

SERVING A MODERN DEMOCRACY

31

*Anniversary*  
CELEBRATION



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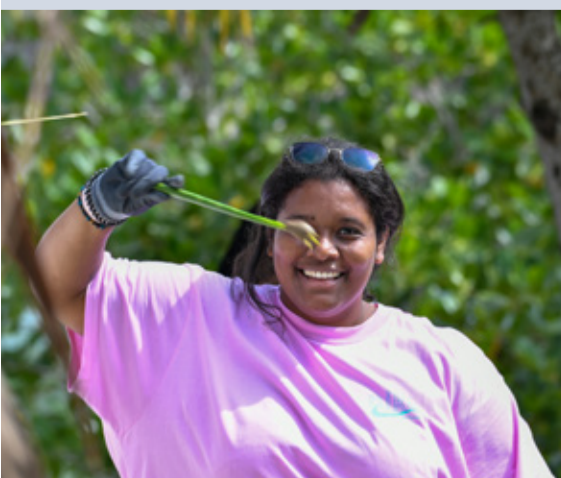
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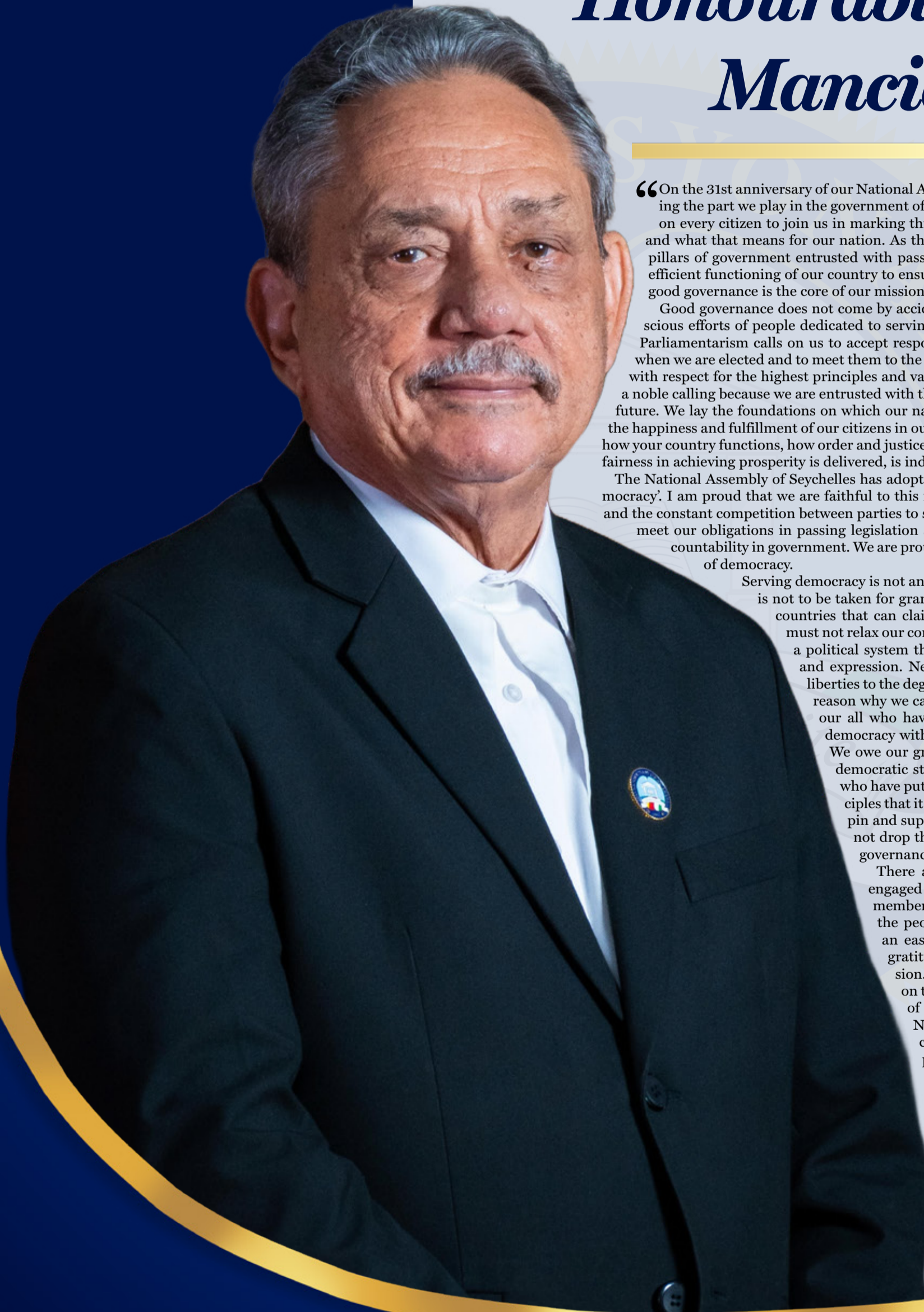
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# A Word from the Speaker *Honourable Roger Mancienne*



“On the 31st anniversary of our National Assembly, we can take pride in celebrating the part we play in the government of our country. I take the occasion to call on every citizen to join us in marking this day with a reflection on what we do and what that means for our nation. As the legislative branch, we are one of the pillars of government entrusted with passing the laws that are required for the efficient functioning of our country to ensure the rights of all citizens. Delivering good governance is the core of our mission.

Good governance does not come by accident or by chance. It requires the conscious efforts of people dedicated to serving faithfully the people they represent. Parliamentarism calls on us to accept responsibilities that we are entrusted with when we are elected and to meet them to the best of our abilities, with integrity, and with respect for the highest principles and values in our society. Parliamentarism is a noble calling because we are entrusted with the wellbeing of people now and for the future. We lay the foundations on which our nation is governed and thereby we have the happiness and fulfillment of our citizens in our hands. To have a part in determining how your country functions, how order and justice is assured, how rights are secured and fairness in achieving prosperity is delivered, is indeed a noble mission.

The National Assembly of Seychelles has adopted as its motto ‘Serving a Modern Democracy’. I am proud that we are faithful to this motto. Despite the tensions of politics and the constant competition between parties to sway public opinion in their favour, we meet our obligations in passing legislation and in ensuring transparency and accountability in government. We are proud that we do this to the best standards of democracy.

Serving democracy is not an easy undertaking. Across the world, it is not to be taken for granted. We are proud that we are among countries that can claim to be holding to its principles. We must not relax our commitment to these principles. We have a political system that allows free and open participation and expression. Never in history have we enjoyed these liberties to the degree that we do today. This is part of the reason why we can celebrate. It is my duty here to honour all who have undertaken this mission of serving democracy with honesty and integrity in our country. We owe our gratitude to all those who uphold these democratic standards, and it starts with the people who have put their faith in this system and the principles that it represents. It is our people that underpin and support the role we play. Our people must not drop their expectations for high standards of governance nor lose interest in politics.

