



REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

STATEMENT BY

H.E. MR. PATRICK PILLAY

MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES

AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION

OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
800 SECOND AVENUE, SUITE 400C  
NEW YORK, NY 10017

Your Excellency, the President of the General Assembly, Dr. Srgjan Kerim,  
Your Excellency, the Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me first extend to all of you, the fraternal greetings and best wishes of Mr. James Alix Michel, President of the Republic of Seychelles, the Government and the people of Seychelles, on the convening of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Seychelles is proud to be here today, as a partner and an ally to further our international efforts to address the challenges that are central to the future of all humanity and that pose a threat to global political and economic stability and security.  
Mr. President,

I join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as President of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your election to the helm of this august assembly is testimony of the highest esteem in which the international community holds your good self and your country, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

I take this opportunity to express my country's sincere appreciation to your predecessor, H.E. Sheika Haya Rashed Al Khalifa from Bahrain, for her outstanding stewardship of the work of 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Assembly.

Allow me to commend and to renew Seychelles' strong support to Secretary General Ban Ki Moon for the determination and strong will he has been showing since the beginning of his tenure of office, in strengthening the United Nations' role.

Mr. President,

Seychelles remains unwavering in its support to the United Nations. Our commitment has not changed since we joined this organisation 31 years ago. More than ever, we believe that the world needs strong and effective multilateralism. Indeed, we are convinced that the most effective means of advancing our collective interests are through the United Nations.

Seychelles is pleased that the overarching theme of this year's Assembly is *Responding to Climate Change*, as the General Assembly of the United Nations is the forum for concerted and comprehensive action in addressing a defining issue of our time.

Fifteen years ago, in 1992, Seychelles, a Small Island Developing State, was the second country to accede to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We were convinced then, as we are now, that the Convention's primary objective of reducing the dangerous levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere must be realised in order to protect the environment and avoid serious socio-economic disruptions. Six years later, in 1998, Seychelles reiterated its commitment to the ideals of UNFCCC by adopting the Kyoto Protocol. However, the attempts by the international community to act on those international agreements have been modest at best.

Mr. President,

The challenge of development has never been higher on the international agenda. However, the adverse impacts of climate change are a major barrier for the achievement of sustainable development goals in many countries, especially Small Island developing states (SIDS) which are recognized as being most vulnerable to climate change.

Mr. President,

We must emphasise again that for the majority of Small Island Developing States, agriculture, fisheries and tourism have for a long time been the mainstay of survival and economic development.

Let us not forget that Small Island Developing States are home to an important proportion of the world's biodiversity- the majority of which are endemic species- but which are also increasingly under threat because of climate change.

In Seychelles, the fisheries sector is a key pillar in our economy. It is expected that changes in climate may cause migratory shifts in tuna aggregations to other locations thus depriving our country of one of its main sources of income. Moreover, inshore and traditional fishing, the mainstay of local fishermen and a major source of food is also highly threatened. Food security on islands is at stake.

The impacts of climate change on the tourism sector are also expected to be significant, and this is why we believe that support for the economic diversification towards other revenue generating sectors in small island states is more than ever necessary.

Mr. President,

Climate change is also a security issue. But it is not a matter of narrow national security -it has a new dimension. It is a question of our collective security and responsibility in a fragile and increasingly interdependent world where the notion of border has undergone a powerful symbolic transformation.

Mr. President,

It is now up to politics, businesses and civil society to take over from the work accomplished by scientists. The peoples of the world are increasingly looking to their leaders to take action. And the time is now. A week ago, at a meeting of the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA) in Rome, President James Michel, launched the Sea Level Rise Foundation, as an attempt to ensure that island nations have the capacity to adapt to climate change. Together we are mobilizing leadership, increasing resources and sharing skills, knowledge, technologies and innovation in a cost effective and sustainable way that will catalyze action for conservation and sustainable livelihoods on islands and low-lying areas in the face of climate change.

We count on the valuable support of the international community for ensuring the success of this noble and important endeavor.

Mr. President,

We call on the developed countries to take a strong lead and commitment in combating climate change. Aspirational global emissions reduction goals are not sufficient. We believe that the Kyoto Protocol paves the way forward for Annex One countries to fulfil their commitments under the Climate Change Convention. We urge those Parties to commit and to translate their legally binding targets into concrete actions for the reduction of their gas emissions.

Mr. President,

We believe that a UN-based multilateral approach that builds on the Kyoto Protocol framework is the only decisive way of moving forward. There cannot be any doubt as to the major importance of the first steps taken in Kyoto, and of the quantum improvements brought about by the provisions of the Protocol. The size and urgency of the problem requires that we take bold initiatives and compromises.

However, as the globe suffers because of climate change, it is essential that the international community as a whole be formally and unequivocally reminded that neither the efforts made thus far in implementing the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, nor the emissions reduction targets, of on average 5.2%, adopted in Kyoto represent an adequate effort to stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at safe levels. We know that we need to do much more. In this regard, we would like to take this opportunity to praise the recent work accomplished by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in urging the need for deeper cuts in greenhouse gasses of 25% to 40% below 1990 levels by 2020. Moreover, we would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation for the determination shown by our Secretary General in facilitating the international dialogue to address the problem.

