



International Affairs Committee Annual Report 2012

July, 2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

The International Affairs Committee for the 5th Assembly was established following a Motion approved by the National Assembly on 15th November, 2011.

The year 2012 has been a productive year for the Committee in that it has successfully established relationships with several foreign Parliaments which aim to promote further exchanges between the Parliaments. It has also set in motion a closer working relationship with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The International Affairs Committee is mandated as per its Terms of Reference¹.

2. MEMBERSHIP

The Committee consists of seven Members as follows:

- Hon. Andre Pool – Chairperson
- Hon. Jeniffer Vel – Vice Chairperson
- Hon. David Pierre – Member
- Hon. Derek Samson – Member
- Hon. Mirena Souris – Member
- Hon. David Payet – Member
- Hon. Emmanuel Fideria – Member

Hon. Emmanuel Fideria was nominated to the Committee since 28th September, 2012 replacing Hon. Begitta Jeannevol.

The Committee is also assisted by a Secretary. Ms. Shelda Commettant served as Secretary to Committee from 15th November, 2011 to 29th March, 2012. From 30th March, 2012 to date, the Deputy Clerk, Ms. Luisa Waye-Hive has been serving as Secretary to Committee.

The Secretary is further assisted by a Secretary Assistant. This role was served by Ms. Anuchka Loizeau from 15th November, 2011 until 01st August, 2012. Since then, Ms. Deborah Maimiee has been serving as Secretary Assistant.

¹ Terms of Reference

3. MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE

The International Affairs Committee held fifteen meetings during 2012 out of which two were held with outside parties. The list of meetings held is annexed².

4. ACP PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AND ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

The International Affairs Committee took an active role on the international front during 2012 with the participation of the Chairperson, Hon. Andre Pool in the 'Inter-Sessional meetings of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and 27th Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly' which was held in Brussels, Belgium from 19th to 22nd March, 2012.

The Chairperson also participated in the '28th Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and the 23rd Session of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly' held in Horsens, Denmark from 23rd to 30th May, 2012. He was accompanied by Hon. Begitta Jeannevol who also had the opportunity to participate in the Women's Forum.

The 'Inter-Sessional Meetings of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and 29th Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly' held in Brussels, Belgium from 16^h to 20th September, 2012 and the '30th Session of the ACP Parliamentary Assembly and the '24th Session of the ACP EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly' held in Suriname from 22nd to 29th November, 2012 also saw the participation of the Chairperson. Hon. Jeniffer Vel had the opportunity to attend the last session in Suriname with her participation in the Women's Forum under the theme 'Women in Decision Making'.

5. ELECTION OF PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP REPRESENTATIVES

With the aim of establishing and strengthening the relationship with foreign Parliaments, the International Affairs Committee elected four Members as Parliamentary Friendship Representatives for six foreign Parliaments. The Parliamentary Friendship Representatives are meant to handle all parliamentary affairs on behalf of the National Assembly with the Parliament which they represent.

² List of meetings held & guests in attendance

On 03rd February, 2012, Hon. Derek Samson was elected the first Parliamentary Friendship Representative for Cuba. Hon. Samson was further elected as the Parliamentary Friendship Representative for Sri Lanka on 10th July, 2012.

The Committee also elected Hon. David Payet as the Parliamentary Friendship Representative for Turkey on 30th March, 2012. However, Hon. David Payet had to discontinue in the position due to other work commitments. Hon. Vel was therefore elected as the Representative for Turkey on 08th June, 2012. Hon. Vel was further elected as Parliamentary Friendship Representative for India on 10th July, 2012.

Additionally, Hon. Begitta Jeannevol was elected as Parliamentary Friendship Representative for People's Republic of China on 27th April 2012. However, with the departure of Hon. Jeannevol from the Committee, the Chairperson, Hon. Andre Pool took over as Representative as of 05th October 2012.

The last election for 2012 was that of Hon. David Payet as the Parliamentary Friendship Representative for Russia on 14th August, 2012.

The elections of all Parliamentary Friendship Representatives have been communicated to the Parliaments concerned and some Parliamentary Friendship Representatives have initiated contact with their counterparts. Hon. Derek Samson had the opportunity to form part of a delegation that proceeded on a fact-finding mission at the Parliament of Sri Lanka in November, 2012 whereby he met with Hon. Neomal Perera, the President of the Sri Lanka – Seychelles Friendship Association. Hon. Samson has also had liaison with the Cuban Embassy in Seychelles and the Parliamentary Friendship Representative for Seychelles in Cuba, Hon. Belkys Perez Cruz.

Hon. David Payet has also initiated contact with the Russian Embassy in Seychelles with a meeting held with the now former Ambassador, H.E. Mr. Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin.

It is hoped that during 2013, the Committee can establish close links with the Parliament of Australia through the Australian Africa Parliamentary Group as well as other Parliaments.

6. ASSOCIATION OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN COMMISSION (APCOI)

The European Union, along with other partners, is financing a project to set up a Parliamentary Association for member countries of the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) including Seychelles, Mauritius, Comoros, Madagascar and Reunion Island. The primary role of the Association would be to oversee the work of the Indian Ocean Commission with emphasis being placed on the way financial aid from the European Union for projects in the IOC region is being used.

