

## **153rd IPU Assembly**

### **Statement by the Delegation of Seychelles**

#### **Theme: Enhancing Good Governance and Empowering Communities Through Inclusivity, Trust and Opportunities for All**

Honourable President of the Assembly, Honourable President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Distinguished Presiding Officers, Fellow Parliamentarians, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to address this Assembly here in Arusha, Tanzania, on behalf of Seychelles.

I wish to express our appreciation to the Parliament and people of the United Republic of Tanzania for their warm hospitality and for providing a platform where parliamentarians from across the world can exchange ideas, strengthen cooperation and seek solutions to our common challenges.

The theme before us speaks to a fundamental truth: **good governance is not measured by the promises governments make, but by the difference they make in the lives of their people.**

Trust in public institutions is built when citizens are heard, when decisions are transparent, when public resources are used responsibly, and when every individual has a fair opportunity to participate in national development.

For Seychelles, as a small island developing state, these principles are particularly important. Our size may be small, but our democratic aspirations, our responsibilities and our commitment to human dignity are no less significant than those of any other nation.

#### **Honourable Chairperson,**

Inclusivity must be more than a declaration in a policy document. It must be reflected in the way we govern.

Our communities must not simply be recipients of government decisions; they must be active participants in shaping them.

Whether we are discussing housing, education, healthcare, employment, infrastructure or environmental protection, the people affected by these decisions deserve to be consulted meaningfully.

Consultation cannot be reduced to a formality. It must be genuine, accessible and capable of influencing the final decision.

When communities are excluded, public confidence suffers. When they are heard and respected, trust has the opportunity to grow.

This is why local participation matters. National development must reach every district, every community and every household, including those whose voices are too often overlooked.

**Distinguished delegates,**

Parliaments have a central responsibility in making good governance a reality.

We are not merely institutions that enact legislation. We are representatives of the people, guardians of democratic accountability and a vital link between citizens and the state.

Our responsibility extends beyond supporting policies. It requires us to scrutinise government action, examine public expenditure, demand transparency and ensure that institutions operate within the law.

A strong parliament is not one that agrees with every decision of the executive. A strong parliament is one that can question, scrutinise and hold the executive accountable while respecting the constitutional order.

The separation of powers, judicial independence, freedom of expression and access to information are not obstacles to effective governance. They are essential safeguards against the abuse of authority.

Where institutions are independent, accountability is strengthened. Where accountability is strengthened, public trust has a firmer foundation.

We must therefore protect the role of parliament as an independent institution and ensure that oversight is exercised without fear, favour or undue interference.

**Honourable President,**

Trust is earned through integrity.

Citizens expect public officials to act in the public interest, to explain their decisions and to accept responsibility when things go wrong.

Transparency in public procurement, effective declarations of assets, responsible management of public funds and accessible information are important tools in strengthening confidence in our institutions.

But accountability must go beyond legislation on paper. The laws we adopt must be implemented fairly, consistently and without discrimination.

Public office is a responsibility, not a privilege to be exercised without scrutiny.

At the same time, we must recognise that trust is a two-way relationship. Institutions must demonstrate integrity, and citizens must have meaningful avenues to engage with them, raise concerns and contribute to solutions.

**Fellow Parliamentarians,**

Empowering communities also means ensuring that opportunities are not determined by a person's background, financial circumstances, gender, disability or geographical location.

A young person should not have to abandon their aspirations because opportunities are inaccessible. A person living with a disability should not face barriers that prevent full participation in society. Women must be able to participate equally in leadership and decision-making. Older persons deserve dignity, inclusion and appropriate support.

We must build societies in which development creates opportunities for all, rather than prosperity for a few.

For small island states such as Seychelles, this also means ensuring that economic growth is sustainable, that young people can access meaningful employment, and that vulnerable households are not left behind as our economies evolve.

Digital technology can help make public services more accessible and improve transparency. However, digital transformation must not create new forms of exclusion for those without reliable access, resources or digital skills.

Progress must be judged not only by how much our economies grow, but also by how many people are able to participate in and benefit from that growth.

**Honourable Chairperson,**

We cannot discuss good governance without acknowledging the challenges facing the world today.

Climate change, economic inequality, geopolitical tensions and rapid technological change place increasing pressure on governments and communities.

For small island developing states, climate change is not an abstract policy debate. It affects our coastlines, our infrastructure, our food security, our livelihoods and the future of our children.

Our communities must therefore be included in decisions about climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and sustainable development. International commitments must be matched by accessible financing and practical support.

Likewise, emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, offer opportunities to improve governance and public services, but they also raise important questions about privacy, fairness, transparency and accountability.

Parliaments must ensure that innovation serves the public interest and protects fundamental rights.

These challenges remind us that good governance is not simply about managing the present. It is about making responsible decisions for future generations.

**Distinguished delegates,**

The strength of democracy is not determined by the absence of disagreement. It is demonstrated by how we manage our differences.

Parliament must remain a place where diverse perspectives can be expressed, where opposing views are treated with respect, and where debate leads to informed decisions.

We must resist the temptation to treat criticism as hostility or disagreement as disloyalty. Constructive scrutiny is essential to democratic progress.

Our citizens do not expect us to agree on everything. They expect us to listen, to act responsibly and to deliver results.

As parliamentarians, we must be prepared to work across political, social and national differences whenever the interests of our people demand it.

The IPU provides a valuable platform for this cooperation. It reminds us that although our countries differ in size, history and circumstances, our people share a common desire for peace, dignity, justice and opportunity.

**Honourable President, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let this Assembly reaffirm our collective commitment to governance that listens, institutions that are accountable, communities that are empowered and opportunities that are genuinely accessible to all.

Let us ensure that inclusion is reflected in our decisions, that trust is earned through our actions, and that accountability remains at the heart of our parliamentary responsibilities.

Ultimately, the success of our work will not be measured by the number of resolutions we adopt or the declarations we make in international forums.

It will be measured by whether a young person finds an opportunity, whether a vulnerable family receives the support it needs, whether a citizen's voice is heard, and whether our institutions deserve the confidence placed in them.

For Seychelles, and for all nations represented here, our task is clear: to build institutions that serve the people, communities that can shape their own futures, and societies in which no one is denied the opportunity to contribute and prosper.

**Let us make good governance a lived experience, inclusivity a practical reality, trust a responsibility we earn, and opportunity a promise we deliver to every generation.**

I thank you.