



**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SEYCHELLES**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF THE**

**MEDIA YOUTH SPORT AND CULTURE COMMITTEE**

**2022**

**Seventh Assembly**

The **Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee** is mandated to ensure monitoring and analysis of policy, administration, and the budget of the Media, Youth, Sports and Culture Departments of the Government as well as to scrutinise the matters within the Ministerial portfolios of Media, Youth Sports and Culture. The Committee is a Select Sessional Committee, as per the National Assembly Standing Orders, 2020.

**Committee Staff**

The Committee is assisted by the following Parliamentary Staff of the Secretariat:  
*Ms. Shannon Surman* (Secretary) and *Mr. Vincent Quatre* (Secretary Assistant)

**Contact**

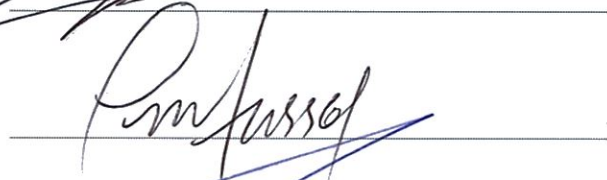
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**The following Members of the Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee undersigned, submit this Report:**

Hon. Wavel Woodcock  
**Chairperson**



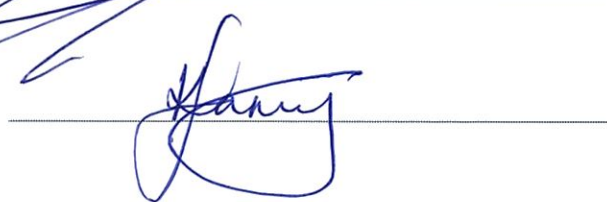
Hon. Philip Arissol  
**Vice-Chairperson**



Hon. Naddy Zialor  
**Member**



Hon. Kelly Samynadin  
**Member**



Hon. Paul Ernesta  
**Member**



Hon. Flory Larue  
**Member**



Hon. Conrad Gabriel  
**Member**



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## Introduction

### Work and Membership of the Committee

The Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee is a Select Sessional Committee with its powers set out in the National Assembly Standing Orders, 2020. The functions of the committee are also governed by the Rules of Procedure for the Committees of which Order 91 makes provisions for.

The Committee consists of seven Members<sup>1</sup> as follows:

Hon. Wavel Woodcock – Chairperson

Hon. Philip Arissol – Vice Chairperson

Hon. Naddy Zialor – Member

Hon. Kelly Samynadin – Member

Hon. Paul Ernesta – Member

Hon. Flory Larue – Member

Hon. Conrad Gabriel – Member

The committee is assisted by a Secretary, Ms. Shannon Surman and a Secretary Assistant Mr. Vincent Quatre.

### Amendment of the Committee’s Terms of Reference

In 2022, the Committee amended its Terms of Reference(TOR) to include the sports sector. The decision to expand the Committee’s scope of work was one which had been discussed in 2021, with the agreeance of the Members. The Committee agreed that the MYSCC (formerly MYCC) should play a bigger oversight role in the sports sector. Thus, a motion was moved by the Honourable Chairperson of the Committee, Hon. Wavel Woodcock, to amend the TOR on the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2022. The motion read:

**“Komite Lasanble pour Medya, Lazenes e Kiltir i demann sa Lasanble pou amann *Terms of Reference* sa Komite pou osi enkli Sport.”**

The Motion was passed with 25 Members of the National Assembly voting for the motion. Thereafter, the Committee was known as the *Media Youth Sports and Culture Committee*.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: Hon. Jany Letourdie and Hon. Norline Sophola were members of the MYSCC (then MYCC) until the 21<sup>st</sup> of February 2022 when their mandate as Members of the 7<sup>th</sup> assembly ended. Hon. Flory Larue and Hon. Paul Ernesta replaced them after when were sworn in on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022. Hon. Conrad Gabriel replaced Hon. Johan Loze as a Member of the Committee from the 3<sup>rd</sup> of August 2022.