The Chairperson has been active in the necessary negotiations and it was proposed that Seychelles take the lead in setting up the Association in view that at the time of the proposal, Seychelles had Chairmanship of the IOC under Mr. Calixte D'Offay.

It was also proposed that a first meeting is held in Mauritius with the aim of formalizing and adopting a proper document which will guide the work of the Association as well as decide on a date to formally launch the Association.

7. EXCHANGES

7.1 Interaction with the Cuban Ambassador

The Committee met with the now former Ambassador for Cuba, H.E. Mrs. Maria Nogales Jimenez, accompanied by Mr. Rafael Romani Tur on 3rd February, 2012.

The aim of the interaction was for the Ambassador to initiate friendship with the International Affairs Committee and to further strengthen the good relations between Cuba and the National Assembly. It was also an opportunity for Members to learn about Cuba, including its history, people and culture, with particular focus on the economic blockade, the Cuban five and the Seychelles-Cuba bilateral relations.

7.2 Delegation from Standing Committee of Henan Provincial People's Congress of the People's Republic of China

A delegation from Standing Committee of Henan Provincial People's Congress of the People's Republic of China called on the Chairperson of the Committee on 19th July, 2012.

During the meeting, both parties expressed their wish to strengthen the friendship between the National Assembly of Seychelles and the Henan Provincial People's Congress following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the International Affairs Committee of the fourth Assembly and the Henan Provincial People's Congress.

The Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Henan Provincial People's Congress also extended an invitation to the Chairperson of the International Affairs Committee to visit the Henan Province.

7.3 Meeting with LUNGOS Representatives

In an effort to engage with the three branches of Government, LUNGOS representatives met with the Committee on 22nd June, 2012.

It was agreed that the public is not fully aware of the role of LUNGOS and it was therefore proposed that LUNGOS develops a sensitisation programme whereby public could learn more about the work of the civil society. As part of that, LUNGOS proposed that it conducts a workshop with all Members of the National Assembly whereby Members could learn about the role and functions of LUNGOS and get the opportunity to interact with representatives of LUNGOS. The workshop was organised in the last quarter of 2012.

7.4 Meeting with Consultants from the National Human Rights Action Plan

On 09th November, 2012 the Committee met with two consultants working on the five-year National Human Rights Action Plan, Mr. Justice Emile Short and Mrs. Mahrookh Pardiwalla.

The plan aims to look at the current human rights situation in Seychelles which covers all categories of human rights including economic, political, social and cultural. The aim of the meeting was to determine how the Parliament can engage with the consultants in the development of the plan given that the National Assembly will have an important role in future legislation to improve human rights in the country.

7.5 Meeting with Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Chairperson of the Committee met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Jean-Paul Adam on Friday 26th October, 2012 whereby the latter

expressed the Ministry's wish to work closely with the International Affairs Committee. The Minister also requested the National Assembly's support for the Seychelles' bid to the United Nation Security Council in 2017. The Chairperson assured the Minister of the National Assembly's full commitment.

During the meeting, it was agreed that the Ministry will appoint a focal person, Mr. Ralph Agrippine who will attend Committee meetings only when the Committee will be taking up issues pertaining to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

7.6 Other meetings

The Chairperson also had different meetings with Representatives from the World Bank during the year. Discussions were also held with the European Ambassador and delegation twice during 2012 where different issues were discussed.

8. CONCLUSION

The International Affairs Committee has been very active throughout the year in international forums. Additionally, we have taken a more active role in foreign affairs at national level.

The Committee wishes to commend Members' in their commitment in forging a stronger relationship with other Parliaments as well as with Embassies and High Commissions based in Seychelles.

It is anticipated that the National Assembly will continue to maintain relationship with existing partners and create new parliamentary relationships.

Annex 1

Terms of Reference for International Affairs Committee

Tasks and responsibilities

- (i) To work closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, other governmental and non-governmental organizations on international affairs, peace, security and defense and contribute thereon as and when necessary.
- (ii) To maintain existing and establish new ties with foreign parliamentary organizations of interest.
- (iii) To perform any other tasks as may be assigned by the National Assembly.

Annex 2: List of Meeting held and guests in attendance

No.	Date of Meeting	Guests in attendance
1.	10 th January 2012	
2.	3 rd February 2012	
3.	17 th February 2012	
4.	30 th March 2012	
5.	27 th April 2012	
6.	21 st May 2012	
7.	08 th June 2012	
8.	22 nd June 2012	Mr. Bernard Elizabeth Mr. Steve Lalanne Ms. Eline Moses Mr. Joseph Francois
9.	10 th July 2012	
10.	20 th July 2012	
11.	14 th August 2012	
12.	05 th October 2012	
13.	26 th October 2012	
14.	09 th November 2012	Mr. Justice Emile Short Mrs. Mahrookh Pardiwalla Mr. Ralph Agrippine
15.	18 th December 2012	

Membership of International Affairs Committee, 5th Assembly:

Hon. Andre Pool
Chairperson


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Hon. Jeniffer Vel
Vice-Chairperson


.....

Hon. David Pierre
Member


.....

Hon. Mirena Souris
Member


.....

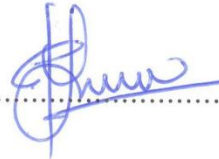
Hon. Derek Samson
Member


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Hon. Dr. David Payet
Member


.....

Hon. Emmanuel Fideria
Member


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