

A Vision of the Future

S.P.U.P. POLICY STATEMENT

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SEYCHELLES PEOPLE'S UNITED PARTY- **POLICY STATEMENT**

Historical Introduction.

The Seychelles are a group of 92 islands stretching from just below the Equator to about 600 miles north of Madagascar. There are approximately 30 granitic islands, the rest being coralline. The principal and largest island of the group is Mahe where the capital Victoria is situated.

The islands were first colonized by the French who brought with them their African slaves. Slavery was an accepted fact and men, women and children were sold to the highest bidder all over the world. But about the same time, however, a relentless war was being waged against the principles of slavery and, after a bitter struggle, slavery was abolished. In its place came the system of master and servant. The arbitrary division of land, however, which had taken place before the abolition of slavery, was not affected. The former owners of slaves became the masters and the slaves their servants. The masters owned everything and the servants were compelled to work for the masters, compelled not by fear but by hunger.

Nature being what she is, however, the masters and servants intermixed and in the course of years the racial distinction that had hitherto been very pronounced became more and more diluted. Today very few can honestly claim to be either purely of European or purely African origin. Over a period of under a century the true 'Seychellois' was born.

The possibility of accumulating their wages, sometimes at the expense of proper meals and adequate clothing, gave the servants the chance to climb the social ladder by the acquisition of landed property. The mixing, originally very secretly and gradually more openly, of the two races also opened the way for some to acquire a higher standing in the social scale. To-day land is owned by all those who in one way or another, have succeeded in acquiring the necessary financial status which enable them to do this. There is, however, still a marked division between the landowners and the landless, and this division is visibly relative to their degree of European and African origin.

The tendency for those who own estates to grow richer has made itself felt very strongly. Land has become concentrated into the hands of fewer and fewer people. The small landowners have been and are gradually being pushed into the landless class. As the larger estate owners have been able to accumulate capital at a higher rate they have slowly absorbed the small estates and so the process has gone on.

In short our history has established a situation in which some, while maintaining intact almost all those unofficial and imponderable advantages conferred on them by nature have also grasped a positively privileged position vis-à-vis the rest of the people.

Why we became a British Colony

Mankind is now in one of the most critical stages of its history. This century has already known two World Wars and various other conflicts have followed the last World War with frightening regularity. The possibility of a third World War is remote and unthinkable and the real conflict today is rather ideological. On the one side there are the Western nations whose economics are more or less based on capitalism; on the other are those countries generally termed "Eastern" and whose economies rest firmly on socialism and communism. Between these two 'blocs' are the Afro-Asians, made up of those countries which have emerged from the depth and darkness of colonial oppression and who have found it preferable, in this world of bitter conflict sometimes verging on thermonuclear war, to steer a middle course.

We, however, have not yet broken the colonial chains that fetter us and it is perhaps necessary for all to know why we became a British Colony. Before we proceed to this we should always keep in mind that the welfare of the colonial peoples has been given much thought by Britain and that whatever she does she does for either of two reasons: (1) to gain a move in her game of chess in which we the colonials are merely pawns, (2) to prove to the World that she is still a mighty power which she is not without the colonies.

It is also important that we should understand generally what happened in the early days of colonialism. Colonialism is not old as a system and before then Africa was free from this scourge. Ironically it was established as a result of a conflict between the various colonial powers. Many bitter and bloody battles were fought between England, France, Portugal, Spain and other colony-seeking powers.

This struggle for the control of Africa and the East went on for many decades until the conquering nations settled down to enjoy their ill-begotten gains. Battles were fought in many seas and one of the most important was the Indian Ocean which the European had to cross before they reached India and the Far East. The sea-route to these areas through the Suez Canal did not exist in those days and all ships had to go round the Cape and across the Indian Ocean. The Seychelles, placed in the middle of this vast ocean, was thus considered to be of great strategic importance. It was because of this important strategic position that the British Government attempted relentlessly to capture our country by force until she finally obtained possession of the islands in an exchange with France at the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars.

Has Britain ever wondered what advantages our country gave her in her struggle for a vast empire? Has she ever worked out in figures the price of our contribution to all the wealth she obtained from the East? Or could she right now be thinking of using us once again in her vain attempt at recapturing her past glory? Will she always be the "Taker" and other countries the "Givers"? We think not ...

