



THE MEDIA COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2012/2013

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Media Committee of the National Assembly is pleased to submit its Annual Report, the first since it was constituted in 2012.

This Report provides an account of the activities undertaken by the Media Committee for the year 2012 and 2013. The last two years may be described as generally productive with focus primarily on relationship building, active discussions and decision making through mutual understanding.

As a new Parliamentary Committee, since its inception its foremost responsibility remains informing the media houses (being its key subject) on its objectives, roles and expectations especially in view of the latter's continuous collaboration with the National Assembly.

In cognizance of this, the Committee endeavors to tend to the implementation of the guidelines which have been established for the local media, emphasizing on service delivery, since it remains committed to ensure fair, proper, dignified and unbiased coverage of National Assembly proceedings.

2. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The Media Committee is constituted of seven members – six representatives of the ruling party namely Parti Lepep and one representing the Popular Democratic Movement also being the Leader of the Opposition

2.1 Chairperson

The Deputy Speaker, Hon. Andre Pool is the current Chairperson of the Committee and the second appointed chairperson of the Media Committee since his predecessor Hon. Marie-Antoinette Rose who was the Committee's Chairperson from March 2012 to February, 2013.

2.2 Vice-Chairperson

The Chairperson is assisted by a Vice-Chairperson, Hon. David Pierre who is also the Leader of the Opposition.

2.3 Other Members

Other Members of the Committee are Hon. Nichole Barbe, Hon. Galen Bresson, Hon. Chantal Ghislain, Hon. Maria Payet-Marie and Hon. Sylvianne Valmont.

2.4 Secretary to Committee & Secretary Assistant

The Committee receives administrative and secretarial support from the National Assembly Secretariat. Ms. Shelda Commettant is the Secretary to the Committee and she is assisted by a Secretary Assistant, Ms. Nadine Govinden.

3 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The creation of a Media Committee for the National Assembly ensued through a motion approved by the House on 13th March, 2012 and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure for Committees, the Clerk, Ms. Azarel Ernesta, called the Committee's first meeting.

In 2012, the Committee conducted nine meetings (eight ordinary meetings and one special meeting). The Chief Executive Officer of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), Mr. Antoine Onezime attended the special meeting. However, in 2013, the Committee met on fewer occasions: a total of five meetings were convened during that year.

The list of meetings is annexed¹.

Below is the list of issues discussed and matters that were resolved by the Media Committee during 2012 and 2013:

3.1 Amendment to the Committee's Terms of Reference

A proposal was made for a change from its current name to that of ``thePublic Affairs Committee`` including changing the Committee's terms of reference², its roles and function.

Update: The amendment to the TOR is still pending.

¹ Table: Meetings and Members in attendance

² Annex: ToR of Media Committee

3.2 Speaker's Determination on the Conditions Governing Media Coverage of the National Assembly Proceedings

On several occasions the Committee met to discuss the Conditions of the Use of Coverage by the Media. The National Assembly's Legal Counsel was invited twice to the meetings to advise the Committee on the legal implication of the proposal. The draft statutory instrument was then referred to the Reform and Modernization Committee for further review and it was resolved that it be tabled before the House as a Speaker's Determination.

Drafts of the Speaker's Determination on the Conditions Governing Media Coverage of the National Assembly Proceedings was also forwarded to the Committee of Chairpersons for consideration based on opinion received from the Attorney General's Office.

Update: The Speaker's Determination No. 1 of 2013 was tabled before the House on Tuesday 16th April, 2013.

3.3 Parliament and Media Training

In 2012, The Committee proposed that, in collaboration with an international organization such as the Commonwealth Parliamentary Organization, the National Assembly organize a training programme for parliamentary journalists.

The aim of such training programme would be to enhance the National Assembly's partnership with the local media thereby enabling better information dissemination and education of the public. This was based on the mild dissatisfaction of the National Assembly vis-à-vis its portrayal in the media: there was general consensus that there was scope for improvement.

Update: The Secretariat is currently in liaison with the Inter-Parliamentary Union to facilitate this project. A Workshop on Parliament and the Media was initially scheduled for 2013. However, due to the 14th Conference of Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers hosted by the National Assembly, the workshop was deferred to 2014.

3.4 Election of New Chairperson

During 2013, the Committee elected Hon. Andre Pool, as its new Chairperson. The election took place on 16th April, 2013, two months after the first Chairperson Hon. Marie-Antoinette Rose had resigned from the position.

4 ACTIVITIES & MEETINGS WITH MEDIA PARTNERS

- 4.1 On behalf of the Media Committee, the Chairperson issued a press communiqué on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day.
- 4.2 In 2012, to commemorate the National Day, the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson tabled a joint Motion to the House.
- 4.3 The Committee carried out a visit at the National Information Service Agency (NISA) on 3rd September 2012 where it met with the CEO of NISA and two of its Assistant Directors. The aims were to introduce the Media Committee to NISA, share its plan and consolidate the partnership.