There are also those who are more actively engaged in making it work. This includes the members of the National Assembly, chosen by the people to work on their behalf. It is not an easy role to fulfil, and they deserve our gratitude for taking part in this noble mission. Our National Assembly also depends on the dedication, sincerity and hard work of people who serve our institution. Our National Assembly service staff play a crucial role in our mission. They are part of the reason we can celebrate. There are other partners that we must not forget, and I wish to mention particularly the media who assist by bringing what we do to the attention of the public, on whose behalf we are pledged to uphold democratic governance.

I invite everyone to share in what we undertake and what we can achieve to make Seychelles a land of peace, freedom and justice.”

# Deputy Speaker

## *Honourable*

## *Gervais Henrie*

### *What long-term goals do you have for parliament as a whole?*

“My long-term goal is to see MNAs applying and abiding to the Standing Orders more diligently. In that same line, I would like to see some new amendments to the Standing Orders that will help with that aim. The issue of time management and focusing on the subject matter at hand are also two major concerns for me. I think MNAs should be more sensitive to ensuring they complete the workload as per every week's Order Paper by becoming more focus and productive.”

### *What are the biggest challenges you've faced as the Hon. Deputy Speaker, and how have you navigated through them?*

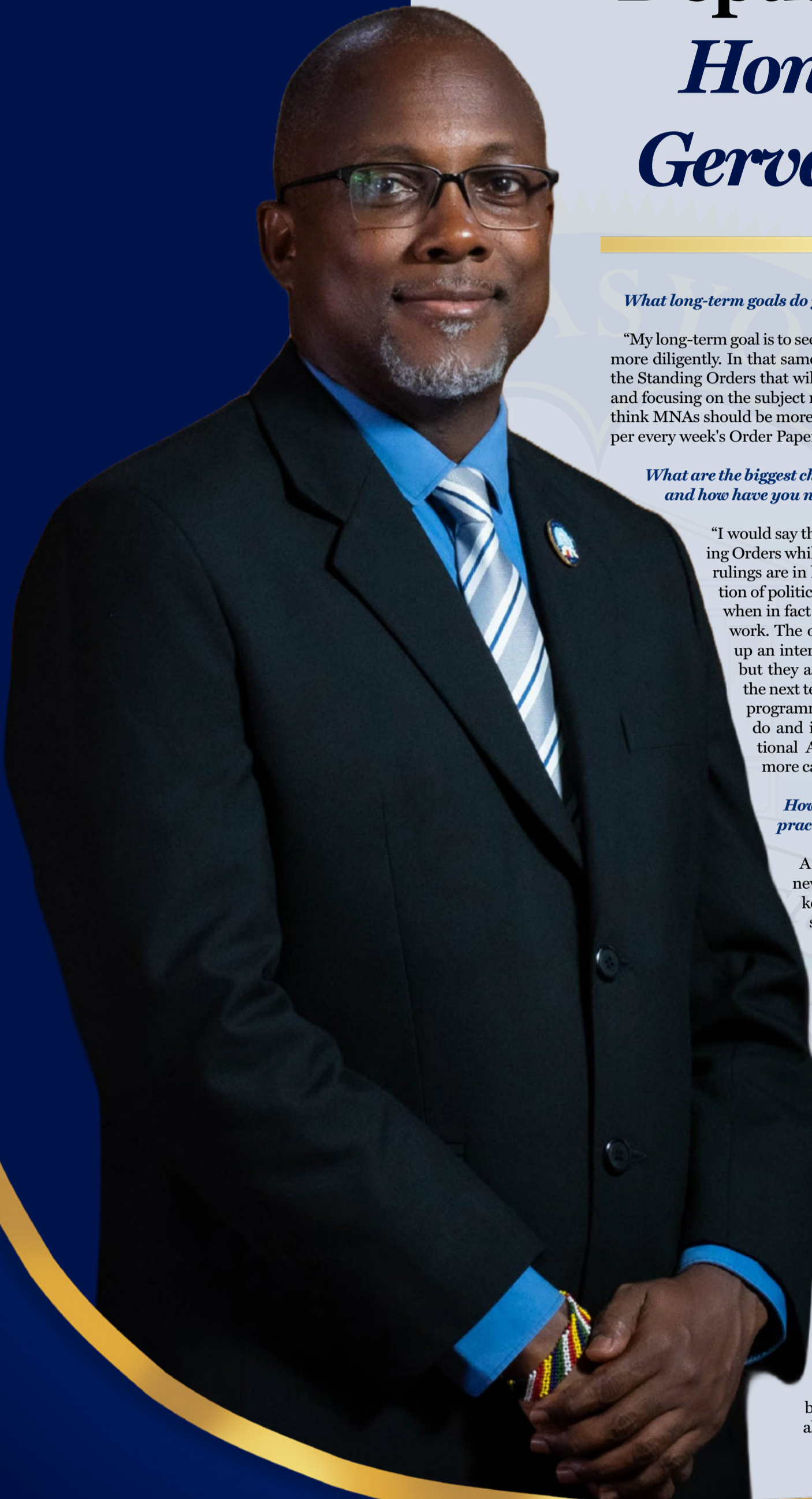
“I would say the biggest challenge has been interpreting the Standing Orders whilst presiding over the Assembly and ensuring that my rulings are in line with what the law says. Then there's the perception of political bias that some seem to see in every decision taken, when in fact we should be trusting the document that guides our work. The other challenge is encouraging young people to take up an interest in politics; not only does it concern their future, but they are the ones who will be replacing our generation in the next ten or so years. We have seen a need for more outreach programmes to sensitise the young population on the work we do and its importance. We also need a more engaging National Assembly Service to support that aim, alongside a more calibrated and specific budget to deliver on this target.

### *How do you keep abreast of global trends and best practices in parliamentary governance?*

A primary way of staying connected is by watching the news and current affairs from around the world. I also keep in touch and participate actively in various WhatsApp groups, and I am a member of CPA Africa, CPA Small Branch, AP-COI amongst others. I often try to catch up on and read the *Parliamentarian*, the *Journal* produced by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, as well as doing research and actively reading about every situation I am not adequately informed or au fait with.

### *What would you like the public to understand about the importance and impact of your dual roles in parliament, as a Directly Elected Member, and the Deputy Speaker?*

They are separate roles! One has nothing to do with the other. When I'm on the floor, I am the Elected Member for Mont Buxton. I am the Deputy Speaker when I am presiding. I see the role of Deputy Speaker as deputizing in the Speaker's absence, which involves taking on some administrative and advisory responsibilities at the Speaker's request. The role is very procedural, as it mainly focuses on providing practical support. On the other hand, as an Elected Member I have the legislative, oversight and representative role for the Constituency, this is my legal mandate, and I must be accountable for my actions to my constituents at all times.





## Leader of the Opposition *Honourable Sebastien Pillay*

Born in 1978, Hon. Sebastien Pillay's early life was shaped by contrasting political influences. His mother, from a humble background, aligned herself with the ideals of the SPUP that championed the rise of national development post-1977. His father, in contrast, supported the Democratic Party (DP). Growing up, he and his siblings gravitated more towards their mother's political beliefs. "As a child, my siblings and I found ourselves closer to my mother, and so we adopted her ideals and beliefs more easily." They felt that Seychelles needed stronger communities coupled with the need to eradicate poverty and bring about meaningful change for the people.