Our March to Socialism.

The last war between the Allied Forces on the one side and Germany and Japan on the other was perhaps the last of its kind. Another World War would cause such catastrophic destruction that we shudder to think of its possibility which nevertheless exists. Today, however, the real conflict is an ideological one between East and West and it is with full awareness of this 'cold water' that the policy of the Seychelles People's United Party is

one of non-alignment. The Party supports no one and condemns no one just for the sake of supporting or condemning; and reserves the legitimate right of agreeing with either the Western or the Eastern Countries. The people of Seychelles must have the freedom to choose their friends and not be directed by any foreign country.

Internally the Party will strive to create an equitable and progressive social order which will guarantee food, clothing and shelter and which will reflect a higher standard of living. This will involve the adoption of a socialist system in which the development of the individual forms the basis of the development of all. The talents and qualities of each individual must be directed towards the full development of the country, the energies of each bent towards the benefit of all. The Party aims at creating a system under which everyone contributes a fair share of effort according to his ability and reaps a fair amount of benefits created by the accumulated efforts of all. Within this frame of socialist welfare each individual will be able to develop fully because everyone will have an equal opportunity to do so. Man is a social animal and it is because of the natural tendency of everyone to live in a well-organised, well planned and equitable Society that the Party will strive to create that society, where our People will in common enjoy the necessities, if not luxuries, that human dignity demands – proper housing – adequate sanitation – sound education – good health and a decent standard of living.

Factually speaking this means that the real income of all types of workers must rise, that prices of goods must not over-leap wages, that house rentals must not be beyond the means of all groups and that educational and cultural facilities must be available to all the people.

[Economic and Social Planning](#)

Ability to pay is the passport to a good standard of living and at present most of the people of this country are unable to pay and are thereby precluded from a good life. Unless a sound economic and social programme is undertaken the people are doomed to perpetual exclusion from a rewarding and comfortable existence. The Party aims at creating a socialist pattern within the shortest possible time. All talk of economic and social reconstruction, however, are just empty words if we do not seriously address ourselves to the question of basic industrialization and agricultural revolution.

To implement our objective of basic economic reconstruction we must henceforth earmark a much larger proportion of our national revenue to the erection of basic industries and the multiplication of our agricultural products. A different approach to planning must be made. Hitherto our planning has been piecemeal and unpurposeful and not properly organized. What we need are not reports from various Government Departments but plans of action. There has been a great wastage of precious funds and of managerial and technical staff. Our planning must extend to all corners of the country, taking stock of all our human and national resources. We must make an inventory of our natural and agricultural heritage. Only thus can we achieve our goal of increased productivity. Everything we do must be related to our overall plan. Education, social welfare and health programmes cannot be devised in isolation but must be planned in relation to the foundation upon which we can erect an equitable and happy society. A Central Planning Organisation must be set up to correlate all planning and set up annual targets of achievements. These targets must embrace not only output and the absorption

of planned numbers of workers in various categories but must arrange for the training of skills and management. They will include estimated margins for industrial expansion. We are all aware of the shocking disregard for and misuse of public funds and property that presently obtains especially in such departments as Public Works. Our new economic and industrial policy will have to control severely our financial budgets.

Our Planning must aim at a two-fold purpose, to increase productivity and to accumulate capital for the expansion of industrialization. Under the new system development which originally must be initiated by grants or loans must be financed more and more from production and less from taxes and dues which makes heavy demands on those people least able to afford them. Only increased productivity can give surpluses for re-investment in further production and, in this way, bring the country to the stage when it will become self-supporting and able to face the future with confidence.

Our Goals

Whereas it must be realized that all planning must be based firmly on facts and figures systematically collected and rationally analysed, the Party wishes to put before the people its programme and plans for action as best as these can be formulated at this stage. It must be borne in mind that in doing this the Party is attempting to give a picture of the future which is somewhat blurred. Data which are essential in proper planning cannot be available to a Political Party which is struggling against the system now prevailing. Information available to Government is not disclosed to the public. In spite of that a serious attempt has been made to give as clear a picture as possible.

