



# THE STATE HOUSE NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2018

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## “Our Unity is what takes us forward”

President Danny Faure’s New Year Message 2018:

2017 was a year of learning to adapt to a new environment, and building trust to work together as a Nation. We faced many challenges, but together, we found the courage within ourselves and we persevered. We learned to agree and disagree peacefully, and we cultivated more tolerance. We recognised the importance of dialogue, which united us further. We learned to compromise for the higher good of our beloved country, and we also learned to celebrate our achievements together.

But there is a lot more to be done. As we prepare to welcome this New Year, we recognise the great potential it holds for each of us. This new year will mark 25 years of our Third Republic. We celebrate 25 years of our Constitution, the Supreme Law of the land that gives every man and woman their full rights as a citizen of Seychelles. However, the Constitution has no power on its own. We the people give it power with our participation and the choices we make.

We have the responsibility to make good choices. The choice to look after our children, and show them good values. The choice to take care of our elderly, and learn from their experiences. The choice to work hard, and support one another in the community. The choice to protect the natural environment that we have inherited and that we need to preserve. The choice to take care of ourselves, and look after our health. The choice to show respect. The choice to respect different opinions, and not let them break our friendships.

For 25 years, we have journeyed through the evolution of our democracy, and as one people, Seychelles needs us all to move our motherland forward. Each of us, we have our own contribution to make.

The start of a New Year always presents an opportunity to start fresh. Let us set new resolutions for ourselves, and for our country.



*Let us work hard toward a shared vision of a Seychelles where every citizen lives in dignity; where all our actions are filled with love, respect, and compassion; where we share what we have, and lift up those in need; where, through dedication and sacrifice, we create a more caring and humane society.*

As Head of State, I will continue to work even harder to unite our people to achieve this vision.

Our unity is what takes us forward. We are one country, one people, one big family, and we share the same identity. May God continue to bless our beautiful Seychelles.

I wish each and every one of you, everywhere you are, a happy and healthy New Year 2018, filled with prosperity and good cheer.

# CABINET DECISIONS

## Cabinet Press Briefings

In line with enhancing Governmental communications and accessibility of information, the Cabinet Office holds briefing sessions for the press on the day following Cabinet meetings.

- These sessions expound further on various Cabinet decisions and subsequent implications. The press briefings can be viewed on [YouTube](#) or [Facebook](#).

## 03 January 2018

- Policy approved to safeguard the privacy of children in the media. This applies particularly to children in the Children's Homes whilst in the care of Social Services. The Media Commission will assist with the sensitisation and monitoring of policy implementation.
- The Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture will undertake a review of the policies and legislation impacting both the Agriculture and Fisheries sectors, to ensure effective development and management of the two sectors.
- Cabinet approved amendments to regulations that are required as part of the migration of the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (HS) from version 2007 to version 2017. The new regulations, which will be effective from March 2018, will create new trade descriptions for certain goods which will enable the Energy Commission to introduce minimum standards under which the goods may qualify for VAT exemption. This is in line with Government's drive to promote the use of environmentally friendly and energy efficient electrical appliances, tools, machinery and equipment.
- Cabinet approved the methodology for the assessment of achievements by Seychelles of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The methodology has been developed by the National Bureau of Statistics.
- Cabinet also approved the 2019 Budget Calendar.
- Cabinet approved for a competition to be launched as part of the process for naming of newly constructed roads.
- Cabinet approved the new Control and Protection of Dogs Bill, which will now be published as a White Paper for public consultation.
- Cabinet also approved amendments to the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill.

## 19 January 2018

- Cabinet approved for the construction of new infrastructure on Mahé and Praslin that would improve the quality and quantity of locally produced meat, including a modern abattoir on Mahé and Praslin as well as a hatchery unit.
- Seychelles will trade with Kenya in 21 crop commodities, including cabbage, mangoossteen, cauliflower and onion. The decision was based on a pest risk analysis that was undertaken on the specified crops in Kenya to ensure safe trade.
- Cabinet approved Seychelles' position for the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission's allocation criteria for fisheries catch in the high seas as well as in the Seychelles Exclusive Economic Zone. Proposals will be discussed in the 4th IOTC Technical Committee meeting due to be held in Seychelles in February.
- Cabinet approved a proposal for the construction of an additional market for the sale of fruit, vegetables and other miscellaneous items. The new market will be located at Bois de Rose.
- The youth motivation building programme called Inspire to Aspire was endorsed, which uses high profile personalities as role models to inspire young people to aim high and achieve their dreams. The programme will be managed by SNYC and will involve personalities from sports, culture, entrepreneurship and social engagement.
- Cabinet expressed disappointment with Seychelles ranking in the 2018 world ease-of-doing-business index. The recently released report placed Seychelles as 95th out of 190 countries.
- Cabinet advised that regulatory agencies take all necessary measures to streamline and accelerate procedures to make the Seychelles business environment as efficient as possible.
- Cabinet advised that steps be taken to address the concerns of the residents of Île Perseverance who had expressed the wish to have an open space within their community for recreation and socialising.
- Cabinet also discussed some of the concerns expressed by citizens in their letters and meetings with the President and with Ministers. The President directed that resolute action be taken to properly address all issues of concern.

