

## **Handover of Power, Speech by President James Alix Michel, State House, 16th October 2016**

Vice-President Faure,

President Mancham,

Chief Justice,

President of the Court of Appeal,

Speaker of the National Assembly,

Ministers,

Members of the National Assembly,

Your Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations,

Distinguished Guests,

Dear People of Seychelles,

Time flies. When you have devoted most of your life working for a better future for your people, you do not notice the passing of time. Time does not matter at all.

As the saying goes, "*A week is a long time in politics.*" As for me, I have spent over 2,700 weeks in politics! After all this time in politics, after all this time in various ministerial and vice-presidential functions, after 12 years at the head of the Republic of Seychelles, after all the time I have dedicated to serving the Seychellois people, I feel the time has come to hand over power. To hand over to someone younger than me, but who has been an important companion in my journey. Who will continue what I started. Who will be able to take Seychelles to a new phase of development. Who shares the same ideals and principles as I do. Who can pursue the struggle we started more than 50 years ago. I have no doubt that Mr Danny Faure will do a great job in his new function as leader of our country. A job which will reflect his interests in and love for our people. To build on what we have accomplished together.

I congratulate Mr Danny Faure warmly. He will become the new President in a few moments. Danny, take great care of this country. Continue doing your work with humility. Continue remaining connected with the people. I assure you of my full support and wish you all the best in the task ahead of you. I also ask the Seychellois people to give the new President of the Republic all their support. Let us acclaim loudly our future President!

Dear people of Seychelles,

Regrets? No, I have no regrets stepping down as President of the Republic. However, I wish the spirit of national unity could have been instilled in our people more, greater respect by the political leaders for one another and for state institutions. And that more of the causes of social ills could have been eliminated.

I am leaving office with a deep sense of mission accomplished, a sense that I have fulfilled my duties towards you and towards my country. With an open heart. I am leaving office with all my dignity and

honour intact. I have never betrayed my country. I have never betrayed my party. I have never betrayed my principles. I have worked for the benefit of all Seychellois. I am leaving office, aware that Seychelles and the Seychellois people are above all else.

Together we have been able to achieve a lot. I emphasise the word TOGETHER. Because we would not have reached where we are today if we had not worked together...

Who can refuse to accept the facts in front of us? The reality of transformation from a situation of "napa" (don't have) to availability of everything. The reality of accumulation of foreign exchange reserves, from 25 million dollars (US) to over 500 million dollars (US) today. The reality of debt repayment and debt reduction, from about 160% of GDP to just above 60% of GDP today, which is quite sustainable. The construction of over 8,000 housing units. The reality of Seychelles' progression to become a high-income country. The establishment of our own university which has, so far, produced more than 500 graduates, including a new generation of Young Leaders. The reality of creation of more employment opportunities, more small businesses, more medium enterprises. The reality of the strengthening of our democracy. The reality of Seychelles' high standing on the international stage ...

We achieved all of this -- and more -- in 12 years. Personally, I am proud of the role I played in the transformation of our country. Naturally, I could not do it alone. I had the support from Vice-President Belmont, Vice-President Faure and ministers. I received the support of the officials in my government. I received the support of my party. I had the support of the Seychellois. I received the support from foreign partners. And I got the support of my close collaborators.

To them all, I say thank you. Thank you for the contribution to my accomplishments for our country.

I would also like to sincerely thank my predecessors -- President Mancham and President Rene.

Dear people of Seychelles,

I am taking my retirement but I will remain active. Parti Lepep will always remain a great passion for me. The future of our party, its evolution, motivate me a lot. I still have a contribution to make. I will continue to do it for as long as I am able to play a constructive role in the future of our party, the party with a revolutionary legacy. The party which represents the aspirations, interests and dreams of the Seychellois. My work within the party will allow me to remain connected with the people. I will not abandon you!

Dear compatriots,

As I leave the post of President of the Republic, I have in mind a verse from the New Testament which I will keep in my heart and proudly proclaim: "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*".

I did it my way! Yes, I did it my way!

May God continue to bless us and our country.