It is now up to us to build the political momentum needed in order to ensure that a comprehensive agreement is met at the world summit on climate change in Bali, Indonesia.

There is an urgent need to ensure that developing nations, including SIDS, can continue to develop and prosper in an equitable manner. SIDS need to be equipped, both financially, technically and technologically, to adapt to global climate change and sea level rise without re-directing its limited resources from sustainable development.

Mr. President,

May I now turn briefly to address some additional issues which are of particular importance to Seychelles.

First of all, Seychelles recognizes that globalisation has the potential to advance human development throughout the world. But this is not automatic. Globalisation has also increased our vulnerability, insecurity and the possibility of marginalisation.

It is internationally recognized that trade can be an important source of financing for development. In this particular context, Seychelles strongly believes that more emphasis should be placed on the development dimension of SIDS in multilateral trade negotiations, in recognition of their specificities and structural handicaps. Moreover, in our view, ownership of development orientations by recipient countries is the precondition for the emergence of a true partnership in development cooperation.

Furthermore it is extremely important that the whole issue of development policies and co-operation be monitored closely within the international system. Decisions affecting development are being taken in different arenas, forums and agencies. Increasingly, there is the need to ensure coherence in policies and programmes.

The international system currently does not have an effective mechanism for conducting such an exercise. We reiterate our belief that one of the urgent tasks of the moment is to create a mechanism within the international architecture, which will focus on trade, finance, technology and development policy in an integrated manner.

Mr. President,

Seychelles remains determined in building its economy based on our assertion of the principle of responsibility for our own development. Our efforts at economic re-engineering have been very dynamic. The Seychelles' Strategy 2017 commits the Government of the Republic of Seychelles in doubling the GDP in the next ten years. The reforms being undertaken will not only ensure that our economy continues to grow but also facilitate the participation of every Seychellois in wealth creation.

This is the commitment of the Government of Seychelles. However, due to our inherent vulnerabilities, we need the support of the international community in guaranteeing that the considerable successes achieved so far in the economic and social sectors are not lost.

Mr. President,

I have spoken thus far on climate and development issues, both are closely related to other critical areas of the international agenda. One such area concerns peace and security. It is tragic and painful to witness the continued cycle of violence around the world. Peace accords, cease fire agreements do not, unfortunately mean cessation of hostilities.

We support the strong will shown by the United Nations, working alongside the African Union, in ensuring that peace and security are brought to the people in the Darfur region of the Sudan. Seychelles associates itself with all those calling and working for peace in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and elsewhere.

Against the backdrop of increased violence from war and terrorism, it is clear to us is that violence and the use of force cannot be the answer. We must embrace multilateralism and insist that international relations be guided by the rule of law as the basis for our collective security.

Mr. President,

The United Nations remains a significant partner and interlocutor of the modern development and progress of Seychelles. It is with complete faith, as a small island developing state, that we renew our trust in the principles of the Charter.

We cannot stop emphasizing the compelling urgency to alter the design and function of the Security Council, if it is to fulfil the mandate conferred by the Charter of 1945, but in the realities of the world today.

With regard to the General Assembly, what is needed is a resuscitation and use of the powers of the General Assembly and the assertion of its role as the principal organ of the United Nations. The Assembly is a forum of equals. Its pronouncements and policy decisions must carry the stamp of legitimacy as the voice of the international community. However, we must emphasize that irrespective of whatever institutional arrangements we may devise, in the final analysis, it is the commitment and political will among member states alone that can make the system work.

Monsieur le President,

Dans le contexte exigeant de la mondialisation les régions sont des interlocuteurs auxquels les organisations multilatérales, les bailleurs de fonds et les investisseurs

internationaux prêtent une attention de plus en plus soutenue. La région est aussi le meilleur rempart quand il s'agit de faire front dans la lutte contre le terrorisme, l'insécurité, le banditisme, les trafics, les pandémies ou bien encore pour apporter en temps réel une réponse efficace à des catastrophes. Une région est enfin pour les pays qui la composent l'espace légal le plus fort dans lequel ces pays peuvent s'appropriier les ressources naturelles et les matières premières qu'ils ont en partage.

Monsieur le Président,

C'est ainsi le but de la Commission de l'Océan Indien qui vise à défendre les intérêts des pays de l'Océan Indien dans tous ces domaines. Ce que la COI est et représente aujourd'hui, et la place qu'elle occupe dans le paysage des organisations de coopération régionale, elle le doit pour beaucoup aux Agences Spécialisées des Nations Unies. Je souhaite vivement que cet appui se renforce dans les mois qui viennent afin que la COI ait véritablement les moyens de ses ambitions.

Le statut d'observateur que la COI a obtenu à l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies le 4 décembre 2006, a permis à notre organisation régionale d'acquérir une légitimité supplémentaire pour travailler avec les agences spécialisées des Nations Unies. Nous nous réjouissons de ces nouvelles perspectives et de ces nouveaux sentiers de coopération.

Mr. President,

The future of generations to come rests not so much on the vigour of our debate and the declarations we make in this 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the General Assembly, but on the action we take.

Our people are demanding that collectively we emerge with a clear vision, that we display the courage and unrelenting commitment to build a world of peace, of justice and equity which we can inhabit together in true harmony.

Let us here resolve to build one world where every man, woman and child can realise the true purpose and enjoy the fulfilment of life.

I thank you.