In his youth, Hon. Pillay was uncertain about his career path, contemplating various vocations such as construction, mechanics, medicine, engineering, or even joining the armed forces. However, it was his passion for teaching that ultimately steered him towards public speaking. His career took off, beginning as a teacher of Mathematics, moving on to being the Head of the Mathematics Department, and finally seeing himself as the Deputy Head Teacher. Eventually Hon. Pillay became a lecturer and Senior Education Officer at the University of Seychelles. "I found myself enjoying teaching, and I gained a love for advocating and defending the interests of my students."

His family home played a significant role in his political journey - "Our family house was always a centre for elections for the SPPF party," he noted, highlighting his mother's role in cultivating a supportive community and participating in voluntary work. His articulate and distinctive nature earned him a position as Director General for Cabinet and Presidential Af-

airs. That same reputation for being so vocal led to his invitation to join the National Assembly: "I was asked to join the National Assembly, since I liked to talk a lot!". Throughout his political career, Hon. Pillay has championed the belief that a strong community and country cannot be built in isolation. He has advocated for equality and equal opportunities for all Seychellois, striving to ensure no one is left behind. "We must fight for equality. We must ensure that Seychelles is an equal-opportunity country where no one is left behind."

Upon acceding to the role of the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, he immediately recognized its critical importance. Historically, this role has been held by significant figures such as the former President James Mancham, current President Wavel Ramkalawan, Mr. David Pierre, and briefly, Ms. Francesca Monnaie. Hon. Pillay's tenure has been marked by a commitment towards maintaining the strength and respect of the Opposition, a crucial aspect for keeping the government in check. "Even while growing up, and supporting the government that was in power, I saw the importance of the opposition in keeping the government in check." He believes that a robust opposition is vital for accountability and transparency in governance. "We are here for the people; we become who we are because the people allow us to be. As leaders we are nothing without the people." Over the past four years, he has worked tirelessly to ensure that the role of the Opposition is well-respected and understood by the public, and effectively challenges the Executive in order to promote national change.

"The weaker the opposition, the less you can keep the government in check."

## Leader of Government Business *Honourable Bernard Georges*

Article 84 (A) of the Constitution makes the provision for the election of a Leader of Government Business (LGB) from the Members of the majority party of the National Assembly. The Leader of Government Business is a crucial position responsible for coordinating and managing the legislative agenda of the government within the legislative body. This role involves ensuring the smooth passage of government bills, overseeing the scheduling of parliamentary business, and acting as the primary liaison between the government and the legislative assembly. The LGB facilitates communication and negotiation between the Executive branch and legislators, helping to navigate and resolve potential conflicts that may arise during parliamentary proceedings.

Hon. Bernard Georges, born on August 24th 1955, has had a significant impact on the political landscape of Seychelles through his various roles and contributions. A lawyer by profession, Hon. Georges has been an active participant in the political arena since 1991. His stint in the legislature began during the 2nd Assembly in 1998, where Hon. Georges was selected to replace the Proportionately Elected Member for SNP Hon. Jean-Francois Ferrari. In subsequent years, Hon. Georges solidified his position in the National Assembly. He was Directly Elected to represent the Les Mamelles electoral area in the 3rd, 4th, 6th, and current Assembly. During the

Fourth Assembly, he served on the Standing Orders Committee and Bills Committee, showcasing his dedication to legislative processes and governance.

As the Leader of Government Business in the Assembly, Hon. Georges holds a crucial role in shaping and guiding legislative activities. This role is pivotal in maintaining the balance between government operations and legislative scrutiny, ensuring that the government's policies and proposals are thoroughly examined and debated. Hon. Georges' contributions have had a lasting impact on the political landscape of Seychelles. His consistent presence in the National Assembly and active participation in legislative committees have helped shape key policies and laws. By balancing his political duties with a successful legal career, and serving as a Judge of the COMESA Court of Justice, Hon. Georges brings a wealth of legal expertise to his legislative role, enhancing the quality of debate and decision-making within the Assembly.

Hon. Bernard Georges' career exemplifies dedication, resilience, and a profound commitment to the governance of Seychelles. As the Leader of Government Business, he plays a vital role in ensuring effective legislative processes and government accountability. His contributions continue to influence the political landscape of Seychelles, making him one of the key figures in our country's contemporary political history.

# Honourable Clerk

## Mrs Tania Isaac

### What is the mandate of the Honourable Clerk of Parliament?

As the Chief Procedural Officer, I lead a team of competent and specialized staff who guide and advise the Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Leader of the Opposition, Leader of Government Business and other Members on established procedures in Assembly proceedings and Committees. My Office ensures that parliamentary committees, debates, votes and other activities are conducted according to these rules.

I am also the Clerk of Clerks, meaning I oversee the Clerks and Assistant Clerks such as those who provide support to Committees; as well as the Clerks-at-the-Table who manage and coordinate the administrative aspects of parliamentary sessions, including preparing the Order Paper and managing the flow of information on questions, motions, Bills, agreements, conventions, and reports between the Legislature and various stakeholders.

I also oversee the day-to-day administrative functions of the Service, including managing staff, technologies, finance, security, infrastructure, processes and other resources to ensure that the Legislature operates like a well-oiled machine.

### What are the most challenging aspects of your position as Clerk?

I find my job very rewarding in the sense that my contributions have tangible outcomes and it's a privilege to see that their impact on the society of Seychelles will last for many generations. On the other hand, this position involves daily interactions with politicians who are by nature partisan. This comes without saying that one of the key challenges is to not only be impartial but also to be seen to be impartial on a continuous basis. I must constantly be mindful of what is best for the organization but also how this will be interpreted by our main stakeholders, including members and the public.

Another challenge is working for an institution that is constantly in the public eye and



Honourable Clerk

sessions broadcasted live with very little room for errors. Managing the high volume and complexity of parliamentary workload can be quite challenging. In fact, each day brings something new and different which requires significant organizational skills and attention to detail. Today it could be a notice received about a state visit to Seychelles where a high-level dignitary (usually the President of a country) desires to address the House, and tomorrow you

can see yourself organizing the official funeral of a Member who tragically passes away whilst in office.

### Can you share some key milestones in your life or career that led you to this role?

Becoming the Clerk of the National Assembly did not even cross my mind when I joined the Secretariat in 2013. Back then I was searching

for a new challenge and was content to be the Senior Parliamentary Research Officer, working on briefs for motions & committees, managing the parliamentary library, implementing projects such as the parliamentary museum, and acting as the Desk Officer for the SADC Parliamentary Forum. While performing these roles I gained valuable knowledge and skills in the procedural affairs and administration of parliament. I received a lot of support from colleagues. When the position of Deputy Clerk became vacant in 2017, I was encouraged by my peers, both locally and internationally, to apply for it, and I did and was successful. I was the first Deputy Clerk to the National Assembly to be selected through an interview process and the first Clerk of the National Assembly to be selected through an independent interview panel in 2020.

