mark the beginning of many such possibilities.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Seychelles, I thank you for your continued service, your commitment and your belief in our country.

I wish you productive discussions, meaningful exchanges and, above all, a Conference that produces results that we can look back on with pride.

As we celebrate fifty years of Seychelles' vision and voice, let us now turn confidently towards the next fifty with ambition, resilience, partnership and purpose.

It is my great pleasure to declare the 2026 Seychelles Honorary Consuls Conference officially open.

Thank you.