## Meetings of the Committee

During the year 2022, the Media, Youth, Sports, and Culture Committee held numerous Committee meetings and met with several external entities.

### **1.0.MYSCC Meeting with the SBC**

On February 03<sup>rd</sup> 2022, the Committee welcomed officials from the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation, to a meeting at the National Assembly. The SBC delegation included the Chairperson of the Board, Mr. Gerard Lafortune, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Mr. Berard Dupres, and the Deputy CEO, Ms. Cindy Wirtz.

The meeting was held with the aim of getting an overview of the progress the SBC has made in the recent years and the challenges it had faced in carrying out its mandate.

#### *Points of Discussion*

- Balanced and Fair Reporting

Balanced and fair reporting were discussed during the meeting with references made to specific incidents. Mr. Dupres informed the Committee of the procedure of managing complaints, stating that the organization considers every complaint seriously but there is a need for tangible evidence. Mr. Dupres informed the Members that there is a record of the complaints and how these complaints were managed.

- Diffusion of Correct Information

Errors discussed regarding court case reporting included the lack of the names and titles of people in interviews, lack of detailed information, and how they are diffused on air. The lack of research done by journalists before reporting was also an error discussed. Two points were discussed in response to the views voiced by the Members:

#### 1) Staffing and Capacity Building

Ms. Wirtz stated that the SBC has a shortage of staff in all departments but especially in the Newsroom. At the time of this meeting, the SBC had 12 journalists and 2 principal editors. As the Committee were informed, most of the journalists were not trained in journalism or had not had the adequate experience or qualifications to fulfil the role so are learning on the job. Ms. Wirtz further stated that there has been a significant decline in the number of trained professionals who expressed their desire to join the field of journalism. One significant reason the SBC have identified for the difficulty in recruitment is the salary package.

2) Learning Centre<sup>2</sup> and Diploma in Journalism in Collaboration with the University of Seychelles

The SBC informed the Members that the management team had to stop deploying their staff full-time basis for 6 months to the Learning Centre due to the shortage of staff. Ms. Wirtz informed the Members that the Learning Centre is not fully operational, having classes twice a week and mostly targeting part timers.

Ms. Wirtz explained that the SBC partnered with the University of Seychelles (UniSey) to provide a diploma in journalism. However, the Committee was informed that the number of applicants is not satisfactory.

- Local Programs (Especially Educational and Empowering Production)

Mr. Dupres stated that there has been a lack of staff in the production department hence the decline of production programs. The Committee were informed that the SBC have been commissioning local content from other external producers to meet demand for local production. Ms. Wirtz explained that the SBC are considering the possibility of revamping older programs, especially those much appreciated by the audience to boost the quantity of production. The SBC are also considering the possibility of using show templates to create educational shows.

- SBC Business Model

Mr. Lafortune and Mr. Dupres affirmed that the SBC will need to develop innovative ideas to generate more revenue and the use of Over-The-Top (OTT)<sup>3</sup> as a reliable solution in terms of providing content and generating revenue from it.

The SBC anticipate that the move to the new SBC House will occur in early 2023. Mr. Dupres also explained that SBC will have to seek additional funding for the furnishing and operational costs for the new building.

## **2.0.MYSCC meeting with the Seychelles Media Commission (SMC)**

The MYSCC met with the SMC on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2022 with the aims of updating the MYSCC on the recent work of the SMC, the reviews of the Code of Conduct, the SMC Act and the Newspaper Act. Attending the meeting were the CEO of the SMC Mr. Ibrahim Afif and the Media Secretary, Ms. Tessa Henderson.

### *Points of Discussion*

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<sup>2</sup> Note: The Learning Centre is a Centre all employees needed to pass through to acquire the necessary skills and tools to perform in a media or broadcasting field. All recruits needed to complete 6 months in the Centre before being confirmed in post.

