



THE STATE HOUSE NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2017

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“One Nation walking toward one destiny”

On 29 June 2017, Seychelles celebrated 41 years of Independence and as is customary, the National Celebrations Committee organised a spectacular National Day Military Parade at Stad Linite.

For the first time, the symbolic presence of all the powers of the Republic stood alongside President Danny Faure for the Presidential salute: Vice President Vincent Meriton, Speaker of the National Assembly Patrick Pillay, President of the Court of Appeal Justice Francis MacGregor, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Dr. Mathilda Twomey, Designated Minister Macsuzy Mondon, Leader of Opposition Honorable Wavel Ramkalawan, Leader of Government Business in the National Assembly Honourable Charles DeCommarmond, Chief of Defence Forces Brigadier Leopold Payet, and the Commissioner of Police Mr Reginald Elizabeth.



The celebration included a military parade of both local and foreign military forces, the police, Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency, and youth and civilian organisations. The parade was followed by a spiritual reflection from all faiths organised by the Seychelles Inter-Faith Council (SIFCO), and musical and dance performances echoing themes of love, unity, and patriotism. The evening ended with a stunning laser show and fireworks display, whilst the night fair continued.

In his video address to the Nation for the special occasion, President Faure said, “We are united today, 29 June. It is a feeling of love for our country, a feeling that is strong and extraordinary, that brings us together... In our celebrations today, we are celebrating Seychelles and we are celebrating what we are, Seychellois. Yes, today we are one. We are one Nation. We are a proud and blessed people, walking toward one destiny.”



[Read the full Presidential Message on the Occasion of National Day 29 June 2017:](#)
[Click to Read Message](#)

CABINET DECISIONS

14 June 2017

- The allocation of land in the Industrial Estates will henceforth be made by the Board of the Industrial Estates Authority, and not by the Ministry responsible for land. In addition, the Office of the Attorney General will review the conditions of lease with a view to greater transparency in the true ownership of the leases.
- Amendments to the NDEA Act and the Anti-Money Laundering Act were approved to strengthen the power of the Auditor General to conduct financial audits in those institutions and to report on the audits in accordance with the law.
- The Budget preparation calendar was revised so that estimates of the budget can be presented to the National Assembly by October 2017, ensuring a smooth and timely process.
- Cabinet approved amendments to the Pension fund statutory instruments to allow for the gradual increase in the members' contribution rates – the new sub-regulation came into effect on 1 July 2017.
- Cabinet approved for the setting up of a Regional Centre for Operational Coordination (RCOC) in Seychelles, which will play an active role in preventing criminal activities at sea and implementing the law in incidences of such activities.
 - The Centre will be led by a Seychellois Director and member countries (Mauritius, France/Reunion, Comoros, Madagascar, Seychelles, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, and Djibouti) will nominate liaison officers.

28 June 2017

- A new Immigration Act will replace the Immigration Decree. The Citizenship Act, 1994, will consequently also be amended. The Bill will be published a White Paper for public consultation.
- Cabinet approved proposed amendments to the public persons Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Business Interest Act, 2016 to amend the qualifications for the post of Commissioner. This will further facilitate the Government's policy on the open declaration of assets by Cabinet Members and elected officials.
- Discussing the plastics ban, Cabinet endorsed regulations aimed at prohibiting the importation and use of plastic bags, plastic utensils and polystyrene boxes in view of their negative impact on the environment and ecosystems. These measures which had been announced earlier, became effective on 1 July 2017.
- New regulations allow the Ministry for Environment, in consultation with the Attorney General's Office, to impose fines on offenders in cases of environmental pollution.
- A new programme to improve energy efficiency in the public sector will be implemented, involving education and training of employees, an audit of infrastructure and services, and implementation energy efficient measures.
- A new Youth Animateurs Scheme, that will provide a more structured approach to the delivery of youth programmes and services at district level, was discussed.
- Cabinet considered various proposals for ensuring adequate power supply for the developing needs of Praslin.
- A policy framework is to be developed concerning erecting monuments in Seychelles.
- Cabinet approved procedures to be followed by agents and individuals in respect of foreign artists performing in Seychelles.
- A National Hydrographic Committee is to be set up that will advise and inform Government on all matters concerning hydrography, whilst also appointing and guiding the technical committee to execute hydrographical surveys and nautical charts.
- Cabinet approved for the establishment of the National Intellectual Property Committee. The Committee will serve as a coordinating body for consultations with stakeholders on matters of intellectual property for decision-making at national level.