### What hobbies or activities do you pursue outside of work to recharge and maintain your balance?

Outside of work I enjoy the simple pleasures of life such as a morning jog on the beach accompanied by my family, ending with a dip in the ocean. I am an active member of the community through my church, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, and practicing my faith helps to keep me anchored and recharged.

### How do you envision the role of the Clerk evolving in the future?

The role of the Clerk has many potentials and with time I expect some natural evolution in the role. Compared to other parliaments in the region and the Commonwealth diaspora, the position of Clerk in Seychelles does not enjoy the same protection either through legislation or the Constitution. It's one of the few government Offices where the individual must take an oath of allegiance before serving. I envision a future where the role of the Clerk is protected through either an amendment to the Constitution or through legislation.

# Honourable Deputy Clerk

## Ms. Alexandria Faure

### Can you briefly describe your primary responsibilities as the Deputy Clerk?

The role of a Deputy Clerk is a specialized position within the world of Parliament and is threefold – Administrative, Procedural and Parliamentary. The Deputy Clerk deputizes in the absence of the Clerk, ensuring that parliament has the infrastructure, strategies and capabilities to deliver on its mandate, staff of the National Assembly Service are led, and meetings, sub-committees and projects are chaired. The Deputy Clerk is also a Clerk-at-the-Table, a parliamentary term encompassing the role that Clerks carry out in Chamber. This means that during Sittings the Deputy Clerk records the actions and decisions of the House by completing 'proceedings' sheets and assists the Clerk in advising the Speaker.

### What do you find most rewarding about this role?

Working with the parliamentary team and achieving milestones with them, seeing staff develop and overcoming challenges together are the most rewarding parts of this job. Personally, learning new things all the time, especially from other colleagues at other Parliaments across the world, is so fascinating. Parliament is so dynamic; I've found my niche here and I have a real passion for this democratic institution. Ultimately, the most



Honourable Deputy Clerk

rewarding part is the service to my country by working in this office.

### What motivated you to pursue a career within parliament?

I previously worked in Aeropolitical Affairs at Air Seychelles before working at Parliament. I always wanted to work in a political/governmental field and working at Parliament was a natural career progression for me. Once I started working at the National Assembly back in 2017, I fell in love with it. The role of the Deputy Clerk has evolved as the National Assembly Service has grown and developed. The office now oversees more Departments than it has previously done in the past, which includes being more involved in infrastructural, technicalities, and capital projects.

### What would you like the public to understand about your work, parliament, or yourself?

Parliaments have a key role to play in promoting and advancing good governance and democracy, the sharing of best practices, and collaborating with their peers. Democracy and good governance are not a luxury, but a fundamental requirement to achieve sustainable development and by this it's crucial that we continue to engage with our parliaments and participate in decision making.

# The Evolution of the National Assembly



Hon. Francis Macgregor, Speaker of the National Assembly from 1993 to 2007

• The first Speaker of the National Assembly

## 1st Assembly (1993-1998)

- Established after the introduction of multi-party governance in June 1993.
- Hon. Francis Macgregor serves as the first Speaker.
- The National Assembly approves its own rules (Standing Orders) in 1994.
- Electoral districts increased from 20 to 25 in 1996.
- Assembly conducts business initially at the National Library, then moves to its own building in 1999.

## 2nd Assembly (1998-2002)

- Assembly dissolved in February 1998; fresh elections held in March 1998.
- SPPF wins the majority with 30 seats; the Opposition gains 4 seats.
- Hon. Francis Macgregor re-elected as Speaker; new Standing Orders approved.
- 2002 election sees SPPF maintain majority with 23 seats; SNP increases to 7 seats.

## 3rd Assembly (2002-2007)

- SPPF retains majority with 23 directly elected seats

in 2002 elections.

- SNP gains 7 seats; DP does not qualify for proportional representation.
- Hon. Francis Macgregor continues as Speaker until replaced by Hon. Patrick Herminie.
- President France Albert Rene steps down in 2004; President James Alix Michel delivers his first State of the Nation Address in 2005.
- The Assembly continues legislative review and operations, celebrating its 20th Anniversary in 2013.

## 4th Assembly (2007-2011)

- SPPF retains 23 seats in May 2007 elections with 56.2% of votes.
- SNP wins 11 seats with 43.8% of votes.
- Hon. Dr. Patrick Herminie continues to serve as the Speaker of the National Assembly
- Hon. Marie-Louis Potter becomes Leader of Government Business; Wavel Ramkalawan re-elected as Leader of the Opposition.
- In 2009, Standing Orders were amended for the first time since 1994.

• The National Assembly moves to its new building at Ile Du Port in 2009.

## 5th Assembly (2011-2016)

- Formed on October 11, 2011, with record female representation (14 out of 32 members, 43.75%)
- The Popular Democratic Movement (PDM) contests elections but does not win any seats, contesting the result in court.
- Independent candidate Jacqueline Hoareau receives 194 votes.
- May 16, 2016: Ms. Francesca Monnaie sworn in as new Leader of the Opposition after Mr. David Pierre resigns.
- December 2013: National Assembly celebrates 20th Anniversary with the launch of a commemorative book.
- 6th Assembly (2016-2020)
- Opposition Linyon Demokratik Sesel held 15 seats, outnumbering the majority party United Seychelles with 10 seats.
- Hon. Patrick Pillay served as Speaker until January 31, 2018; Hon. Nichola Prea served from March 6, 2018,

to August 6, 2020.

- The first child addresses the Assembly on World Children's Day in 2018.
- Standing Orders amended in 2020.

## 7th Assembly (2020-Present)

- Inaugurated on October 28, 2020, with Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (LDS) forming the majority party for the first time.
- President Wavel Ramkalawan delivers his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) on January 22, 2021.
- A new theme 'Serving a Modern Democracy' launched by Speaker Hon. Roger Mancienne on July 2, 2021.
- The National Assembly adopts Wetlands in commemoration of World Wetlands Day 2022.
- A time capsule is created in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the National Assembly in July 2023.
- The National Assembly Service undergoes an organizational restructuring in 2024.
- A mock Sitting of the National Assembly, featuring children from various schools across the country, is coordinated and broadcasted from the Chamber.