<sup>3</sup> Note: OTT is a media service offered directly to viewers via the internet at a subscription fee.

- Update on the Recent Work of the SMC

The CEO stated that challenges include the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and that the SMC is restricted in the actions that it can take.

- The Newspaper Act

The CEO informed the Members that the current Act does not make provisions for online publishing which is a shift that is being experienced.

Ms. Henderson stated that there were over ten complaints in 2021, showing that there are issues regarding coverage and content. Ms. Henderson stated that the lack of training was the main problem leading to these issues. The Members were informed that disruptions caused by Covid-19 and low participation of media houses in the main factors affecting training.

- The Review of the Code of Conduct

The SMC informed the Members that the revision of the Code of Conduct has been completed and that informed that media houses were consulted before reviewing the Code of Conduct.

Ms. Henderson also informed the Committee that the SMC wish to review a number of other media laws. The SMC have a tentative committee set up to review media laws, consisting of members of other entities.

- The Review of the SMC Act

Ms. Henderson explained that the review of the Act has been done internally but the SMC intend to involve other stakeholders in the process as well. The Committee were also informed that the Act has not yet been tabled.

Ms. Henderson further informed the MYSCC that, in 2019, the SMC joined the Media Coalition of the Commonwealth and in 2021, there was a review of the Commonwealth Principles on Freedom of Expression. Ms. Henderson further explained that, based on the content of the principles, there will need to be adjustments in Seychelles' documents to ensure that the country's own principles are aligned with these. Ms. Henderson stated that there are several other international documents that Seychelles has to take heed of when reviewing media laws to ensure that commitments are aligned.

### **3.0.MYSCC Meeting with the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC)**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of November 2022, the Committee had a meeting with the SBC prior to the presentation of their budgets to the National Assembly. The meeting was requested by the SBC officials to the meeting. The SBC officials included Mr. Berard Dupres the CEO, Ms. Cindy Wirtz the Deputy CEO, Mr. Gerard Lafortune the Chairman of the SBC Board and Mr. Denise Horace the Head of Finance.

#### *Points of Discussion*

- The SBC Budget

Mr. Dupres started by informing the Members of the SBC's main point of contention being the inadequate funds for the move to the SBC House. Mr. Dupres further informed the Members that the transition cost is significant to the tune of 32.4 million for which the SBC have been allocated only 3 million for the move.

The costs, according to Mr. Dupres include the significant recurring electricity costs, minor capital costs which involve the transition of the headend as well as procurement and installation of equipment. Mr. Dupres also stated that there would be an increase in the SBC cost in the coming years and that the budget presented does not reflect this.

Mr. Lafortune also stated that the deliverables of the SBC would decline as most of the limited revenue of the SBC would be spent on the operational costs of the new building rather than on such things as procuring programs and equipment which would assist in achieving deliverables.

*Pertinent Questions*

- The Chair of the Committee enquired about the expected completion date for the building of the new SBC House to which the response noted was that the building is expected to be completed in March or April.
- Hon. Larue enquired about the use of photovoltaic energy for electricity and the mitigation of costs through certain investments. Mr. Lafortune stated that the option of photovoltaic energy has been discussed but it is a one-off installation cost which would require a capital investment.

*Recommendations from the Committee included:*

- Renting some of the space to other media houses as this could also mean the sharing of costs.
- Review of the building and its purpose with the assistance of the relevant government department. Mr. Dupres in response stated that the repurposing would have to be done in terms of an exercise to consider what it would be repurposed for and that would also incur certain costs.
- The SBC should consult the ministries to identify the government entities which do not have an office. Hon. Larue further explained that some of the space from the new building could be used for such an entity.