NEW

Read All Cabinet News via the [State House Website](#)
»» [Cabinet Business Section](#)

ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

Inner Island Schools to mark Children's Day

To commemorate International Children's Day on 1 June, President Danny Faure visited students in all the schools on La Digue and Praslin, from crèche to secondary school. President Faure took the time to meet students, share ideas, and discuss their aspirations. He also presented each school with donations based on their needs, such as projector sets, televisions, laptops, photocopiers, and cookers. The President ended his Children's Day tour at the Grand Anse Secondary School where he joined the secondary students and School Management for a meal at the school dining room.



In his [message](#) on the occasion of Children's Day on 1 June, President Danny Faure appealed to every parent to invest in the time spent with children: "Every child needs a home that is safe and a supportive environment to grow up in. While we recognise that our society is facing many challenges, we must never give up. The future and well-being of our children is worth fighting for...Let our efforts be guided by one common goal; the wholesome development of every Seychellois child."

New Projects to Benefit Seychelles

Following President Faure's bilateral talks with the UAE over 2 June weekend, the UAE will finance 400 additional units in the housing sector, a new drug rehabilitation centre, and has pledged financial support towards one of the country's upcoming national projects – the Grand Anse Mahé Dam.

The UAE has been a longstanding partner of Seychelles. President Faure has said that the UAE has demonstrated its willingness to further support Seychelles in its socioeconomic development for the benefit of the Seychellois people.

Coco de Mer planting to mark World Environment Day

To commemorate World Environment Day 2017, 5 June, President Faure invited students from secondary schools representing each region of Seychelles to plant Coco de Mer seedlings in the State House gardens.

In a short ceremony, well-known pioneer of nature conservation Mr Willy Andre, spoke about his 43 years of experience protecting the environment. SALS student and Master of Ceremonies, Joshua Sofola, stressed on the importance of staying connected to nature, saying: "Today, we pledge our support and join hands with our parents to honour one of the Fundamental Duties prescribed in Article 40(e) of our Constitution, which calls on all citizens to protect, preserve and improve the environment of Seychelles."

Following this, President Faure planted a Coco de Mer seedling in the gardens of State House, and the remaining six were planted by secondary students from each region: the North, South, East, West, Central Mahé and the Inner Islands.



Appointment of two new members to Anti-Corruption Commission

President Faure presented Miss Nisreen Abdul Majid and Mr Michel Finley Felix, two newly appointed members of the Seychelles Anti-Corruption Commission, with their Instruments of Appointment during a ceremony held at State House on 16 June.

In April 2017, the Anti-Corruption Act was amended to enlarge the Anti-Corruption Commission to provide for two additional Members, both of whom would be recommended by the Constitutional Appointments Authority. The appointments will be for a seven-year period, effective 16 June 2017.



Commemoration of Seychelles' Constitution Day

President Faure attended the Flag Raising Ceremony at the *Lavwa Lanasyon* monument in Victoria, to commemorate the Third Constitution Day of the Republic of Seychelles on 18 June.

The event, organised by the National Celebrations Committee, was attended by representatives from all three branches of the Government. It paid tribute to the Constitution, the supreme law of the land, and the National Flag and National Anthem as a source of pride and patriotism for all Seychellois. The Constitution Day celebrations continued with the opening of the 41 National Schools' Athletics Championship at State Linite. President Faure presented the President's Cup for Fair Play in both the Competitors and Spectators category, in addition to the categories with the most gold medals.

President Faure meets with citizens on La Digue and Praslin

Honouring the commitment he made to members of the inner island community, President Danny Faure met with members of the public who had requested an appointment to see him through a letter on Friday 23 June.

President Faure met with residents of La Digue in the morning, and residents of Praslin in the afternoon, taking note of the concerns raised.



Official Opening of Inner Island National Day Show 2017

President Faure attended the official opening of the National Day Show on Praslin on Saturday 24 June, following a day of meetings with members of the inner island community. Part of the National Day Celebrations, the show was held under the theme "Inner Islands Celebrate Socio-Economic Progress," showcasing various economic activities and services available on the inner islands.

Following the short opening ceremony, President Faure visited every stall, speaking to people and learning from the various exhibits. The National Day activities continued with a gospel show and live musical performances that the President attended.