• National Assembly Building Ile Du Port



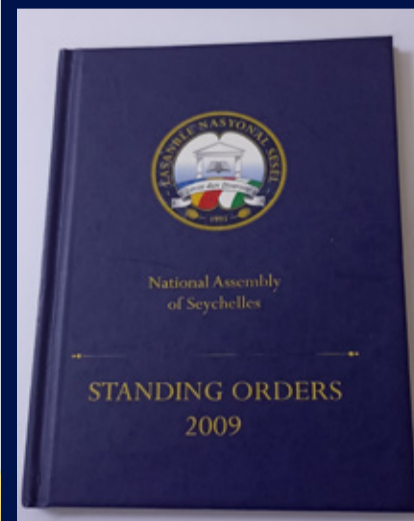
• Adoption of the Wetlands



• First Child to address the House



• Time Capsule 2023



• Standing Orders 2009



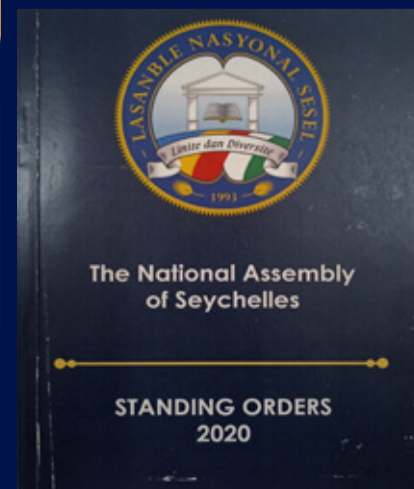
• Members of the 1st National Assembly in the Third Republic



• Members of the 2nd National Assembly of the Third Republic



• Members of the 3rd National Assembly of the Third Republic



• Standing Orders 2020



• Members of the 4th National Assembly of the Third Republic



• Members of the 5th National Assembly of the Third Republic



• Members of the 7th National Assembly of the Third Republic

# The Membership of the National Assembly



Chief Whip and Directly Elected Member for Anse Royale Hon. Sylvanne Lemiel



Directly Elected Member for Grand Anse Hon. Waven William



LGB, Directly Elected Member for Les Mamelles, Hon. Bernard Georges



Directly Elected Member for Glacis Hon. Regina Esparon



Directly Elected Member for Takamaka Hon. Terence Mondon



Directly Elected Member for Bel Air Hon. Norbert Loizeau



Chief Whip and Directly Elected Member for Bel Ombre Hon. Sandy Arissol



Directly Elected Member for Anse aux Pins Hon. Clifford Andre



LOTO Proportionately Elected Member Sebastien Pillay



Directly Elected Member for Anse Boileau Hon. Phillip Arissol



Directly Elected Member for Baie Lazare Hon. Francois Adelaide



Directly Elected Member for Baie Ste Anne Prasin Hon. Churchill Gill



Directly Elected Member for Beau Vallon Hon. John Hoareau



Directly Elected Member for Grand Anse Prasin Hon. Wavel Woodcock



Directly Elected Member for Buxton Hon. Gervais Henrie



Directly Elected Member for Port Glaud Hon. Egbert Aglae



Directly Elected Member for Roche Caiman Hon. Audrey Vidot



Proportionately Elected Member Hon. Flory Larue



Proportionately Elected Member Hon. Johan Loze



Directly Elected Member for Anse Etoile Hon. Georges Romain



Directly Elected Member for Au Cap Hon. Kelly Samyadin



Directly Elected Member for Cascade Hon. Phillip Monthy



Directly Elected Member for English River Hon. Andy Labonte



Directly Elected Member for Mont Fleuri Hon. Michel Roucou



Directly Elected Member for Plaisance Hon. Richard Labrosse



Directly Elected Member for Pointe Larue Hon. Conrad Gabriel



Directly Elected Member for Perseverance Hon. Desheila Bastienne



Directly Elected Member for St Louis Hon. Sathya Naidu



Directly Elected Member for Inner Islands Hon. Rocky Uranie



Proportionately Elected Member Hon. Doyace Porice



Proportionately Elected Member Hon. Naddy Zialor



Proportionately Elected Member Hon. Wallace Cosgrove



Proportionately Elected Member Hon. Anne Bistoquet



Proportionately Elected Member Hon. Rachel Spiro



Late Hon. Rosie Bistoquet



# The Committees of the National Assembly

The National Assembly currently has two Standing Sessional Committees; these are Committees which are set up at the beginning of each new Assembly and cease to exist with the dissolution of the Assembly. They are also referred to as 'Permanent Committees' since they feature in the Constitution.

1. The Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC), one of the two Standing Sessional Committees that are currently in existence, is chaired by the Leader of the Opposition by convention. FPAC's mandate includes reviewing the accounts noted in Article 158(3) of the Constitution, financial statements from public or statutory bodies, and reports from the Auditor General. The Committee then reports to the Assembly if there's any spending that goes beyond what was approved. FPAC has the powers to summon and examine persons and records and take evidence.

2. The Standing Orders Committee consists of seven Members appointed by the Assembly from among its Members at the Commencement of each session. The Committee reviews and proposes rules on how the Assembly conducts its business, then reports its findings and recommendations to the Assembly for approval.

The National Assembly also has Select Sessional Committees. This is a committee which is prescribed in Order 90 of the Standing Orders and may be established at the beginning of each new Assembly and cease to exist at the dissolution of each Assembly.

Order 90(2) of the Standing Orders prescribes the following Committees:

1. The Committee on Government Assurances (COGA). The main functions of COGA are to scrutinize the assurances, promises, and undertakings made by the President, Ministers, Chief Executive Officers and Chairpersons of Boards made on the floor of the Assembly.

2. The Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights Committee engages stakeholders, including Civil Society Organizations, to address legal barriers affecting the aforementioned topics. The Committee promotes participatory democracy through community-focused activities and identifies evidence-based information to inform parliamentary interventions.

3. A crucial one is the Defence and Security Committee, which is mandated to conduct oversight on the Seychelles People's Defence Force, the Seychelles Police, and all Government Agencies involved with national security, including Intelligence Services. This Committee requires that all Members and support staff swear oaths before participating in the often-sensitive meetings and site visits.

4. The Committee for Food Security and Sustainable Development (FSSD) oversees national policies, strategies, action plans, and measures aimed at achieving optimal food security and sustainable development in Seychelles. It focuses on agriculture, environment, climate change, energy, fisheries, blue



• MYSCC Site Visit



• Defence and Security Committee Swearing In

economy, and land development through collaboration with various MDAs, NGOs, and the private sector. Members and support staff on this Committee operate on a voluntary basis.

5. The House Committee considers matters and related issues brought to its attention and reports to the House and appropriate bodies of the Assembly for policies to be formulated and actions to be taken in the best interest of the National Assembly.

6. The International Affairs Committee is mandated to address all issues of national importance associated with the national foreign service of Seychelles, the conduct of tourism, international affairs, and international parliamentary affairs. This includes the ratification of treaties within the National Assembly.

7. The Media, Youth, Sports & Culture Committee (MYSCC) is mandated to conduct inquiries, site visits, and generally oversee the conduct of projects and infrastructural developments under the purview of Media, Youth, Sports and Culture related Governmental bodies. MYSCC is also able to propose and assist with capacity building opportunities to strengthen relations with local youth organizations, digital infrastructure developments, and sports-oriented departments.

8. The Scrutiny of Bills Committee's responsibilities encompass the examination and review of all published Bills, whether Public Bills or Private Members' Bills, as well as those in draft form. Their role includes suggesting necessary corrections, amendments, and modifications to improve these legislative proposals. Furthermore, the Committee addresses matters referred to by the Assembly and submits reports detailing their findings on Bills, legislative enactments, or other issues examined.