Primarily the general direction of all future planning must be towards:-

- (a) Transforming the Seychelles into a state in which people can live in harmony without fear or discrimination whether social, economic, religious or racial.
- (b) Establishing a democratically elected Government.
- (c) Maintaining strongly the rule of law and justice based on the recognition of human rights and respect for every individual's right to own property.
- (d) Upholding and respecting religious institutions without favour to any particular religion.
- (e) Respecting the equality and dignity of man which the Party believes must be inviolable.
- (f) Preserving the country's national and political unity.
- (g) Ensuring that the fullest use is made of the land by the re-organisation and improvement of the coconut industry, by fostering the production of more foodstuffs and by encouraging new agricultural development.
- (h) Initiating new, and supporting existing industries.
- (i) Promoting for all workers improved conditions and creating a social security system that will guarantee a decent standard of living to everyone.
- (j) Improving the system of education and making it available to all without discrimination.
- (k) Providing the people with free health and sanitation services.
- (l) Undertaking a vast programme of rebuilding so that proper houses can be made available to all.

The Party is fully aware that its goals will not be reached overnight, and that it will take several years before results will be obtained. It realizes that there will be many setbacks and tribulations. It appreciates the financial difficulties involved. It also accepts that the people must contribute towards the achievement of these high ideals by their hard work and spirit of sacrifice: but the Party believes that the people of this country will not hesitate to rise up to the occasion when their imagination is stirred towards this greater vision.

Constitutional Changes

SELF-GOVERNMENT NOW

The Party aims at achieving independence for our country within the shortest possible time. The British Government will be pressed hard both here and abroad to effect the necessary constitutional changes that will take the country to independence. The Party realizes that in view of the neglect of the British Administration in training competent administrative staff, the country will have to go through the stage of Self-Government for a short period but it feels that all necessary steps must be taken to lead the country peacefully to independence.

The Party will therefore PRESS for immediate SELF-GOVERNMENT to be followed as soon as possible by full INDEPENDENCE.

FUTURE CONSTITUTION

The future constitution of the country after achieving independence must be previously worked out in details. The Party aims at establishing a Government of the People, for the People and by the People and in order to establish this proposes that the country be divided into some twenty constituencies (the exact number to be worked out after detailed figures of population have been studied). Each constituency will then elect ONE representative, such election to be on the basis of one man, one vote. The elected body of some twenty representatives will constitute the House of representatives and will be the legislative council of the country. The elected members of the House of Representatives will elect the Prime Minister of the country who will then choose his ministers to form the Cabinet which will become the Executive Body. In this way the representatives of the people will have complete control of the affairs of the country.

After independence the Country will be forced with pressing and urgent problems for the solution of which the available national resources, both human and otherwise, must be mobilized. The situation will be analogous to a state of emergency and only a strong Central Government, deeply rooted in the people and embracing popular organizations such as Trade Unions and Cooperatives, will be able to implement harmoniously its programme. The Government must rest on the firm foundation of mass support and the leadership must consult continually with the people to ensure that its plans in all matters are understood and are in accordance with the popular will.

Education.

Literacy is the very foundation of our development. Until every Seychellois man and woman can read and write and can have a conception of the world in which he lives no progress can be made in achieving a higher standard of living. We need scientists, doctors, engineers and other qualified men and women in order to develop every available resource in the country. Until every Seychellois is literate we will be presuming too much in assuming that we can achieve a great deal. We must imbue into the hearts of every child in this country the necessity for education, and an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. We must develop our system of education to such an extent that no one will ever say as thousands of us are now saying "we could not afford it". Where education is concerned everybody must be able to afford for anybody. The nation as a whole must ensure that every young man and woman born on our soil receives the highest possible education that he can achieve or wish to achieve.