Baie Lazare

Accompanied by community leaders and representatives from various government services and agencies, President Faure visited various locations in Baie Lazare on Friday 9 June. This marked the twelfth district President Faure has seen as part of his ongoing community visit programme.

He assessed the progress of district projects firsthand, visited areas facing challenges, and met with members of the community. He visited the Baie Lazare clinic, farmers, and families facing housing challenges. Following his visit, the repair of *Val D'en D'or* water tank is now an issue of priority. Officials accompanying the President had the chance to be briefed onsite and devise a timeframe for effective follow-up action.



Montagne Posée

President Danny Faure paid a surprise visit to Montagne Posee prison on 15 June. He was shown around the facilities by the Superintendent of Prisons, Mr Vic Tirant, visiting part of the male block, the female prison, and various facilities including the gym, the furniture workshop, and the crafts section. The President also saw first-hand the open style prison with inmates that do work outside, and toured the perimeter reserved for future development.

Regional Elderly Homes

President Danny Faure spent the morning of 19 June visiting the elderly living at North East Point and La Retraite in a surprise visit. He toured the facilities and could assess firsthand the care the elderly receive, and discuss any challenges with the nurses and staff on duty. He also met with the residents, chatting to them about their thoughts and experiences.

Leaving North East Point, President Faure also paid a visit to residents of the La Retraite Home for the Elderly where he was briefed by the carer on duty on the daily operations of the home. The La Retraite Home currently has a total of 18 residents who were delighted to receive a surprise visit from the President and share some of their fondest memories with him.



Elderly Home at Grand Anse, Praslin



President Danny Faure dropped in at the Elderly Home at Grand Anse, Praslin on Sunday 25 June.

He visited all 8 residents in their rooms and chatted with each one of them, before meeting with the administrator and the home carers.

President Faure thanked the administrator and home carers for the dedicated care they are giving to all the residents.

ACTIVITIES OF THE OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT

United Nations Ocean Conference

The Vice-President headed the Seychelles delegation to the United Nations Ocean Conference held in New York, from 5 to 9 June 2017. The high-level UN Conference was co-hosted by the Government of Fiji and Sweden and aimed to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: *conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development*.

Seychelles had an impressive presence at the conference across a range of ocean issues including the blue economy, marine pollution, marine conservation, ocean governance, fisheries management, and innovative finance. This was well noted and commented upon by the UN, Governments and other international organisations, and generated a lot of interest in the country's conservation efforts.

Under the leadership of Vice-President Meriton and the Minister for Environment, Energy and Climate Change Mr Didier Dogley, several bilateral meetings were held with senior officials from Sweden, Denmark, UAE, Germany and Granada, as well as with representatives from international organisations including the World Bank, European Commission, and the Food and Agriculture Organisation, on a range of issues of common interest.



These meetings also helped identify the various opportunities for collaboration and funding available to Seychelles.

Seychelles' participation at the Ocean Conference included Vice-President Meriton, Minister Dogley, Ambassador Jumeau and Ambassador Samson; as well as Government Officials from the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Energy; the Blue Economy Department; Seychelles Fishing Authority; and representatives from the James Michel Foundation; Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT); University of Seychelles; SYAH; and secondary schools.

SPOTLIGHT

*Every edition the State House Newsletter aims to give attention to a particular individual or cause whose work or aspirations are exemplary. This month we focus on **Alvania Lawen**, a S5 student from Anse Boileau Secondary School who is a very active volunteer and part of the delegation chosen to attend the Ocean Conference in New York.*

SPOTLIGHT

Alvania grew up in Anse Boileau with her parents, older sister, twin sister, and a little sister. Family has always been central to Alvania. Her grandparents and aunt were very involved in her childhood, taking a strong interest in her activities and supporting her.