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## 31 January 2018

- Cabinet approved for the relocation of 16 households from a Housing Estate in Vista Do Mar, where the area had become unsuitable for housing development due to the instability of the land.
- Cabinet has assessed the rising cost of heavy fuel and the effect of fluctuation in the exchange rate on consumers. Cabinet has taken a decision to delay the electricity tariff rebalancing to the 1st of July 2018 instead of 1st of March.
- Cabinet has also taken a decision to remove progressive income tax on commuted overtime allowance for employees.
- Cabinet also approved the Ministry of Health's Plague Preparedness and Response Plan. The Plan which will cost SCR37M to implement will include an Isolation Unit and the extended Public Health Laboratory facilities.
- Cabinet approved plans to formalise a national vision for La Digue. The Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change as well as the Tourism Department will lead consultations with the Diguois and other stakeholders.
- Cabinet considered recommendations for the Electoral Reform from the Electoral Commission. The recommendations will now be submitted to the Department of Legal Affairs to prepare the necessary legislation.
- Cabinet was also briefed on findings of a research on the Black fungus gnats undertaken by entomologists from Germany. The results of the research indicate that the specie of the fungus gnat found in Seychelles is still unknown to science. The team of researchers have made proposals of measures for control of the black gnats that can be safely applied by Seychelles.
- Cabinet endorsed the anti-bullying policy and strategy for primary and secondary schools and professional centres developed by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development. Cabinet advised that the policy becomes a national document that will be adopted and applied by all public and private educational institutions.
- Cabinet approved amendments to the Licensing Regulations under the Licenses Act for Car Hire operators. These amendments will allow operators to renew their license every five years instead of annually. The amendments will also increase the condition to obtain a car hire operator license to with minimum of 7 instead of 5 vehicles.
- Cabinet was briefed on the details of the national and international examination results. Cabinet supported the need for further analysis of the factors affecting students' performance.
- Cabinet was updated on the work of CARE in drug prevention and awareness. Cabinet has renewed its commitment to financially support CARE in implementing its education and sensitisation plan.



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# ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

## Weekly Exercise Initiative

On Thursday 4 January 2018, President Faure began a weekly exercise initiative at Stad Popiler, to bring awareness to the importance of regular exercise in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

President Faure is encouraging others to start a similar initiative in their routines. He was joined by the Minister for Health, Mr Jean-Paul Adam, who emphasised that the best medicine is prevention. Minister Adam highlighted the importance of exercising regularly, and providing an example to the younger generation in staying active and healthy.



## Opening of 24<sup>th</sup> CSPOC

On Tuesday 9 January 2018, President Danny Faure officially opened the 24th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC), which brings together Speakers and Presiding Officers of the 52 national parliaments of the independent sovereign states of the Commonwealth.

In his opening address, the President expanded on the successful cohabitation in Seychelles, saying: “The Seychelles National Assembly as an essential branch of Government has transformed into an exemplary institution in the region. There are vibrant debates of divergent views, but there is also a new working environment; one where there is dialogue and consultation. And most importantly, mutual respect.



Under the leadership of Honourable Speaker Patrick Pillay, our National Assembly has seen greater transparency, openness and accountability. The sittings are broadcasted live on both television and radio. Through modern technology, citizens are able to directly contact their respective representatives while the debates are taking place, making use of platforms such as WhatsApp and social media. This is permissible by our Speaker. As for the Executive Branch, members of my Cabinet make themselves available to take private members’ questions from the Leader of the Opposition, and both urgent and 10 days’ notice questions from Members of the National Assembly,” said the President.