## Visits of The Committee

The fulfilment of the MYSCC's tasks involves conducting visits to the department of Media, Youth, Sports, and Culture, seeking clarifications, and making reports and recommendations. In 2022 the MYSCC visited several entities. This section will detail the visits of the Committee:

### 1.0. The MYSCC Visit to the SBC Station



The MYSCC visited the SBC station on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2022, guided through the relevant departments by Ms. Cindy Wirtz, the Deputy CEO and Mr. Herve Cherry the Chief Engineer.

#### *Aims of the Visit*

The visit was held with two main aims:

- 1) To familiarize the Members with different aspects and departments of the organization.
- 2) For the Members to gain a better perspective of several issues raised by the SBC in their earlier meeting with the Committee (*refer to page 4*).

- The Committee visited the Studios

The MYSCC visited both studios of the SBC, gaining an overall perspective of how operations work within the studio.

It was pointed out that Studio 1 needed some new equipment, and in Studio 2, the Committee was able to observe the space limitation and some lighting equipment that needed attention as they were quite old.

- The Committee visited the Network Operation Centre (NOC)

The Committee visited the NOC, which is the section that operates the 3 main channels of SBC. The head of the section Mr. Leslie Marie, stated that apart from being short-staffed, the section operates fairly well. This section has a 24hour operation schedule and a technician is needed throughout. The technicians work on a shift basis, with part-timers forming part of the Rota to ensure the availability of a technician in the NOC at all times.

- The Committee visited the Ingest section

The MYSCC was led to the ingest section which is where all production of the organization is stored and broadcasted.

- The Committee visited the Newsroom

The Committee met with the Head of the Department, Ms. Marceline Evenor, the Chief Editor, Mrs. Marie France Kilindo, and news journalist, Mr. Willy Jacques.

Ms. Evenor pointed out several issues regarding their staff shortages. Ms. Evenor further stated that they currently had about 14 journalists working full time and they would need a further 10 journalists to be able to deliver on a day-to-day task and to provide the efficient news item. The journalists are currently working on 3 different shifts from early 4am to 9pm. Ms. Evenor explained the nature of the job and how journalist currently works in a limited time frame and this sometimes has an impact on the standard and quality news. The Department currently has to compliment their work with part-timers with some as News presenters and others as journalists.

- The Marketing Department

The Committee also had the opportunity to visit the Marketing Department and learn about the different strategies and plans of the organization to generate more revenue.

#### Other Pertinent Points

The Committee then proceeded to visit the Radio Section, and the visit concluded at the Graphics Department before meeting with the CEO of SBC, Mr. Berard Dupres, in the boardroom. Discussions were centred on the new SBC House and the progression of work on the building itself.

## **2.0. The Committee Joined a High-Level Delegation to Visit Sports Facilities**



On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2022, the MYSCC formed part of a high-level delegation visiting the sports facilities at the Roche Caiman Sports Complex and the *Stad Popiler* in Victoria. The visit was led by the Minister for Finance, National Planning, and Trade, Mr. Naadir Hassan in collaboration with the Minister for Youth, Sports, and Family, Mrs. Marie-Celine Zialor.

### *Aims of the Visit*

The aim of the visit was to better understand the state of the sports infrastructure and their maintenance and remodelling demands amid plans renovations.

### *Visit of Sports Facilities*

The delegation was guided through the various sports facilities by the CEO of the National Sports Council (NSC), Mr. Jean Larue. The facilities visited included the *Stad Linite*, the dojo, tennis courts, swimming pool, the *Palais des Sports*, and the *Stad Popiler*.

The delegation was given the opportunity to assess the state of the *Stad Linite* and gain more information on the updates and re-modelling planned. The planned updates to the stadium include the addition of a media box with a sound system and the installation of energy saving lights and CCTV cameras around the stadium.

The delegation was then guided through to the NSC hall, where it was noted that re-modelling would be essential to convert the hall into a more appropriate sports facility. The delegation then made their way through to the other sports facilities where the various maintenance issues were pointed out by the CEO of the NSC. The deterioration of the various structures was clearly visible, justifying the necessity for renovations.

