



THE STATE HOUSE NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2017

“Respect as a value needs to be promoted”

President Danny Faure held his final press conference of the year on 23 November 2017, taking questions from over 20 journalists present.

Topics raised included improving law enforcement, reinforcing public sector efficiency, and addressing existing social ills. The President emphasised the importance of collaboration and dialogue in moving forward, and developing values of respect, compassion and love.

“What is happening in schools is a reflection of what is happening at home. We need to increase the level of discipline in the country as a whole, and push our young people to work hard and join productive activities.

Respect as a value needs to be promoted within our school – what we see now is an assault on institutions and we can no longer tolerate that,” said the President. “We need to promote compassion and love as strong values in the workplace and community.”



The President announced that over half of the labour force is expected to benefit from the new Progressive Income Tax system and the 13th month salary. Following the removal of customs duty on construction materials, President Faure also confirmed that the Government is continuing to take steps that will reduce the cost of living. He encouraged citizens to reduce spending as it causes prices to rise, and consider making investments. He also spoke on the potential of the private sector to innovate, and pushed entrepreneurs to develop business in the production sector for example.

Speaking on the recent protests, President Faure encouraged citizens to explore all internal mechanisms to find solutions to existing problems, before resorting to drastic actions. “We need to build an alliance, and this is a special opportunity for us to work together. I welcome critics, as they help me to grow as a person,” said the President.

He reminded everyone to respect staff in all institutions, and give full support to all employees, particularly those providing public service.

CABINET DECISIONS

2 November 2017

- The Road Transport Commission is the designated authority on any matters relating to road safety, including breathalysing of drivers for alcohol, drugs and other illicit substances, the use of camera and radar equipment for speed detection, the levels of noise emanating from vehicles, the conditions of licence for new drivers, and regulations concerning the modification of vehicles.
- Cabinet endorsed the Seychelles National Parks Authority Strategic Plan 2017-21.
- New reclamation work at Providence will be completed in order to further develop infrastructure for microenterprises. Additional space will become available to small entrepreneurs in ventures such as mechanical garages, panel beating, fiberglass and other marine repair activities.
- Cabinet approved for the creation of a technical working group which would thoroughly assess the merits and operating conditions of dry-dock infrastructure and facilities in Seychelles.
- A policy for providing government assistance to victims of fire disasters to reconstruct their houses was approved, in addition to a housing finance subsidy scheme that would cover such assistance.
- Two new marine protected areas will be designated: around the Aldabra Group and the area located between Amirantes and the Fortune Bank.
- Cabinet approved recommendations for amendments to the Physical Planning Bill 2017 following feedback from the public consultation process.
- The Hijacking Act 1971 was repealed, and replaced by a new Anti-Hijacking Act 2017.
- Cabinet approved the Enterprise Seychelles Agency Bill, 2017. This Bill would allow for the creation of the Agency that would implement government policies with regards to entrepreneurship development, business innovation and development of a competitive industrial base for Seychelles.

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- Cabinet approved the action plan drawn up following the findings of the Investigation Committee on Fungus in the National Cultural Centre. The plan, which will span over two years, will implement the recommendations of the report.
- Amendments to the Education (Amendment) Bill, 2017 were approved, that would allow for sanctions to be imposed on parents and legal guardians who fail to honour their obligations to school management with regards to their children of compulsory education age. The amendments would provide for the contractual obligations of students, parents, teachers and members of the school leadership to be prescribed in law.
- The Trade Licenses regulations will be amended to include online buying and selling transactions to be included in the definition of wholesale and retail services.
- The Social Renaissance Programme will be rebranded, reinforced and strengthened with a renewed focus on family welfare and wellbeing.
- Cabinet approved the concept of having multi-storey car parks around Victoria to alleviate traffic congestion in town. However there will be further public/stakeholder consultations on the matter before a final decision.
- Cabinet approved a policy for encouraging private investment in the construction of residential units on Ile Perseverance.

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- Cabinet approved the removal of customs duty on corrugated iron sheets and other sheets, panels, tiles and similar articles not containing asbestos. This removal of duty will come into effect from 1 January 2018, in line with Government's ongoing efforts to reduce the cost of living.
- Recommendations to address the weaknesses identified so that Seychelles is not perceived as a high-risk country were approved, and so that it can continue to maintain partnerships with reputable international financial institutions.
- Cabinet approved a policy to introduce legislation for financial consumer protection. This would promote, amongst others, fair treatment of consumers, increased transparency, responsible lending and the prevention of over-indebtedness. It would also encourage responsible pricing and appropriate product development, and encourage greater assertiveness on the part of consumers. Data privacy and complaint resolution would also be addressed in the law.