9. The Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) is comprised of women parliamentarians regardless of political affiliation, who work in unity to ensure equality for all, especially women, children and the vulnerable, by advocating, enacting and monitoring gender- and child-sensitive laws Seychelles.



• COGA Site Visit



• Communicable Diseases, HIV/AIDS and Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights Committee



• FPAC Site Visit

# EPIC

The Environmental Policy Implementation Committee (EPIC) is the only National Assembly Service Committee, created and staffed by National Assembly Service Staff. Chaired by the Deputy Clerk to the National Assembly Ms. Alexandria Faure, EPIC is tasked with ensuring that the National Assembly of Seychelles remains an environmentally conscious institution, continually caring for the parliamentary Mangrove Sanctuary, reducing the carbon footprint of the parliament, and promoting sustainable collaborations with stakeholders and civil society partners. Members of the Committee act as champions of sustainability within the workplace, educating colleagues on how to lead sustainable lives. Furthermore, EPIC also aims to foster greater engagement among its members and staff regarding its objectives and the critical significance of environmental protection. In an era marked by pressing environmental challenges, the importance of integrating sustainability into parliamentary proceedings cannot be overstated.

Following a sustainability audit carried out by Sustainability for Seychelles (S4S), EPIC was created to address the gaps and needs of the National Assembly to reduce waste and conserve resources such as water and energy. The audit, supported by an EU-funded national climate change project, made the National Assembly the first major public institution in the Seychelles to collaborate with a local NGO on sustainability. EPIC aims to protect the environment by minimizing pollution and resource consumption and supporting and encouraging biodiversity. The Committee operates on a voluntary basis, with all members of staff encouraged to join in activities such as cleaning up of the adopted mangroves.

As part of the Action Plans implemented by the Committee, EPIC pledges various developments and procedural changes such as environmentally friendly purchasing policies, the implementation and use of the rainwater harvesting system, the reduction of plastic waste throughout the National Assembly precinct, and the encouragement of an "E-Parliament" which does not rely on unnecessary printed materials. EPIC has successfully spearheaded various ecological milestones, such as the planting of a Coco de Mer sapling on the parliamentary precinct, as well as the Orkid Payanke. Known in English as the Tropicbird Orchid, the plant is registered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. Thanks to the tireless and dedicated work of EPIC, the National Assembly has grown to become a leading institution in environmental efforts, collaboration, and awareness.

### Message from the Vice-Chairperson, Ms. Shannon Surman

The Environmental Policy Implementation Committee of the National Assembly Service consists of staff of the Service who eagerly volunteer their time and energy toward implementing various environmental projects. EPIC's vision is to lead in environmental performance and embed sustainability in the heart of parliamentary operations.

EPIC's projects include the rehabilitation of the National Assembly's adopted wetland area, managing energy consumption, green purchasing, rainwater harvesting, and limiting paper usage. EPIC is an excellent example of the initiatives that staff can pioneer in their organizations to implement environmental projects and enforce environmentally sustainable practices within the workplace. The Committee actively demonstrates how harnessing the power of staff is an avenue of making a constant direct positive impact on the environment. For me, EPIC has served as the perfect link between my passion for the protection of the environment, volunteerism, and my job. Forming part of a committee of dedicated like-minded individuals working together for the betterment of the environment has further bolstered my commitment to environmental sustainability whether it involves getting knee-deep-stuck in mangrove mud during mangrove clean-ups or assisting in project writing.

The Committee's work is diverse, allowing for new experiences which are educative and enjoyable. My hope is that everyone realizes that they all have a role to play in the protection of our environment, whether it be in our organizations, our homes, or the community.



• EPIC Vice-Chairperson Ms. Shannon Surman



• EPIC Member Mr. Jim David showcasing the Coco de Mer sapling



• EPIC visit to the Constance Ephelia Mangrove Areas



• Speaker Hon. Roger Mancienne aiding the EPIC Clean Up



• EPIC visit to Silhouette

# What is the National Assembly Service?

The National Assembly Service is the impartial administrative body led by the Honourable Clerk, who acts as the Accounting Officer of the Legislature, with the support of the Honourable Deputy Clerk. These essential Offices ensure that the National Assembly operates smoothly and efficiently, managing all aspects ranging from procedural matters to Committee work and Internationally Affiliated Desks. The Office of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk are responsible for more than simply running the Service; their duties involve preparing the Order Paper, recording the proceedings of the House during each Sitting, authenticating Bills passed by the Assembly, and providing administrative support to the Office of the Speaker, Leaders, and other Members. Together, the Service orchestrates the Assembly's Business and proceedings, providing robust sustenance for effective governance and legislation.

## The Service is comprised of:

### 1. People, Culture, and Finance

The Department of People, Culture, and Finance is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and dynamic work environment within the National Assembly Service. This department's role in talent acquisition, employee development, and training ensures that the National Assembly attracts and retains skilled professionals, vital for maintaining high standards of legislative operations. Staff welfare and support are prioritized, promoting a positive and productive work culture. Furthermore, the department's financial management, budgeting, and accounting functions are integral in maintaining fiscal discipline and transparency, aligning with global best practices in parliamentary governance.



### 2. Sergeant-at-Arms and Parliamentary Security

The Security Unit, headed by the Sergeant-at-Arms (SAA), ensures the safety and order of the parliamentary precinct. By coordinating security measures, facilitating visitor screening, and providing Chamber support, the SAA plays a crucial role in safeguarding the integrity of parliamentary proceedings. Escorting the Speaker and carrying the Mace are ceremonial yet significant duties, symbolizing authority and order. The SAA's responsibilities reflect a commitment to maintaining a secure environment and promoting parliamentary security protocols.

### 3. The Hansard

The Hansard division, consisting of Reporters and Editors,

is tasked with transcribing all proceedings of the House. This meticulous documentation ensures transparency and accountability, allowing the public and stakeholders to access accurate records of parliamentary debates and decisions, which are published on the website. The Hansard also provides support in the Chamber, assisting Members and accompanying Ministers.

### 4. Public Relations and Protocol

The Public Relations and Protocol Office plays a pivotal role in upholding the image of the National Assembly. By managing communications with Media Houses, overseeing online platforms, and preparing written communications and publicity materials, the office ensures that parliamentary activities are effectively communicated to the public. The Office is also the coordinator of all protocol matters arising within the legislature. Protocol refers to the rules, customs, and procedures that govern official events and ceremonies. The team is responsible for fa-

cilitating smooth interactions with Presidents, Ambassadors, and other VIP delegations.

### 5. Media Operations

The Media Operations Unit is essential for maintaining transparency and public engagement by filming and live streaming all sittings in the Chamber. Officers in this unit operate cameras and other audiovisual devices to capture, record, broadcast, and archive meetings and events, particularly the live Sittings. Creating educational and promotional content, the team ensures the public is informed about parliamentary proceedings.

