

Inaugural speech of President James Michel as New President of Seychelles

Wednesday 14 April 2004 Victoria, State House.

Dear Seychellois brothers and sisters,

Thank you for sharing this occasion with me. This is an important moment for our country; for me, also a moving one. The oath that I have just taken is a firm commitment to serve all Seychellois citizens –without exception. I come before you with humility, but also with the determination to devote all my energy to our country. I am aware of the many challenges ahead; conscious of the responsibilities of my new office.

I accept my new responsibility without hesitation because I have confidence in the great potential of our country and its people. By harnessing this potential – and by working together – we can realise great things for Seychelles. I am aware of the problems that we face at the moment. But there is hope that these will be solved if we put our hearts and our heads together. I have the firm conviction that the Seychellois people can do it. Together, we will do it!

President René (former President), I am grateful to you for your support. I am thankful for your trust in me. Together with the Seychellois people, we express our gratitude for your devotion and hard work in the service of our nation during the past 27 years. Your political vision has transformed our nation. Today we stand as a proud people in the world. I join the Seychellois people in wishing you a happy, peaceful and prosperous retirement.

Dear Seychellois brothers and sisters,

I assume this mandate in the spirit of continuity. I will work to preserve our socioeconomic foundation. I will do all that is possible to steer our country to a new phase of development that will bring more progress. I will continue to defend the sacred principles of social justice and equal opportunity for all our citizens. I will continue to safeguard the rights of the elderly. I will continue to create the conditions that will foster the development of our youth. And I will do my best to enable all Seychellois to earn their living and progress in life through productive work. As the new President, I have my own vision, and I have my own style of government.

In my vision: I see unity, peace, harmony, stability and prosperity prevailing in Seychelles. I see unity and tolerance in our diversity, no matter what our religious and political affiliations. I see the promotion of human and spiritual values. Without human and spiritual values, freedom and democracy would have no meaning. Neither would material progress. I see the consolidation of our democracy, openness and accountability in government as well as in companies and organisations. I see a society where there is no place for corruption and favouritism. I see a Seychelles capable of ensuring its future; where the public sector serves the citizens well; where the private sector creates the country's economic wealth; where religious and other bodies promote social, moral and spiritual wellbeing; and where every citizen enjoys his or her rights and assumes his or her responsibilities; a Seychelles where all who are able are productive, contribute and benefit. I see Seychelles overcoming its economic difficulties and successfully integrating itself in the world economy, in a manner that ensures that its people continue

to enjoy a good standard of living. I see a people living in security and without fear. On this matter, I will ensure that law and order are respected and the rights of the citizen protected. On this I will be firm.

Dear Seychellois brothers and sisters,

I believe this is a vision we can all share. It is a vision we can realise. But this will not depend on me alone. It depends on each one of us, on all of us. We have to assume our responsibilities.

I will do my best to bring a new approach in the way decisions are made and implemented in our country. My government will be one that is dynamic, transparent and accountable. Through a working style based on dialogue and consultation, we will create the structures to allow us to bring our ideas together to solve our problems as quickly as possible.

In the coming weeks I will hold a series of meetings and consultations with representatives of different sectors of our society. This will enable my government to have a better understanding of the expectations of our people. It will allow us to work together – as a team – to strive for greater progress and prosperity. Of course, it remains my responsibility to listen, to appraise and consider. It is my responsibility to take decisions. And I will take decisions with the best interests of Seychelles and the Seychellois people in mind. Today I pledge that I will devote all my energy to the wellbeing of our nation. You are the witnesses, and also the judge. My actions will speak for me.

Dear Seychellois brothers and sisters,

expectations in our country are high. But we must be realistic. It is not possible to do everything overnight. There is a lot of work ahead.

There is much effort for us to make. But we Seychellois are not afraid to make sacrifices when we see the light ahead. We are willing to embrace our responsibilities. And we have to do it together. We have only one country, one motherland. Our country needs our collective effort, our talents and our goodwill. I therefore make this appeal: Let us work together to take our country forward! With God's blessing we will succeed! Long Live Seychelles!

Long live the Seychellois people!