- A proposed National Financial Education Strategy was approved. This would empower consumers to participate actively and successfully within the financial market.
- Cabinet approved a new policy to address the growing prevalence of diabetes and the effects of obesity.
- A programme will be implemented to allow people with chronic illnesses to collect their prescribed medication from any clinic, other than the clinic in their district.
- Cabinet approved the revision of the National School Health Programme.
- Cabinet was informed on findings of the study on Gender Based Violence in Seychelles. Cabinet approved for new policies and legislation to be introduced to mitigate the incidences of gender based violence.
- Following feedback on a pilot study done on the social needs of children and youth of Ile Perseverance, Cabinet approved recommendations to improve youth engagement and involvement in positive activities.
- Cabinet endorsed plans to address the presence of illegal tourism establishments in the country.
- Cabinet agreed that the proposed reform of the electoral commission would require a review of the Constitutional provisions under which the Commission is establishment.

DIPLOMACY

Africa Global Business Forum



At the invitation of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, President Faure attended the Global Business Forum on Africa (AGBF) in Dubai on 1 and 2 November 2017.

President Faure was invited to share his experience on the success of the country's economic programme and the leadership role of Seychelles in the Continent in areas such as maritime security, sustainable development, and social protection of citizens. He also explained the important role of transparency, accountability, and good governance and the building of strong institutions as the way forward to meet contemporary challenges.



Speaking to the 1,200 delegates attending the forum, the President of the Republic called on governments and the private sector to build a new alliance and a stronger partnership that will allow Africa to use the opportunities created by new technologies to improve the quality of life of its citizens.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PRESIDENT

Chairperson and Board of Directors of Al Salam Bank Bahrain

President Faure received the Board of Directors of Al Salam Bank Bahrain, including the Chairperson, Her Royal Highness Sheikha Hessa Bint Khalifa Al Khalifa, at State House on Tuesday 14 November 2017.

The President highlighted the excellent relations that exist between Seychelles and Bahrain as well as other countries in the Middle East. Her Royal Highness expressed the interest for the bank to nurture the needs of Seychellois and play a key role in investing in important sectors such as housing, amongst others. The President also witnessed a donation of SCR500,000 to the Seychelles Children's Fund.

The newly opened Al Salam Bank Seychelles, with Seychelles Pension Fund as a 30% shareholder, is the first Islamic bank in the country. It is located at Maison Esplanade in Victoria.



Country Director for Seychelles at the World Bank



President Danny Faure met with the Country Director for Seychelles at the World Bank, Mr Mark Lundell, at State House on Friday 17 November 2017. They discussed the systematic report produced by the World Bank in May 2017, and the need to merge it with new policies in various sectors.

The World Bank has assisted Seychelles in sectors including health, public utilities, pensions, public finance and tourism. In 2018, they will try to focus on four or five areas and develop a five-year strategy.

Seychelles Family Hospital Inauguration

President Faure inaugurated the new Seychelles Family Hospital at Ile Perseverance on Thursday 16 November. This is a project funded by HRH Sheikh Khalifa Foundation and the Government of UAE costing USD 6 million, with SCR 9 million contributed by the Government of Seychelles for site preparations and other associated costs.

The hospital has a capacity of 30 beds and it has 2 operating theatres, 7 consultation rooms, and several inpatient and isolation rooms, as well as a backup ICU. It also has the latest equipment in areas such as audiology, which will help improve services offered to children who are hearing impaired.



Seychellois environment conservationist



The President received Seychellois environment conservationist, Mr Robbie Bresson, at State House on Tuesday 21 November. He met Mr Bresson following his working visit to Bird Island, where he saw some of the conservation efforts in relation to the protection of flora and fauna on the island first-hand. Mr Bresson has more than 40 years of experience, and has been working on Bird Island for the last 14 years.

President Faure expressed his sincere gratitude for Mr Bresson's service to conservation, and expressed his hope that he will share his knowledge with the next generation of dedicated environmentalists.

EU Naval Force Atalanta

President Faure received a delegation from the EU Naval Force Atalanta, led by FCDR Rear Admiral Fabio Gregori, at State House on Friday 24 November. The President was briefed on the recent operation that led to the successful capture of six Somali pirates intercepted off the coast of Somalia. The pirates are now with Seychelles authorities.