Update: the Committee had also planned to undertake a visit at the Today in Seychelles newspaper on 12th November, 2012 however in the absence of the Vice Chairperson due to an overseas mission, the visit was deferred to the following year. Although it was incorporated into the Committee's 2013 calendar of activities it has to date not been executed.

- 4.4 The Media Committee worked on a Dress code for members of the media which was approved by the Reform and Modernization Committee. Copies of the Dress Code have been circulated to all media houses since 2012.
- 4.5 A meeting was held in October 2012 with the Chief Editors of the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) and the National Information Service Agency (NISA) discussing concerns such as coverage of Assembly proceedings at that time, education on parliamentary work and dress code for members of the media.

Update: the Committee's discussions and negotiation with the SBC CEO have resulted into the National Assembly receiving greater coverage of its proceedings in the news and as individual programmes. Question time is

now broadcast live on both radio and television.

4.6 On 27th May, 2013 the Committee held another meeting with NISA, however on that occasion it was with its Chief Web-Editor Mrs. Marylene Julie to collaborate on a project linking the National Assembly website to the new NISA's website. The objective of this project is to promote and publicize the work of the National Assembly through the website of NISA. In a separate meeting in June 2013, the Committee met with representatives from the new radio station Pure FM leading to the proposal of the setting up of a feed allowing direct transmission of the National Assembly deliberation.

Update: both projects are pending for 2014.

5 CONCLUSION

During 2012 and 2013, the priorities of the Media Committee were twofold. Firstly it was to initiate a working relationship between the Committee, the National Assembly and the media. This objective has, to certain extent been achieved, however there is scope for improvement.

The second objective was to establish written rules to guide local media coverage of the National Assembly proceedings including other parliamentary works and activities. This has been translated into the formulation of two documents - The Speaker's Determination on the Conditions Governing Media Coverage of the National Assembly Proceeding and a Dress Code for accredited media personnel.

With such a working framework in place, the Media Committee therefore endeavours to enhance its oversight role during 2014, particularly in ensuring that all media houses adhere to the aforementioned regulations. The enforcement aspect necessitates that Members and media personnel be provided with appropriate training thereby improving on the quality of reportage on the National Assembly in the local media.

Annex 1: List of Meetings held and Witnesses in attendance

No.	Dates of Meetings	Guests in attendance
1.	Tuesday 20 th March, 2012	-
2.	Tuesday 10 th April, 2012	-
3.	Monday 28 th May, 2012	-
4.	Monday 04 th June, 2012	Mr. Antoine Onezime – CEO SBC
5.	Monday 09 th July, 2012	Ms. Farzana Jumaye – Legal Counsel Mr. Michael Payet – Parliamentary Journalists Mrs. Sharon Uranie – Parliamentary Journalist
6.	Monday 3 rd Sep, 2012 (Visit)	Ms. Murline Volcere – CEO NISA Mrs. Marie-Anne Lepathy – Deputy Editor Mr. Gerard Govinden – deputy Editor
7.	Monday 24 th Sep, 2012	-
8.	Monday 6 th October, 2012	-
9.	Monday 15 th October, 2012	Ms. Linda Rosalie – Chief Editor SBC Mr. Robert Andre – Chief Editor NISA
10.	Monday 10 th January 2013	-
11.	Tuesday 16 th April 2013	The Clerk, Ms. Azarel Ernesta
12.	Monday 27 th May 2013	Mrs. Marylene Julie – Chief Web-Editor NISA
13.	Monday 03 rd June 2013	Mr. Russel Vidot – Chief Editor Pure FM Mrs. Virna Onezia – Journalist Pure FM
	Monday 18 th December 2013	-

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Annex 2: Media Committee TOR

The Media Committee **Terms of Reference**

Role and Purpose

The main role of the Media Committee is to ensure fair, proper, dignified and unbiased coverage of proceedings of the National Assembly.

Tasks and Responsibilities

The Committee will:

- Enhance the quality of media coverage of the National Assembly
- Ensure maximum media coverage of the National Assembly
- Provide Members of the National Assembly with the right tools to interact with the media
- Assist with proper training for parliamentary journalists

Composition

The Committee shall consist of seven Members appointed as per Article 104 (2).

The Committee shall elect its own chairperson as per Rule 5 of the Rules of Procedures for Committees.

The Committee shall meet at least once a month, or as and when is required.

Appointment to the Committee shall be for a period of five years.

The Secretary to the Committee shall be appointed by the Secretariat

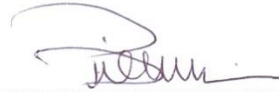
The Committee may co-opt any person with interest in media as and when required.

Membership of the fifth Assembly

Hon. Andre Pool
Chairperson



Hon. David Pierre
Vice-Chairperson



Hon. Nichole Barbe
Member



Hon. Galen Bresson
Member



Hon. Chantal Ghislain
Member



Hon. Maria Payet-Marie
Member



Hon. Sylvianne Valmont
Member