The Chair of the MYSCC, Hon. Wavel Woodcock, stated the lack of a comprehensive plan for renovations as the cause for the deteriorating sports structures. The Chair of the Committee also spoke of the role of the Committee in providing oversight of the renovations planned and ensuring that the funding for renovating sports facilities is taken into consideration in budgetary discussions.

### **3.0. The Committee Visited the University of Seychelles**



The Committee conducted a visit to the Anse Royale Campus of the University of Seychelles (UniSey) on the 14<sup>th</sup> of July 2022. A meeting was then held with the University's Vice Chancellor, executives, as well as the President and Vice-President of the UniSey's student Council.

#### *Aims of the Visit*

The MYSCC wished to achieve several aims from the visit and meeting:

- 1) To gain more information on the university's infrastructure, facilities, and available resources.
- 2) To gain more information on the courses on offer at UniSey.
- 3) To understand the university's constraints.
- 4) To gain a better understanding of student concerns.

#### *Campus visit and Concerns Raised*

The MYSCC was guided through the campus by Ms. Joelle Perreau, the university's Vice-Chancellor, members of staff, the President of the Student Council, Mr. Steve Monnaie and the Vice President of the Student Council, Ms. Samia Brioché.

The visit began at the *Konpa*, the office responsible for the provision of information and guidance to students, members of staff and visitors. The Registrar's office, Marketing offices, and Human Resources and Finance offices, staff rooms, classrooms and lab were also visited. The main concerns noted was the limited office space and insufficient staff members.

The Library was also visited, where several constraints were noted. It was observed that the library's space is quite limited, and the Vice-Chancellor further informed the Committee that the university is lacking the fiscal capacity to implement systems where research on Seychelles from different departments and ministries could be stored. The Committee were informed of the limited books in the library and, due to limited resources to gain more, is only stocking the books which are classed as 'highly recommended'.

The Committee visited the Research Institutes at the university, including the James Michel Blue Economy Research Institute, Creole Language and Culture Research Institute, the James Mancham Peace and Diplomacy Research Institute, and the Education and Socio-economic Research Institute. The Researchers voiced several challenges which included the lack of office space, limited equipment, insufficient researchers, lack of transportation facilities.

#### *Meeting with the Vice Chancellor, University Executives, and Student Representatives*

Following the visit, a meeting was held where discussions on various points concerning the university, its business, and challenges occurred.

#### Points of Discussion

- Courses

Applicants to the university are mostly part-time in-service students. The university's staff also informed the Committee that a meeting was held with ministries and organizations to determine the needs of the country. Following this exercise, the university is identifying means of aligning the needs and demands of the country, customising programs to reflect such needs.

Disruptions to normal teaching modes, cause by the pandemic have meant a migration to online learning. This has been made difficult due to technological limitations at the university as internet connectivity is a challenge, affecting the quality of learning and interactions with lecturers online.

- Revenue

The Committee were informed that the university's revenue lines are not well-developed and diversified, a shortfall the university aims to address in their new strategic plan.

- The UniSey and ANHRD

The UniSey's relationship with the ANHRD was also discussed during the meeting. The university staff explained that they require a more collaborative relationship with the ANHRD, the agency replaced by a new division within the Ministry of Education (MoE), to undertake its scholarship function.

A potential course of action discussed was that ANHRD review their scholarship process, in consideration of the mass in-service employees who require and would like to gain higher levels of qualifications in their respective fields.

- International Students

The Vice Chancellor informed the Committee that one of the major barriers preventing students from pursuing their education at UniSey is Accommodation. One suggestion was that researchers and international students be permitted to work at least 20 or 30 hours a week to earn an income to help cover their costs.

- Accessibility of Classes for Students

Several points were discussed which addressed facilitating classes for students, such as night classes as well as facilitating bank loans. Night classes were discussed as a viable option for people who are working but are also students. Challenges for the university mainly lie with the release of workers from their employment to attend classes.