The principle that some sections of society have more right to education than others has no place in a country which aims at equality. The necessity to educate only a minority of the people does not exist in a country with a socialist background. Our aim therefore is to eliminate all elements that tend to create barriers to some children in their effort to achieve a sound education. The most important of these elements is the system of fee-paying schools, that is, to a large extent, current in our present educational system. The Party intends to undertake a radical revision of this system. On a long term basis it proposes to integrate all private schools into state schools. This policy, however, must necessarily be implemented in degrees. The primary aim is to ensure that every child receives at least a full, free and equal primary education. The education that a child receives at primary level forms the basis of his future intellectual development and our system of primary education must make every effort to give to our youngsters not only a course of instruction in the present "get on if you can" attitude, but a sound basic education into which is poured a sense of respect, responsibility, dignity and pride combined with a thorough grasp of the various subjects which are taught to him. Perhaps the most difficult task in this respect is to achieve an equal standard throughout our system of primary education. The primary education which is now available in the parishes is far below the standard of the fee-paying schools. Conscious of the danger of lowering the standard now prevailing at the fee-paying schools, the Party will strive to raise the standards of the other schools to the higher level. One answer to this lies, of course, in the provision of facilities for the training of qualified and efficient primary school teachers, and this raises the problem of recruiting teachers. Young men and women who have the ability, promise and aptitude should be given every possible encouragement to take up teaching as a profession and a national campaign will be launched, immediately to bring to the minds of young people the beauty and dignity of the teaching profession. We must make sure that our teachers are adequately rewarded and no effort should be spared in providing the best possible conditions of work to them.

It is generally accepted that the provision of a sound education system rests on the quality of our teachers. It is therefore part of our programme that a comprehensive Teacher Training Scheme should be established as soon as possible. This will enable promising young men and women to be given a basic training locally in all aspects of teaching. The training of teachers is a more delicate task than the training of other

professionals and must be undertaken by experts who, at first, must obviously be recruited from overseas until such time as some Seychellois will emerge endowed with the necessary ability and quality. After an initial period of training locally our most promising teachers must be given the chance to proceed overseas for further training.

The secondary education of our children will be fundamentally revised. All elements which tend to create social distinctions must be removed. This will partly be achieved by the changes in primary education but more still must be done. As soon as possible secondary education must be put on the same footing as primary education. Children must not be harassed by lack of financial means and must be given the opportunity to proceed with their secondary education in spite of their lack of financial means. It must, in fairness, be stated here that a lot has already been done in this respect but certainly not enough. The practice of streaming at the end of primary schools must be abolished and replaced by a system which gives the child an opportunity to achieve a high standard of education immaterial of his or her standard at the age of 11 or 12. It is basically for this reason that education must be made compulsory to the age of 14 and strong measures taken to enforce this.

The new system will obviously create a problem. Many more children will wish to receive a secondary education and our present number of school places will not be able to cope with the influx. New schools will have to be built or the existing ones vastly enlarged. Again something is already being done in this direction but our efforts must be stepped up to support a rapid change in the whole structure.

Finally all children who complete their secondary education will be given every encouragement and opportunity to undergo further training. It is our policy that the state should provide for the full training of our future citizens. There are to-day hundreds of Seychellois men and women who had the ability to be doctors, scientists, engineers, accountants, teachers, etc.. but who were prevented by lack of means from obtaining the necessary training. Such will not be the case in future. It is our hope that the children who will grow up in the 1970s will be given every possible opportunity in a country where everyone will be equal.

Social & Welfare Policy

INTRODUCTION

Opportunities for profitable adventure have no place in a country which aims at establishing a socialist base to its economy. The aim of the Party is to ensure that every individual is certain not only of his next meal but also of his subsistence for the rest of his life, and the subsistence of his dependants. This involves the introduction of a social security system which the Party pledges itself to work for. The full implementation of such a system will not be possible at first and will only come about gradually as productivity rises appreciably and as new measures are introduced for the Government to mobilize greater surpluses of capital. The social security system will therefore be achieved by a comprehensive and successful series of measures for protecting measures as is the case now, is caused by the stoppage of earnings through sickness, unemployment or old age: for making available to the public medical care as needed; and for subsidizing families bringing up young children. This is in full conformity with the Social Security (minimum standards) Convention 1952, adopted by the International Labour Conference of that year.

It will not be easy to bring about the necessary changes but the Party is resolved to meet the challenge.