President Faure also thanked the Secretariat of the Seychelles National Assembly, and the Commonwealth Secretariat, for facilitating the organisation of this conference. The speech can be viewed [here](#).

## Reinforcing Good Governance

Following a cross-sector meeting on 11 January 2018, the President announced that the Public Enterprise Monitoring Agency (PEMC), the Department of Public Administration and the Finance Department would work together to ensure that public enterprises and budget-dependent agencies observed the established governance frameworks, and action would be taken in cases of non-compliance. Internal mechanisms would also be set up to enable communications from Boards to be circulated to all relevant authorities in a timely manner.

President Faure noted that public sector organisations had recently been accorded greater delegation of authority, and that such delegation also carried increased responsibilities for organisations, as well as accountability for decisions taken.

## Meeting with the Electoral Commission

President Danny Faure met with the Chairperson and Members of the Electoral Commission on 26 January 2018, at which he was presented with the recommendations of the Commission for Electoral Reform as mandated by the 6th Amendment of the Constitution. The Reforms will set the framework to govern future elections in the Republic.

The President informed the Commission that the Report will be considered at the next Cabinet meeting, after which it will be forwarded to the Office of the Attorney General for the drafting of a Bill.

The President also received the resignation of the Chair of the Electoral Commission, Mr Hendricks Gappy, pursuant to Article 115C (2) of the Constitution. President Faure thanked Mr Gappy for his 40 years of service to the public sector, of which 19 years have been as Head of the Electoral Commission.



## DIPLOMACY

## Foreign Secretary of India



President Danny Faure welcomed the Foreign Secretary of India, Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, for a courtesy visit to State House on Saturday 27 January 2018.

The President expressed his pleasure at welcoming Dr Jaishankar to Seychelles once again, and how the signing of the revised Agreement concerning the development of facilities on Assomption Island serves as a testament of the good relations between Seychelles and India, particularly in the domain of military cooperation.

“This project is of utmost importance to Seychelles, and it attests to the kinship and affinity that exists between our two countries. We are proud to have India as a partner in realising our development aspirations,” added President Faure.

President Faure also took the opportunity to discuss with the Foreign Secretary other potential areas of cooperation for new projects in sectors such as Legal Affairs and Law and Enforcement that will further benefit the people of Seychelles.

## WFES Summit

The President of the Republic attended the Official Opening of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW) 2018 on Monday 15 January 2018, held in Abu Dhabi under the theme ‘Driving the Global Energy Transformation’.

ADSW is one of the world’s largest gatherings dedicated to sustainable development and addressing climate change, and presents an important networking platform for Seychelles as a Small Island State focussed on a sustainable future.

Speaking at the WFES, President Faure referred to the Summit as an opportunity to drive the global energy transformation, and reiterated the collective commitment of SIDS to this goal.



“We ask that unique consideration for the challenges facing SIDS in building resilience to the impacts of changing climate is given,” emphasised President Faure. “We are always looking for partners to help us grow, and within this context, the World Future Energy Summit presents a major strategic occasion for us, and we thank the Government of UAE for this tremendous opportunity.”

In addition to his capacity as the President of the Republic of Seychelles, President Faure was also speaking as the newly-elected President of the Third Assembly of SIDS DOCK, the Small Island Developing States initiative for sustainable energy and climate resilience. President Faure was elected the President of SIDS DOCK in September 2017, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly.

On the sidelines of WFES on Monday, the President also held bilateral talks with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. The two leaders discussed areas of ongoing cooperation and ways to maintain the unique fraternal friendship based on mutual respect, understanding, and support between the two nations.



## SITE VISITS

### SFA

President Faure visited Seychelles Fishing Authority (SFA) on Friday 5 January 2018, marking his first workplace visit in the New Year. SFA was established in August 1984, and is an organisation that aims to develop the local fishing industry to its fullest potential, whilst ensuring its sustainability.

The President had the chance to meet management, staff, fishermen, and various stakeholders in the fishing industry including the Boat Owners Association, who were able to share their concerns with him.



Speaking to the staff, the President commended the long-serving professionals, and expressed his wish to see the fisheries industry grow to form a substantial part of the country’s GDP once again. He reiterated his commitment to finding solutions to the various constraints brought to his attention, and encouraged employees to follow the structures in place and bring any issues to the attention of management and the Board.

He thanked all the staff for their hard work and dedication, despite the challenges they face, and encouraged them to maintain their focus as the SFA celebrates 34 years of existence this year.