The President commended EU NAVFOR for their prompt action, commended them for their work over the years, and reiterated Seychelles' commitment to strengthening the excellent partnership that exists between Seychelles and the EU.

Somali Minister for Foreign Affairs

On Monday 27 November, President Faure received the Somali Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Yusuf-Garaad Omar, at State House. Ambassador Omar was on an official visit in Seychelles to visit the Somali prisoners at the Montagne Posee prison, those in remand at its centre on Bois de Rose, and hold various meetings with authorities in Seychelles.

President Faure and Ambassador Omar discussed the transfer of the Somali prisoners currently in Seychelles back to Somalia to continue serving their sentence. The President also highlighted the importance of Seychelles and Somalia joining forces to protect and preserve the region and to show the world that it is a safe place, securing growth and development of both countries and the region.

Long-serving Retiring Officers Commended

President Faure said farewell to three retiring Ambassadors and CEOs at State House on Thursday 30 November; Ambassador Callixte D'offay, Mrs Marise Berlouis, and Mrs Lena Desaubin.

On behalf of the Government and people of Seychelles, President Faure thanked them for their dedication and hard work as well as for their professional and loyal service over the many years that they worked for the Government.



Bird and Denis Island

President Faure visited two private outer islands, Bird and Denis, on Wednesday 8 November 2017 to get a first-hand view of best practices for the integration of sustainable tourism and environment conservation.

He commended the teams on Bird Island and Denis Island respectively, where conservation efforts are supported by experienced local Seychellois staff. The President expressed his interest to showcase and share some of the best practices currently being implemented on both islands.



Office of the Ombudsman, CAA and PSA

President Danny Faure visited the Office of the Ombudsman, Constitutional Appointments Authority (CAA), and Public Service Appeals Board (PSA) on Friday 10 November. Visits to these institutions form part of a series of visits that the President is undertaking to different workplaces and institutions.

At the visits, he toured the offices and facilities, and held meetings with staff. He reiterated the importance of the institutions as inscribed in the Constitution. 2018 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Third Republic, and the President mentioned that there are discussions to hold a Constitution Week where the bodies can promote their work and services. As Head of State, he commended them for their hard work and extended his support through the expertise of the Cabinet Office.

Commemoration of World Diabetes Day 2017



President Danny Faure was the guest of honour at a presentation ceremony to commemorate World Diabetes Day 2017, held at Seychelles Hospital on Tuesday 14 November 2017.

President Faure extended his continuous support to the staff of the Seychelles Hospital working hard to take care of patients suffering from diabetes, as well as those in other departments within the health system. He commended the work of the Ministry of Health in promoting their theme, “My Health, My Responsibility” and encouraged people to rally behind it.

International Day of Tolerance

To commemorate International Day of Tolerance on 16 November, President Faure visited various religious denominations: Jehovah's Witnesses, Sheikh Sultan Bin Khalifa Al Nahyan masjid, Pentecostal Assembly, Bin Khalifa Al-Nahyan mosque, St Paul Cathedral, Bahá'í Centre, 7th Day Adventist Church, Arul Michu Navasakthi Vinayagar Temple, and the Catholic Domus.

He commended all the religious institutions for their work in promoting good moral and spiritual values and tolerance in communities. He asked them to join him in promoting and strengthening three values amongst citizens from next year: respect, compassion, and love.



Visit to police stations and fire and rescue services

President Danny Faure visited the police headquarters and the fire and rescue services station on Mahe and Praslin, and police stations on Praslin, as part of his weekly visits to workplaces and institutions on Friday 17 November 2017.

He received a guided tour of all the facilities, and held discussions with the staff who had the opportunity to express their concerns. They also briefed the President on the adoption of a more proactive work approach in relation to education and raising awareness on certain issues, crime prevention, and strategies to reinforce surveillance.



Mont Fleuri secondary school



President Danny Faure visited Mont Fleuri Secondary School on Wednesday 22 November morning. Speaking at the morning assembly, the President urged the students to make their studies their priority and to ensure they respect and appreciate the dedication and sacrifice their teachers make in order to teach them. He also stressed on the importance of students respecting their fellow schoolmates and school property.

The President commended and expressed his appreciation to the teachers and school management that despite challenges they remain dedicated to their profession. He called on former teachers to return to teaching and join forces to lend a hand for the betterment of the young Seychellois generation.