### 6. Parliamentary Corporate Services and Facilities

The Corporate Services and Facilities department oversees the administration, infrastructure, and logistical services required by the National Assembly. This includes house-

keeping, precinct management, health and safety, procurement, purchasing and store management, transportation and fleet management, and reception and telephone services. By ensuring the smooth functioning of these essential services, the department supports the effective operation of the National Assembly. This comprehensive mandate warrants peak operational efficiency and a conducive working environment.

### 7. Information Technology

The IT Department is responsible for cybersecurity, IT infrastructure management, device maintenance, network infrastructure and setup, and helpdesk support. By ensuring digital empowerment and providing comprehensive training, the team supports the technological needs of parliamentarians and staff. Maintaining a secure and efficient digital environment is critical for modern legislative functions. This department's efforts reflect

global standards in parliamentary IT services, where cutting-edge technology and robust cybersecurity measures are paramount in protecting the business of the House.

### 8. Information Centre

The Information Centre supports parliament through the Parliamentary Library, Parliamentary Museum, Parliamentary Archives, and National Assembly Visits. These services provide resources, educational exhibits, historical records, and guided tours to parliamentarians, staff, and the public. The mandate of the Centre is the promotion of parliamentary knowledge, transparency, and public engagement, enhancing the public's understanding of parliamentary functions and heritage.

### 9. Parliamentary Research Division

The Research Division provides non-partisan and balanced analytical work for use by parliamentarians and Service staff. The division produces research briefs, legislative briefs, factsheets, and project proposals, ensuring that all materials are impartial and reliable. This enables parliamentarians to make informed decisions in the House. It must be noted that thorough and unbiased analysis is crucial for effective legislative decision-making.

### 10. Legal Services

Legal Services are of utmost importance to the National Assembly, handling all legal matters and aiding the Scrutiny of Bills Committee. The legal team aids parliamentarians by offering legal opinions, discussing legal implications, and advising on Bills and proposed amendments to laws. This comprehensive legal support ensures that legislative processes adhere to legal standards and principles, providing for legislative decisions which are well-informed and legally sound.

As with all institutions, the National Assembly Service follows best practices and has a culture of teamwork, team-orientation, and supportiveness. All Divisions work towards upholding the Mandate, which is "ensuring the efficient functioning of the Legislature by delivering a service that adheres to the highest standards, upholds and maintains the dignity of the National Assembly in the execution of its constitutional duties and responsibilities". It is infused within the Service that all staff should remain professional, impartial, respectful, and accountable for their actions at all times.



• Group Photo



• Staff commemorating Breast Cancer Awareness Month



• Staff of the National Assembly Service



• Hansard Reporter's Desk in Chamber



• Birthday Gathering



• Media Operations at the Plaisance Job Fair 2024



• The Management Committee alongside the Hon. Speaker, Hon. Clerk, and Hon. Deputy Clerk

# 23 years of service

*Honourable Waven William and Mrs. Ghislaine Thelermont have dedicated 23 years each to the National Assembly of Seychelles. The National Assembly takes this opportunity to thank them both for their tireless and faithful service.*

## Longest Serving Member – Honourable Waven William

Entering the political arena in 1989, the longest-serving Member of the National Assembly of Seychelles, Hon. Waven William, began his journey from an unexpected starting point: a career as a Farm Manager. It was through this role that he developed an interest in politics, driven by a desire to advocate for his people. Initially hesitant, he recognized the necessity of political engagement to influence the country's governance and initiate meaningful change.

Reflecting on his early years in the legislature, he recalls a time when parliamentary sessions at National House lacked depth and structure. "You would often see a Sitting begin at 9am and finish by 10 or 11," he notes, describing an environment where Honourable Members simply showed up to vote without informed debate or research. The political system was young, lacking historical context and established conventions, leaving both the country and its legislators in a state of political naivety. The introduction of multiparty politics marked a significant turning point, ushering in a period of development and increased political maturity. Members began to participate in international forums, gaining exposure to diverse socio-political systems and bringing back valuable insights. This era of political evolution

allowed Members to diversify their roles and engage in benchmarking exercises to improve legislative processes. Hon. William emphasized how these experiences enriched his understanding of representation and the varied roles of an elected member.

In 2012, he transitioned to the role of Ambassador, pausing his political career but continuing to contribute through diplomacy. This new role complemented his political experience, enhancing his skills and broadening his perspective. It was noted that "Diplomacy and politics go very well hand in hand", with Hon. William highlighting the growth he experienced through this synergy.

Despite the progress, he remains mindful of the need for political unity on national issues. "We need our political parties to avoid diverging on issues of national importance; We need to move together as a country," advocating for a collaborative approach to governance. Looking ahead, Hon. William is hopeful about the future of Seychellois politics, particularly the increasing respect and understanding of the legislature's role. This was paralleled by a desire to see more young people engage in politics, ensuring that the momentum of growth and development continues.



• Hon. Waven William

## Longest Serving Staff - Mrs. Ghislaine Thelermont

### *Why did you start your career with the parliamentary service?*

I began my career in the parliamentary service because I was inspired by the opportunity to contribute to the governance and financial stewardship of such an important institution. My current role as Senior Accountant at the National Assembly offers a unique chance to apply my skills in a setting that directly impacts the legislative process and, by extension, the lives of the people of Seychelles. The idea of working behind the scenes to ensure financial transparency and accountability within such a crucial institution is both exciting and fulfilling for me.

### *What are some of the most memorable moments you have witnessed during your tenure?*

Over the past 23 years, I have had the privilege of witnessing several transformative moments that have shaped the National Assembly of Seychelles. I recall the monumental shift when the National Assembly moved from the National Library to the National House, to the current National Assembly Building at Ile Du Port. This move symbolized a new era for the Assembly, providing us with a dedicated space that better reflected the importance of our work. Additionally, the evolution in terms of leadership has been remarkable. We have seen changes in the Speakership and Clerk leadership, each bringing their own vision and direction, which has enriched our institutional heritage. One of the most significant events during my tenure was in 2016, when the political landscape of our nation experienced a historic shift within two branches of government – the Executive and the Legislature, marking a significant milestone in our political history and underscoring the dynamic nature of our democracy.

### *How has the culture of the National Assembly changed since you first began working?*

The culture of the National Assembly has evolved significantly since I first started. Initially, the environment was more formal and hierarchical. Over the years, there has been a noticeable shift towards a more inclusive and collaborative culture. Today, there is a greater emphasis on teamwork, professional development, and open communication. This transformation has fostered a more supportive and dynamic workplace, encouraging innovation and continuous improvement.

### *What qualities do you believe are essential for a long and successful career in the NAS Service?*

For a long and successful career in the National Assembly Service, several qualities are essential. Firstly, integrity is paramount; it is crucial to uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct. Secondly, dedication and perseverance are necessary to navigate the challenges and demands of the role. Thirdly, adaptability is key, as the legislative environment is continually evolving. Lastly, effective communication and teamwork skills are vital for collaborating with colleagues and ensuring the smooth functioning of the National Assembly Service operations.