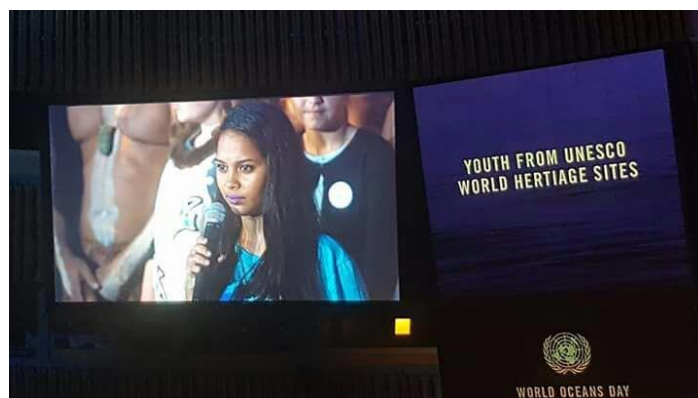
Alvania and her grandfather, Alva Lawen

“Saturday was our fun day when we talked all day long after classes about everything including cartoons, school, life, future ambitions – I guess that’s how I started to talk uncontrollably! During one of these talks, I was 7 years old at the time, when I was complaining about sewing class at school, my grandfather said: ‘Don’t ever say you can’t do something if you’ve never tried it...never be afraid to try’. This quote has impacted my life profoundly, especially whenever I’ve thought about giving up. He passed away a year later, but I know he still looks down on us – I never stop trying to make him proud.”

Alvania’s love of the ocean began with her grandfather, who was a marine surveyor and would take her and her sister along with him on the boat. Most of her extracurricular activities revolve around the environment and, in her words, “bettering humanity”. She was formally launched into environmentally related activities after a science fair project about climate change and rain water harvesting when she was 9 years old, and this interest continued as she took part in events like the National Day Expo, science fairs, and the Save Our Seas Foundation (SOSF). Along the way, volunteering and dedicating her time for the environment became a passion. She joined the SIDS Youth AIMS Hub (SYAH) and was added to the District Youth Council at Anse Boileau. In 2015, at just 14 years old, she was selected as one of the country’s top 28 people making a difference. In 2016, she was awarded the ‘Most Valuable Student in Environment’ under the eco-schools programme, and was chosen as one of the 12 students to go on an educational visit to Aldabra.

The same year, she founded an environmental interest club for her district with her twin sister Nathalia Lawen, “Eco-Anse Boileau”. She also successfully secured an internship in the blue economy sector and as a result, thanks to her sponsors, completed a two-day course and obtained a certificate in the Environment and Oceanography in Mauritius.

This year, she was selected to be part of the delegation to the Oceans Conference, and described it as “phenomenal, proud experience”: “I’ve always wanted to set foot in the United Nations General Assembly Hall. I’ve seen pictures and videos, but being there myself was something truly amazing, and a dream come true. I feel blessed and honoured to have had the opportunity. My favourite part was without a doubt, standing on stage in front of two thousand something leaders and dignitaries from around the world, and being privileged enough to talk to them and tell them why the ocean is important to me, and why it should be important to everyone. I tried to convince them to sign my ‘Ocean Pledge’, and tell them the importance of initiating change.”



Giving her address at the Ocean Conference, June 2017

This year, Alvania has spent her time working with UN Youth Seychelles, Stand Up Step Up Seychelles, The Meraki Foundation and The Ocean Project. She is also an avid participator in 'Word Up', an open mic night organised by The Meraki Foundation and founded by Alexandria Faure. "I believe that by volunteering through these organisations, I am not solely helping the environment, the people at the other end and providing entertainment, but I am also helping myself. To grow as an individual, to better my knowledge, to feel as if I have a purpose and to make myself and my family proud," she says. "God above all keeps me going. I thank him every day for everything, everyone and every situation in my life, because I believe that they have made me who I am today."



Alvania with her family at her 16th Birthday party

Her inspiration? "I owe everything to my family members who support, motivate, and encourage me in the many things I do, especially my twin sister who is literally there beside me, every step of the way. My friends are also very supportive, and the people in organisations who set examples and provide opportunities: Ms Jeanette Larue, Sir Shane Emilie, and Miss Marlene, thank you. In fact, every individual that I have encountered in my life has impacted my life – either inspiring me to be better or teaching me what not to do through examples.

Isometimes find inspiration in Eminem's songs, especially from the lyrics of *Lose Yourself*: 'If you had one shot, or one opportunity, to seize everything you've ever wanted, one moment, would you capture it? Or let it slip?'"

Her wish for Seychelles is simple – that it continues to advance sustainably, as a shining example of environmental protection. As for her peers, the youth of Seychelles, she says "contrary to popular belief, I see that with more awareness and motivation, there is a bright pathway for us. I hope that more Seychellois youth come together and form more remarkable youth-led groups and organisations to motivate the younger generation. Awareness is key to anything – you have to understand before taking action. I think it is crucial that information is made accessible to youth in a way that is engaging – songs, poetry, drama, etc. are more interesting than long meetings. I think youth need to understand the many problems of the world and are more involved with decision-making, as we are the ones who will run the world in the future."