



**STATEMENT
BY
H.E. MR. DANNY FAURE
VICE PRESIDENT
OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES
ON
OCCASION OF THE
GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE 68TH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Your Excellency President of the General Assembly- Ambassador John Ashe,
Your Excellency the Secretary General of the United Nations- Mr Ban Ki-Moon,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great honour that I address the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on behalf of the President of the Republic of Seychelles, Mr. James Alix Michel and on behalf of the Seychellois people.

Ambassador John Ashe, I wish to congratulate you on your election to this High office and on your guidance of proceedings so far.

In 2014, we will mark the UN international year of Small Island Developing States. Your elevation during this 68th session is highly symbolic of the constructive role that Small Island Developing States (SIDS) play within the United Nations- and we express our full support to your efforts to further promote inclusiveness and full participation.

I would also like to join all those that have come before me in complimenting Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his leadership of the 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, whereby he further underlined the unifying aspects of our Assembly.

Allow me also to reiterate our appreciation to Secretary General Ban Ki Moon for the determination and commitment he has shown since the beginning of his tenure of office, in strengthening the United Nations' role in keeping with this spirit.

Post 2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development

Ladies and gentlemen,

For the Seychelles delegation, the United Nations General Assembly evokes the spirit of humanity's common cause better than any other institution.

Indeed, in this hall, we are reminded that there are no large nations nor small nations, rich nations nor poor nations, powerful nations nor weak nations- simply the united nations.

As a Small Island Developing State, we are perhaps also more conscious than most, that very little can be achieved through isolation.

Our economy is built around its connectivity to the world economy. Our security is easily undermined by events beyond our control. And our environmental safety is also dependent on so many factors that occur beyond our borders.

Both our opportunities, and our risks can only be addressed through international partnerships.

As we discuss and exchange on the Post 2015 development agenda, we believe that the experiences of SIDS provide contexts that can help us to design a better development model.

As we aim to set Sustainable Development Goals, we must keep in mind that if we can sustain our islands- then we will know we can sustain our planet.

Supporting Small Island Developing States

This year, Seychelles was given the honour to host the AIMS Sub-Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, to be held next year in Samoa.

The participation in this event by both the Secretary General of UNDESA and the President of the UNGA is highly appreciated as a symbol of support for the concerns of islands.

Our discussions there, and in the ongoing process, have highlighted the fact that there is urgent need for the UN to adopt a 'resilience index' that takes into account the evolving developing needs of islands.

The 'Green Economy' and 'Blue Economy'

Ladies and gentlemen,

In Rio last year, we identified the 'green economy' and the 'blue economy' as tools by which states may implement a more sustainable approach to development.

We are convinced that the 'green economy' cannot be properly addressed unless we also give more attention to what is termed 'the blue economy'- that is harnessing the development potential of our oceans sustainably.

Our oceans make up 72% of our planet, and connect our nations in terms of geography, in terms of trade, transport and in terms of communications. We consider island nations such as ourselves as guardians of this space- even if in many cases, we can be but witnesses to plunder, pillage and pollution.

The status quo merely perpetuates a model where we will consume our planet's resources with no long term protection, while the menace of climate change continues to grow as a threat to our economies, our way of life and our existence.

To further mobilize reflection and action on the concept of the 'Blue Economy', Seychelles is pleased to be able to organize in partnership with the United Arab Emirates, a special High Level Event to be held as part of the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week on 21st January 2014.

Sustainable development in Africa

Ladies and gentlemen,

The 'Blue Economy' also represents an unparalleled opportunity for Africa. As an African island nation, we have continued to call for more attention to be given to the sustainable development of Africa's coastal areas and its oceans.

We can transform Africa's oceans from being sources of raw products for distant nations to a space where Africa's trade needs are prioritized, and where Africa can better protect its oceanic resources.

Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean

As an African island, Seychelles continues to prioritise security of our maritime spaces.

In terms of maritime security, Seychelles reiterates its desire to build partnerships to create better coordination and sharing of information in the immediate region and beyond.

Seychelles has also set up a Regional Anti-piracy prosecution and intelligence coordination centre while it also hosts an anti-piracy cell of the Indian Ocean Commission to build the maritime security capacity of the island states. The tools we have developed through these initiatives have strengthened our ability as a region to also deter other criminal activities such as arms-trafficking, drugs trafficking, people trafficking and illegal fishing. We look forward to build on these successes with partners to create an effective coordination mechanism for maritime security in our region.

The situation in Somalia and East Africa

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we consider the security situation in East Africa, may I also take this opportunity to express our solidarity and our sympathies to the government and people of Kenya, as well as personally to H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta, as Kenya recovers from the barbaric attacks in Nairobi on Saturday.

Such acts of terrorism strengthen our resolve to ensure that we build a shared future free of these forces of division and hostility.

We also salute the efforts of the government of Somalia in their dedication to ensure that forces of extremism and intolerance have no place in our shared region.

Madagascar

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are encouraged by the positive developments in relation to the expected first round of presidential elections to be held in Madagascar in October.

Elections represent the path towards resolving the crisis in our neighbouring island, and we are encouraged that the basis for resolution of the crisis discussed during the SADC mediation with the support of the Indian Ocean Commission held in Seychelles in 2012 have come to fruition.

Issues of ongoing concern relating to international peace and security

During the 68th session of the UNGA, Seychelles will continue to be an advocate for peace and stability, and urge all nations to work through the mechanisms of the United Nations towards resolving existing crises.

Seychelles condemns in the strongest terms any use of chemical weapons, or any other weapon of mass destruction.

As one of the first signatories of the Arms Trade Treaty, Seychelles also urges all nations to actively engage to reduce the risk of arms trades which remains one of the biggest challenges for our region and the world.

Finally, during this session of the UNGA, Seychelles will continue to call for every effort be made to reduce the marginalization of island states- and it is this context that we reiterate the call for the removal of the embargo against our brotherly nation of Cuba.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen,

Seychelles is a nation that believes that all voices count.

In speaking out on behalf of small islands that are often marginalized in international processes, we believe that we have a duty to ensure that all perspectives are considered.

It is because of our commitment to this inclusive approach to the UN and to multilateralism that Seychelles has announced its intention to stand as a candidate for a non-permanent seat of the Security Council for the period 2017-2018. As a nation that has never served before, we are actively engaged in discussions in our East African constituency, and we appreciate the opportunity to engage with all nations that wish to share their views.

We look forward to many fruitful discussions.

To conclude, I would like to emphasise that our approach towards the Sustainable development goals must be even more broad and inclusive than for the MDGs.

The challenges are obvious.

Poverty. Climate Change. Energy. The list can go on indefinitely.

But we believe there is also a shared opportunity in setting the SDGs.

The opportunity to reflect the true interconnectivity of our planet through the adoption of interconnected objectives.

Shared objectives will lead to shared success.

This is the conviction of the Seychelles delegation.

I thank you.