### *What is the most important lesson you have learned in your time here?*

The most important lesson I have learned during my time at the National Assembly is the value of resilience and continuous learning. The legislative environment can be demanding, and it is essential to remain adaptable and open to new ideas and methods. Embracing change and striving for excellence in every task has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally. Maintaining a collaborative spirit is also important for achieving success and driving positive change within the institution.



• Longest Serving Staff Mrs. Ghislaine Thelermont



• Hon. Justice Francis Macgregor's Safari Jacket



• Gavels in the Parliamentary Museum



• Gift from the Republic of Vietnam

# The Parliamentary Museum

The National Assembly of Seychelles precinct, Ile Du Port, is home to the only Parliamentary Museum in Seychelles. This Museum is called "The Evolution of the Seychelles Parliament" and it plays a fundamental role in fostering public understanding of political history, enhancing transparency and openness, and supporting the principles of modern democracy. By preserving and displaying relics of the previous Assemblies, tokens from visiting Parliaments, and symbols of Seychelles, the Museum offers invaluable insights into the development of our parliamentary system and of democratic governance in action.

Educating the public on political history is one of the primary functions of a parliamentary museum. Through carefully curated exhibits, visitors can trace the development of legislative bodies, from the People's Assembly to the National Assembly as it stands today. It is also vital to understand significant historical events and appreciate the struggles and triumphs that have shaped the modern political landscape. Exhibits that explain legislative procedures, highlight key parliamentary debates, and showcase the contributions of notable politicians help bridge the gap between the government and the governed, encouraging a more engaged and knowledgeable electorate. The Museum also showcases the former Honourable Clerks of the National Assembly, each who played a vital role in the administration of their respective Assemblies.

By making parliamentary processes and historical records accessible to the public, the museum demystifies the workings of the legislative system and encourages informed citizen participation, particularly for our younger generation. Schools, organisations, and individuals are not only permitted but encouraged to pay a visit to the Museum and actively enhance their understanding through the guided tours offered by the Information Centre of the National Assembly Service.

## The Mace

The National Assembly Mace is the symbol of the Speaker's authority and impartiality. The Mace is crafted from 'Bwa Nwar' wood, with an open book at its top representing the Constitution of Seychelles, engraved with the Preamble. This open book rests on a Coco de Mer, which in turn rests on a drum-like wooden base with the crest of Seychelles engraved on the front. The 'original' Mace was designed and built by Mr. Collin Dyer, a former Member and representative of the district of Beau Vallon. This originally crafted Mace is housed in the Parliamentary Museum and has never been used in practice due to its hefty weight and stature.

The Mace used and carried into Chamber is a smaller version which is used and properly stored by the Sergeant-at-Arms. Within the Chamber, the Mace is placed upright in a special wooden stand to the Speaker's right. By convention, the Assembly cannot proceed unless the Mace is present in the Chamber. It is also the signal used when moving between Committee Stages, and by convention this must be done before the change can take place.

The tradition of the Mace is deeply rooted in parliamentary history and underscores the importance of maintaining order and respect for parliamentary procedures. The Mace is not merely a ceremonial object; it embodies the continuity and integrity of the parliamentary institution.

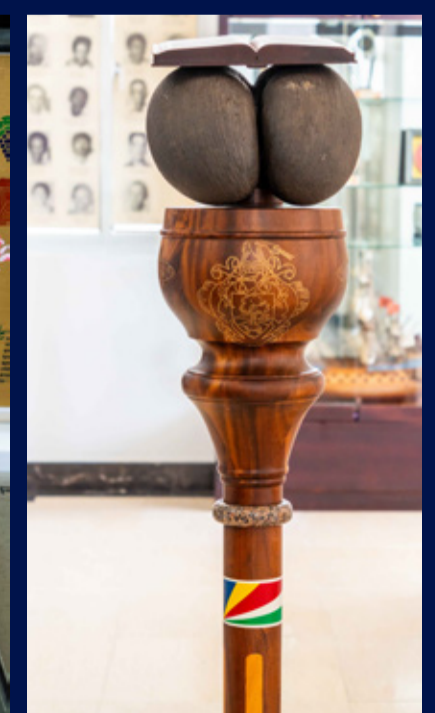
For instance, in the House of Commons, the Mace plays a crucial role in signifying the authority of the Speaker and the legitimacy of parliamentary proceedings. Its presence on the central table signifies that the House is properly constituted and has the authority to conduct its business. This tradition dates back centuries and exemplifies the respect and adherence to parliamentary customs that uphold the democratic process.



• The Mace



• Gift from the Parliament of Russia



• The 'Original' Mace

# The Chamber



Pre-2023 Chamber

As the primary space in which legislative activities take place, the Chamber holds particular importance in the operation of the National Assembly and in the promotion of national democratic values. The Chamber is the central arena where laws are introduced, debated, amended, and ultimately passed or rejected. It provides a dedicated space for representatives to express their views, present arguments, and engage in the democratic process of shaping and refining laws. Elected officials, also known as Members of the National Assembly (MNAs), can gather and fulfil their duty of representing their constituents' interests and concerns. A vital function is also that of scrutiny and accountability: the Chamber serves as a crucial venue for holding the Executive branch accountable. Our lawmakers use the Chamber to question government officials, debate policies, and scrutinize the actions of the Executive, and through this oversight function they can ensure that the government remains transparent, responsive, and accountable to the legislature and to the public.

Beginning in December 2022, the renovation of the Chamber involved a complete redesign of the floor layout, a relocation of the Hon. Speaker, Clerk, and Deputy Clerk, as well as an enhancement in the audio/visual production systems. The new positioning of the Members' seats represents not only a modern shift but an important aspect of open democracy and transparency. Instead of facing one another each caucus must now face the Speaker, whom they are always meant to address. As the Honourable Speaker Roger Mancienne noted, "This symbolism is why this configuration is the accepted pattern for deliberative bodies worldwide. I am certain that the new configuration conveys a better sense of the purpose and function of our National Assembly to both the Members and our public who follow us. To be relevant, the National Assembly must reflect its mandate and purpose. It needs to review not only physical arrangements but also practices and procedures in its functioning. Where we need to change to keep up with perceptions and aspirations, we must do so."

The perception of parliament is a very important aspect that must always be considered by Members, the Secretariat, and the public, as it affects not only the functions of the Assembly but of political participation nationwide. An effective parliament is one that conveys efficiency, legitimacy, relevancy, and social cohesion. As the cornerstone of democratic governance, this renovation has reinforced the image of the National Assembly of Seychelles as one that continually works to promote the best interests of its citizens.

It goes without saying that the Chamber in a parliament is a vital space that facilitates legislative deliberations, democratic decision-making, representation, accountability, and public discourse. It is an indispensable forum where elected representatives come together to shape laws, debate policies, and serve as the voice of the people they represent. This renovation has provided a step into the future of a more cohesive, accessible, and democratic parliament in Seychelles, ready to meet the needs of the people with a reinvigorated passion.



• Renovated Chamber Overhead