Office of the Advisory Committee on the Power of Pardon, Auditor General, Electoral Commission, and Anti-Corruption Commission

President Danny Faure visited the Office of the Advisory Committee on the Power of Pardon, Auditor General, Electoral Commission, and Anti-Corruption Commission on Friday 24 November, continuing his weekly visits to workplaces. He called on everyone to reinforce the value of those institutions as enshrined in the constitution and furthermore, to rely on the support of the government.

The President highlighted on the necessity for the various institutions, such as the Advisory Committee on the Power of Pardon and the Anti-Corruption Commission, to sensitise the public on the important work they do through programmes on the media.



National Tender Board



President Danny Faure visited the National Tender Board on Tuesday 28 November, as part of his weekly visits to workplaces and institutions.

He met with members of the National Tender Board and Procurement Review Panel, who provided the President with an overview of their regulations and policies. The President noted the need to review some of them so as to better uphold the principles of good governance, transparency, and accountability.

At the end of the discussions the President thanked and commended the staff for their hard work and dedication. The National Tender Board will celebrate 9 years of existence in 2018.

SPOTLIGHT

Every edition of the State House e-newsletter aims to give attention to a particular individual whose work and aspirations are inspiring. This month we focus on Kalsey Belle, a young professional working at PUC and an active volunteer, passionate about empowering youth and developing the local community. She is a founding member of UN Youth Seychelles, an Executive Board Member of SYAH-Seychelles, and co-leads SYAH's Blue Economy Internship Programme. She was 1 out of 4000 non-EU applicants to be selected for a 5-month traineeship programme at the European Commission, and recently attended the 'Our Ocean' Youth Summit in Malta, held parallel to the 'Our Ocean' conference attended by President Danny Faure.

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Kalsey grew up at La Misere, the middle child and only daughter of the family. Her parents gave her constant support and guidance, and always encouraged her to join extra-curricular activities. “I was fortunate to have them teach me values such as respect, perseverance, and adaptability,” says Kalsey. “My brothers have also always been my source of inspiration. Despite constant sibling teasing, they always believe in my abilities. In their own different ways, they have encouraged me to pursue various endeavors ranging from tackling a sprint triathlon to designing engineering models at university.”

As a founding member of the NGO, UN Youth Seychelles, Kalsey has worked hard to raise local awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals, through newspaper articles and supporting a young entrepreneur through an ‘immersive exhibition’. She is also an Executive Board Member of SYAH-Seychelles, a youth-led NGO promoting sustainable development projects. She takes part in several activities including CV writing workshops, motivational talks to encourage other young people to pursue careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), mangrove-planting, and beach clean-ups, among others.

“Last year, through funding from the British High Commission, I co-lead SYAH’s Blue Economy Internship Programme which allowed Seychellois youth the opportunity to gain work experience while exploring the myriad of career opportunities within the Blue Economy sector. As part of the programme, I led the delegation of 14 students aged between 15-22 years old on an educational visit to Mauritius. By networking, participants were able to share ideas and help reinforce a regional platform for the sharing of best practice between the two countries,” says Kalsey.



In 2016, Kalsey completed a 5-month traineeship at the European Commission in Brussels, where she was with the Structural Support Unit of the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries. It was through this programme that she found out about the Our Ocean conference, which she describes as “an eye-opening experience”. “At the conference and predominantly during the EU traineeship, I truly appreciated the international recognition (and admiration) that Seychelles’ holds in the context of its prosperity as a country, as well as, the leading role Seychelles plays towards championing the importance of the ocean. It was also amazing to have President Faure chair the panel discussion on policy and diplomacy at the Youth Summit. Not only did he set an example for world leaders, but on an international platform he shared Seychelles’ success together with the joint work that Seychellois youth and institutions were undertaking. I was especially proud when fellow participants approached me to express that I was fortunate to have a President who recognised the important role of youth in placing sustainable development at the heart of all initiatives including the ocean economy,” says Kalsey.

“Experience has taught me life will not always go as you would like it to. Nonetheless, you must remain optimistic and motivated by making the most of every situation. As Mandela used to say “I never lose. I either win or learn’.”

Her vision for Seychelles is a country where potential solutions are provided alongside the challenges, where citizens take ownership of the challenges and complement the government’s efforts to strive for a prosperous Seychelles.