OUR CHILDREN

It is the policy of the Party to build up a new generation of healthy individuals where under-nourishment will be unknown and a thing of the past. Our effort to achieve this ideal must be directed first and foremost to the mother or prospective mother. Thus the Party will strive to introduce legislation which will:

- (a) enable a female employee to abstain from work, during the six weeks preceding the expected date of the confinement.
- (b) oblige her to abstain from work during six weeks following her confinement.
- (c) Provide her with free attendance by a doctor or certified mid-wife.
- (d) Provide her out of public funds with a cash benefit sufficient for the full healthy maintenance of herself and her child during the said periods of abstention from work.
- (e) Prohibit her dismissal during the said periods or a subsequent period of sickness.
- (f) Enable her to suckle her baby twice a day during working hours.

In the case of mothers or prospective mothers who are not employed certain steps must be taken to ensure that she is properly fed and given medical care prior to her confinement and that proper maintenance is available for herself and her child after her

confinement. Furthermore a system of family allowances will gradually be introduced in an effort to ensure that each child is fed and looked after on a national 1 standard. Every mother must be given an allowance for each child that she bears and this must be the case whether the child is classed under the present system as legitimate or illegitimate. Our children cannot be held responsible for the circumstances of their birth and following our policy of equal opportunity each child born in this country must have available to him the means to proper nourishment. Wage rates do not normally take account of the size of the family to be supported, and it is commonplace that large families and poverty go hand in hand. Therefore public subsidies in kind or in cash or in both should be established in order to assure the healthy nurture of children. It is hoped that a future Government will not be led by experience to introduce any special check against parents who attempt to subsist on their children's allowances and that a stricter enforcement of the obligation on parents to look after their children will be sufficient. If, however, it is found necessary to take certain precautionary measures then the Government should not hesitate to do so, keeping in view that the purpose of family allowances is to assure the healthy nurture of all children.

It is obvious that in the course of the next decade or so the labour capacity of this country will be employed to the full and the potentiality of female labour tapped considerably. To deal with the problems that will arise when more mothers are working the policy of the Party is to establish gradually large nurseries where babies would be cared for and looked after by trained staff under constant medical and dental supervision.

OUR YOUTHS

Some of the problems relating to the youths of our country have been dealt with under separate sections (such as Education). The Party, however, wishes to record its disapproval of the lack of attention and direction shown by the Colonial Government towards the youths of this country. Some of our youngsters are even allowed to go begging about the streets. The Party will undertake to provide our young people with better opportunities for training and development. Non-discriminating Youths Clubs will be encouraged and will provide a social and educational meeting point for all youths.

OUR OLD PEOPLE

Old age is the kind of invalidity which supervenes inevitably if a person lives long enough. Men and women who have worked for their country and contributed to its development in one way or another deserve to be treated with reverence and gratitude and not be given hard push into their grave. The plight of our people is a scheme on our conscience and the Party considers that it is the duty of every able person to strain his resources in order to meet the costs of keeping our old people happy and contented. It is incumbent upon the country to plan comfort and happiness for the aged. Old age could be a blessing if our old people could have the help necessary to keep themselves. Most old people get no income from any source whatever and are often so poor that they spend their last few years begging and end their days in sorrow and misery. We must correct this at all costs, and the Party will work for the creation of a National Scheme whereby

every old person will be given a decent income sufficient to give him decent accommodation, food and clothing.

It is hoped that in due course comfortable homes will be built for the old. Pending such new quarters as may be made available, the Fiennes Institute should be modernized and re-equipped. Immediate steps must be taken to ensure that the old are occupied and happy. It is the aim of the Party that in due course the old will find a haven of rest in the homes of those they love and have lived for. This is a strong tradition with our people and it must be encouraged to the full.

SICKNESS BENEFIT

Many people are prevented from earning an income owing to some disease or injury which cannot be cured without stopping work. In such cases some means must be found to ensure that the sick person and his family are not left destitute. The Party will therefore work out a system under which sickness benefits will be paid to those who need them.

In considering what scheme should be implemented the Party will strive to create a sense of equality in conformity with its general principles.

SURVIVOR'S BENEFIT

Provisions must be made for the payment of certain allowances to widows presumed to be incapable of self-support and to children under school-leaving age. It is to be stressed that incapacity for self-support includes not only invalidity and old age but also responsibility for the care of a child.

