OPENING REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR BARRY FAURE, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THE DIASPORA

SEYCHELLES AMBASSADORS' RETREAT 2026

Colleagues,

Following our meeting with the President, I would like us to turn our attention to the work of the Ministry, our priorities and how best we can advance the interests of Seychelles in an increasingly complex international environment.

Since the new Government assumed office on 26 October 2025, we have been working through a period of transition, as its priorities are translated into the work of our institutions. For the Ministry, this has been an opportunity to take stock of our responsibilities, consider how best to support the Government's foreign policy objectives and identify where our institutional arrangements need to be strengthened.

Our approach must balance continuity with the need to adapt. We have valuable experience, established relationships and institutional knowledge on which to build. At the same time, our responsibilities are evolving. The establishment of the Development Cooperation Division, the strengthening of our diaspora engagement, the opening of our High Commission in Mauritius and the work towards establishing our diplomatic presence in Moscow and Cairo all reflect the broadening scope of our external engagement. These developments bring opportunities, but also new demands on our people, resources and administrative capacity.

It is in this context that work has commenced on the Ministry's Scheme of Service and broader institutional framework. This is an important step towards ensuring that our structures, responsibilities and conditions of service appropriately reflect the Ministry's specialised mandate and evolving needs. We must approach this work carefully, drawing on our experience and considering the practical requirements of the Ministry as we develop proposals for its future development.

Our work is also shaped by an international environment in which geopolitical tensions increasingly carry direct economic consequences. The conflict involving Iran, the United States and Israel has disrupted energy markets and international transport. The World Bank projected

that global energy prices would rise by 24 per cent in 2026, with overall commodity prices increasing by 16 per cent.

For Seychelles, the implications are immediate. The IMF estimates that around 60 per cent of our tourist arrivals come through Dubai, Doha or Abu Dhabi. Disruption to these major aviation hubs resulted in an average year-on-year decline of 32 per cent in arrivals during the initial period of the conflict. We also import approximately 95 per cent of our energy, leaving us exposed to higher fuel prices, freight costs and wider inflationary pressures. These developments demonstrate why our diplomatic work must be informed by a clear understanding of international events and their potential consequences for our economy and national interests.

Against this background, we are introducing written instructions for Ambassadors and Heads of Mission, setting out priorities relevant to their respective jurisdictions. These letters are intended to provide greater clarity and strengthen coordination between Headquarters and our Missions, while allowing Ambassadors the professional judgement and flexibility required to respond to developments on the ground. Our collective objective is to ensure that our diplomatic engagement is purposeful, coordinated and aligned with Seychelles' priorities.

The Objectives and Key Results framework we will discuss during this retreat is another means of bringing greater focus to our work. It should help us define what we seek to achieve, measure progress and assess whether our efforts are delivering meaningful results. Equally, we must ensure that our expanding responsibilities are supported by sound financial management, effective administration and the institutional capacity we are working to develop.

I hope our discussions will be open and constructive. We bring different experiences and perspectives, and there will naturally be occasions when our assessments differ. This is valuable when it helps us understand issues more fully and arrive at better decisions. I encourage us to use this opportunity to share our experiences, raise concerns in a constructive spirit and identify practical ways forward, with an appreciation of the challenges faced by both Headquarters and our Missions.

My hope is that we leave this retreat with a clearer understanding of our priorities, the institutional work ahead and the results we must pursue together. Above all, we must remain focused on how our work serves Seychelles and advances its interests in a changing world.

I thank you for your continued service and commitment, and I look forward to our discussions.

Thank you.