### SAA & NBA

Continuing his weekly visits to institutions, President Danny Faure visited the Seychelles Agricultural Agency (SAA) and the National Biosecurity Agency (NBA) on 13 January 2018. President Faure visited key sections of SAA and NBA offices, including the Veterinary Services Block at Union Vale and the Livestock Services at Grand Anse.

Following the site visit, the President attended meetings with both the SAA and NBA management staff where he emphasised that agriculture and food security are critical sectors for Seychelles, and that greater efforts along with all relevant partners are required to further develop and integrate the sector. He commended recent innovative approaches such as the incorporation of technology with farming in Seychelles and highlighted the role of every citizen to safeguard the country’s biosecurity.

President Faure commended the SAA and NBA team for the progress made despite the numerous challenges in the sector, and pledged the Government’s full support to further developing the sector.

# ACTIVITIES OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT

## Government and Civil Society Strengthen Ties through MOU

The Government and the Civil Society renewed their commitment to continue working together for the betterment of the Seychellois people.

Vice-President Vincent Meriton and the Acting Chairperson of CEPS, Mr Jude Fred, pledged this commitment through a MOU which they signed at State House recently.

In his address for the occasion, Vice-President Meriton acknowledged the importance of having an active and dynamic civil society organisation in our country. He congratulated CEPS and LUNGOS for the role they play in enhancing democracy in Seychelles.

“Since its establishment, CEPS has been the voice of our people. It has made remarkable contributions toward civil society and national development, and its participation in activities organised nationally as well as internationally is commendable,” the Vice-President said

Since 2016 the Civil Society has been a portfolio responsibility of the Vice-President.



## Seychelles hosts COMESA Digital Free Trade Area Workshop

Seychelles, in partnership with the COMESA Secretariat, hosted the COMESA Digital Free Trade Area (DFTA) workshop on 8th and 9th January this year. Held under the theme ‘Towards Digital Economic Integration.’ The two-day workshop gathered delegates from 17 out of 19 member countries, including Seychelles.

With the expectation to acquire the knowledge needed to improve its systems and craft a more realistic implementation plan for Seychelles, Vice-President Vincent Meriton, in his opening remarks, also acknowledged contributions of trade towards the development of African economies.

He emphasised that Seychelles is committed to leveraging ICT for enhancing the delivery of public service through its e-government programme, which is an important component supporting trade.

At the end of the workshop, participants agreed that the concept is about empowering traders to do cross-border trade, using ICT as a tool to minimise physical barriers.



# SPOTLIGHT

## Government warns of Facebook scammers using fake accounts

The Government has warned the population of scammers on Facebook using fake accounts under the name of the President, Vice-President or Cabinet Ministers to extort money from unsuspecting members of the public.

The warning has been issued after it was brought to the attention of the Cabinet of Ministers that loan scams by scammers using fake accounts of top Government officials on Facebook are becoming more rampant and some members of the public are falling prey.

In a typical scenario, the scammer uses a fake account of a high-profile figure to send a message or leave a post that an individual's loan has been approved or instant loans can be obtained at low interest for an advance fee. The victim pays the fee using the method provided by the scammer, only to later discover that it is a hoax.

The scammer ensures that the payment method is such that money cannot be traced after the scam has been discovered.

The Cabinet of Ministers wishes to inform the public that the Government does not use Facebook accounts for issuing loans or any other monetary transactions. All such requests should not be entertained.

Loan scams are but one form of scamming cyber criminals use to extort money from unsuspecting individuals. Others include romance scams, lottery scams, donation scams and even inheritance scams. In all these cases, the scammers ask for money to be deposited in advance. For example, for flights or visas in the case of romance scams; to disburse the prize money in lottery scams; to donate to charities in donation scams; or pay for the processing of inheritance in the case of inheritance scams.

The Cabinet has warned that people should protect themselves from scammers and watch out for tell-tale signs such as the payment of any 'charges' in advance in order to receive a loan, prize, or other winnings.

While it can be difficult at times to differentiate between genuine and fake accounts on Facebook, the best thing is not to entertain any requests for money.

In order to assist the public with this differentiation, the Department of Information Communication Technology (DICT) is working with Facebook in order to have an official verification in the form of a blue tick on the official pages of Government Ministers.

State House can confirm that President Danny Faure has only one verified Facebook page which can be found at [facebook.com/DannyARFaure](https://facebook.com/DannyARFaure) with a blue tick, and that he does NOT have a personal profile.