HEALTH

The strength of a nation depends on the health of the people. Medical and health services are but a part of the cooperative effort to improve the well-being of the people and efforts to improve the general standard of health will have to be co-ordinated to the general of the people.

The Party's programme for health aims at introducing within ten years a National Health Service which will embrace all medical practitioners. The fullest mobilization of surgeons, doctors, dentists and nurses needed to maintain a fully competent scheme must be implemented. The Party holds the view that doctors and other medical staff, by virtue of their calling, have a special responsibility to the community and should be inspired to devotion to duty and not relate the quality of their work and their relationship to the public to material reward. On the other hand the Party believes that those who devote themselves to the care of the sick should never be harassed by material need.

Our health programme will include services relating to the control of all categories of disease carriers and will cover all aspects of health from prophylaxis to nutrition. An extensive network of health services will also embrace the general sanitation and nutritional services with special attention to the eradication of the present unhealthy sanitary arrangements. We believe that the British Government, in its administration of our country, has failed completely to provide us with a system of sanitation fit for human being. Immediate steps should be taken to remedy this. The Party

hopes that this matter will not be left pending until the people achieves control of their own country. If, however, this proves to be the case, the Party will undertake to introduce a proper system of drainage and sanitation as soon as possible.

As far as medical services are concerned it is the policy of the Party that under a national health service no consultation fees will be charged to the patient. A register of medical practitioners will be drawn up and every citizen will be entitled to register with a doctor of his own choice and the services of the doctor will be paid by the State. The patients of all medical practitioners will be treated free in every Government hospital. The class distinction now in existence will be abolished and the food and treatment dispensed will be the same for all patients. The hospital will be staffed by a permanent body of doctors, nurses, etc., but all medical practitioners will have the right to treat their own patients in hospital. In short the Party aims at creating a system in which there will be no discrimination and which will cater for everyone no matter what his financial position may be. No one should be left without medical attention through his impossibility to raise the necessary money to receive such attention. The Party aims at making our country the healthiest in the world and in this effort will take strict precautions to ensure that no new disease is brought into the country while we are combating those we are already inflicted with.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

The Party believes in the independence of the Judiciary and the equality of persons before the law. The Government should never interfere with or exert pressure on Judges or Magistrates in the exercise of their judicial functions.

The administration of justice, however, need to be radically revised. The appointment of officers from the Crown Law Office to part-time judicial functions is incompatible with the principle that justice must not only be done but must be seen to be done.

There also exists on our statute books a number of bad, outmoded and unnecessary laws.

THE POLICE

Every attempt must be made to establish and maintain a strong and efficient police force. Law and order must be maintained but no effort must be spared to instill in our policemen a sense of responsibility. There has been a tendency in the past for the police to be made tools of the capitalists and the colonialists. This will of course be stopped. The police must become the friend of the people and not their enemy.

THE CIVIL SERVICE

The colonial civil service is, in theory, a misnomer because the civil servants are, in effect, civil masters. Each civil servant must feel that he is a servant of the State. The civil servant must be selfless, devoted, conscientious, tolerant and, above all, a hard working officer. He must remember that he is working for a Government to which he

belongs and for the welfare and progress of his own people. In our present state of development we cannot tolerate the delays, indifference and waste to which the Civil Service is prone. There is a curious sense of inertness in many quarters. We must adopt a revolutionary attitude to our work and accommodate our minds to the need for constant adaptation.

The importance of establishing a correct attitude towards State property cannot be over-emphasised. State property belongs to all of us individually and collectively and civil servants should be foremost in protecting State property from unscrupulous persons who may wish to use it for their selfish ends. We must all work together in an effort to get the country to run smoothly and we must try to get every ounce of efficiency out of what we have.

The Party believes that high standards must be maintained in every section of the Civil Service and that corruption must be eradicated where it exists. Promotion should be based on merit and not be indiscriminate and pensioners should not be re-employed.

TRADE UNIONISM

The Party believes in the people's right to organise and bargain collectively. This right will continue to be protected by law and trade union in all its aspects will be encouraged.
