

24 August, 2017



**Indian Council of World Affairs**

**Sapru House, Barakhamba Road**

**New Delhi**

## **Report**

on

**Talk**

by

**Hon. Patrick Pillay**

**Speaker of the National Assembly of Seychelles**

on

**“Cohabitation in Government – Importance of its Success”**

10 August 2017, Sapru House, New Delhi

While welcoming the esteemed guest Honourable Mr. Patrick Pillay, as well as the Parliamentary delegation from Seychelles **Ambassador Shri Nalin Surie, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs** said that, India's relations with Seychelles are extremely important and the subject chosen was one of great relevance not only in India but also in all political democracies. The DG, ICWA said that, cohabitation has become a norm in many countries, but there are also situations where many countries are going back to single party dominated legislatures.

**Mr. Patrick Pillay, Speaker of the National Assembly of Seychelles**, while delivering the talk said that the topic "Cohabitation in Government" is very important for Seychelles. He said, even though Seychelles is small in population but not small in terms of its EEZ and in its ambition to succeed as modern democracy. He elaborated briefly on colonial history of Seychelles. He said, Seychelles was colonised by the French and the British and got independence from Britain in June 1976. Seychelles celebrated 41<sup>st</sup> Independence Day recently and Indian military took part in military parade.

He explained that in the last December 2015 Presidential elections the ruling party the People's Party (PA) candidate the President of Seychelles Mr. James Mitchell could not win outright majority. It was a close call. In 2016, legislative Assembly elections were held. Both the Presidential and National Assembly elections are held every five years. For the first time in 40 years since independence, opposition parties under one umbrella won the majority of seats in National Assembly. The President had resigned due to loss in National Assembly elections. As per the Constitution the Vice-President took over as President. This clause has been modified in the Constitution and now the President cannot pass on his powers to the deputy with immediate effect. Now within ninety days a new President has to be elected.

While explaining about how the government works he said that certain aspect of the Constitution allows them to work through cohabitation, which is an agreement between the two entities. Executive head is the President who was elected by a popular vote. And in the National Assembly, majority are from the opposition. He said that, they are ready to work together because they want to serve the country and people. He also said that, legislative, judiciary and executive are working together and respect independence of each other and responsibility, to ensure the governance is clean, accountable and transparent. He said these are the three guiding principles on which cohabitation is based.

Mr. Patrick Pillay elaborated on the work of National Assembly. He said that, since the opposition is in majority in the house, it is instituting different investigations, and various committees such as select committee, ad hoc committee, standing committee. There are two important committees; one is the Truth and Reconciliation Committee chaired by the leader of the opposition. And the second one is Anti - Victimisation

Committee chaired by the Speaker of National Assembly. He said that the country was under one party rule from 1977-1993. The committees constituted will try and uncover some of the injustices of the past. The President as a result of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee instituted two Commissions to look into land confiscation and restitution. Second Commission is looking at victims of torture to ensure justice. The speaker said that, this will help to rectify the injustices of the past.

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*Report was prepared by Dr. Samatha Mallemati, RF, ICWA*