- Perception of the University

The Vice-Chancellor stated that results from a study that was done, concluded that, being an island state, many local students wish to leave the country to experience living and studying abroad.

- Student Concerns of the University

Student concerns included the low allowances for university students and that they are not reflective of the country's economic situation and cost of accommodation on Mahe. One option discussed was for the university to reach out to investors to invest in building student accommodation for the university.

Part-time work was also discussed as a concern for the students as many feel they do not benefit from the part-time work which relates to their studies. A suggestion was made for the university to reach out to its local partners and organizations to provide the students with part-time work.

The visit to the UniSey was fruitful and the Committee was able to gain more information about the university concerns. The Committee raised those concerns with the relevant Ministries. A

report based on the visit to the UniSev was presented to the House on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> October 2022, after which it was shared to the relevant entities.

#### **4.0. The MYSCC Visit to the Anse Royale Youth Hostel**



The MYSCC visited the Youth Hostel on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July 2022. Two separate meetings were held, one with members of staff of the Hostel and one with the student representatives.

##### *Aims of the Visit*

In light of the concerns raised to the Members of the Committee from parents and residents of the Hostel, the visit and meetings were carried out to:

- 1) Gain more information on the infrastructure and facilities of the Hostel.
- 2) Gain an understanding of the concerns of the staff of the Hostel as well as their plans for the future.
- 3) Attain a deeper understanding of student concerns as well as their aspirations for the Hostel.
- 4) Gain more information on some of the concerns raised to the Committee regarding the challenges that the Hostel is facing.

##### *Meetings with the Hostel Members of Staff and Hostel Resident Representatives*

The Members met first with the Hostel staff, where concerns were voiced, and the Committee posed questions at several points.

### *Points of Discussion*

- Pay Schemes

The staff expressed their frustration at their pay schemes as there are some members of staff receiving salaries which have remain unchanged since the early 2000s. Another challenge voiced was that there was inadequate staff to fulfil the Hostel duties resulting in a bigger workload for the current members of staff.

- Operating Costs of the Hostel

Challenges voiced included high running costs for the Hostel, as the director informed the Committee of utilities expenses. There was a recommendation from the Committee for the Hostel to have solar panels which would be a more cost-effective means of accessing electricity.

- Hostel Facilities and Infrastructural Limitations

The director informed the Committee that in the future, there are plans to equip the Hostel with I.T facilities, such as computers, WIFI, and printers which would support the students in their studies. Also discussed was the lack of internet facilities, lack of study spaces, limited number of washing machines, lack of a canteen and the lack of adequate maintenance personnel.

Another meeting was held with Hostel Resident Representatives where they had the chance to voice their concerns and ideas about the Hostel. Many topics discussed echoed the topics discussed with the Members of staff, for instance difficulties arising from the lack of internet facilities and lack of a recreational area. The students also voiced concerns about their allowances which they expressed was too little and not reflective of the economy.

### *Visit of Hostel Campus*

The Committee then visited the facilities, including dorm units, the outdoor manual laundry area, and an area designated for a recreational building. This area consists of two older structures; one currently being used as a workshop area. The main issue raised during the visit, was the lack of certain features such as the lack of 11 modern Television sets as well as 176 desks. It was also observed that there were only two washing machines available for the residents and a manual laundry area. Recommendations were made for the students to have access to more modern means of doing their laundry.

The visit to the Youth Hostel was fruitful in providing the Committee with the information it needed to bring forward to the House and the Executive. A report written about the visit and meetings held at the Anse Royale Youth Hostel was presented to the House on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2022, after which it was shared with the concerned entities and Ministry.

## **Conclusion**



In 2023, the Committee aims to further engage and strengthen relationships with the key stakeholders involved with the fields of media, youth, sports, and culture, to successfully carry out its oversight role.