



# SEYCHELLES

COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION  
BENCHMARKS FOR DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATURES

FINAL REPORT



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# CPA BENCHMARKS SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT

## THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF SEYCHELLES



The National Assembly of Seychelles Coat of Arms

## Executive Summary

As underscored by the Speaker, the National Assembly of Seychelles is committed to promoting good governance, accountability, and institutional development. This commitment was evident throughout the Self-Assessment process and aligns with the Commonwealth's belief that strong, independent, and effective Legislatures are vital to democratic societies. The National Assembly should be commended for its openness to self-reflection and for its willingness to benchmark its practices against international democratic standards.

The CPA's Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures, grounded in the Commonwealth Charter, offer a robust framework for assessing the core functions and values of a democratic Legislature. In Seychelles, the assessment highlighted several areas of institutional strength—ranging from legislative productivity and procedural transparency to public outreach and international engagement. These reflect both the maturity of the Assembly and the dedication of its Members and staff to uphold high standards of public service.

The assessment found that the National Assembly has made considerable progress in strengthening democratic governance since the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1993. Notable developments include its strong legislative output, active engagement in international parliamentary networks, increasing digital outreach, and an evident commitment to institutional improvement. The Assembly also benefits from a stable legislative calendar, transparent voting practices, and increasing efforts to promote inclusion—particularly for underrepresented groups.

At the same time, the assessment identified several priority areas for reform. These include strengthening financial and administrative autonomy, enhancing parliamentary oversight and scrutiny, improving support to committees and Members, and modernising the ethical and accountability framework governing legislators. Opportunities also exist to deepen public engagement, institutionalise pre- and post-legislative scrutiny, and ensure adequate resourcing of the Opposition and parliamentary groups. In some areas, reforms are already underway, including proposals to establish a Parliamentary Service Commission and further enhance human resources and staff management systems.

The CPA team was impressed by the National Assembly's openness to self-reflection and its interest in continuous development. While many challenges identified are common across small jurisdictions, the National Assembly has demonstrated clear intent to address these systematically and in line with international good practice. The findings and recommendations of this report aim to support that process and encourage the National Assembly to prioritise reforms that further embed the principles of accountability, transparency, participation, and institutional resilience at the heart of Seychelles' democratic governance.

## Background

The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA<sup>1</sup>) is an international community of 180 Parliaments and Legislatures working together to deepen the Commonwealth's commitment to the highest standards of democratic governance. Founded in 1911, the CPA brings together Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff to identify benchmarks of good governance and implement the enduring values of the Commonwealth. It offers vast opportunity for both Parliamentarians and officials to collaborate on issues of mutual interest and to share best practice across many fields.

In 2018, the CPA undertook a consultation and review process that resulted in the adoption of updated Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures<sup>2</sup>. The Benchmarks provide a set of minimum standards for how a Parliament should be constituted and a comprehensive guide on how it should function. Together they play an important role in developing the effectiveness of parliamentary institutions across the 180 Parliaments and Legislatures of the CPA and contribute to effective implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals<sup>3</sup>.

In February 2025, the National Assembly of Seychelles became the 39th Commonwealth Legislature to use this framework to conduct a Self-Assessment against the Benchmarks. The Self-Assessment exercise was approved by the Speaker of the Assembly, Hon. Roger Mancienne, and organised by parliamentary staff. The CPA Secretariat appointed Jack Hardcastle (Deputy Head of Programmes – Bilateral Engagements, CPA Secretariat) and Fathimath Niusa (Secretary General, People's Majlis, Maldives) to undertake this Self-Assessment from 24-28 February.

During their time in Seychelles, Jack and Fathimath met Speaker Mancienne and other Members of the National Assembly. They also held discussions with parliamentary staff, including the Clerk of the National Assembly, Mrs. Tania Isaac, members of the Senior Management Team and committee support staff alongside additional meetings with a wide range of external stakeholders, including representatives of the Executive, Constitutional Appointees, Civil Society, and the Media.

1 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Homepage*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/>.

2 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/10jkk2nh/recommended-benchmarks-for-democratic-legislatures-updated-2018-final-online-version-single.pdf>.

3 In particular: Goal 16.6 (Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels) and Goal 16.7 (Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels).



These meetings took place in conjunction with a review of key documents, including the *Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles*<sup>4</sup> and the *Standing Orders of the National Assembly of Seychelles*<sup>5</sup>, as well as other related parliamentary materials. The Report below is a summary of the main findings of the Self-Assessment.

## Acknowledgements

The National Assembly of Seychelles proactively chose to assess itself against the CPA Benchmarks. As such, Hon. Speaker Roger Mancienne, the Clerk, and parliamentary staff should be commended for their willingness and enthusiasm to undertake this important exercise. Their commitment to transparency, self-reflection, and institutional strengthening was evident throughout the process and greatly facilitated the success of the Self-Assessment.

The CPA would also like to place on record its sincere appreciation to all stakeholders who participated in the Self-Assessment. In particular, we would like to thank the Clerk and the wider parliamentary team for helping coordinate a constructive programme of meetings and supporting the logistical arrangements throughout. The CPA team is especially grateful for the warm hospitality extended during the visit and acknowledges the contributions of all those who engaged with the process so openly and thoughtfully.

## Support and Follow-Up

Following the publication and consideration of the findings of this Report, and within financial constraints, the CPA is committed to supporting the National Assembly in further strengthening its democratic processes. As such, the CPA stands ready to enable the National Assembly to take forward these Recommendations – where requested and appropriate – through its Technical Assistance Programme<sup>6</sup> scheme and wider efforts linked to institutional parliamentary strengthening.

## Political, Economic, and Social Context

The Republic of Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean, comprising 115 islands, of which the largest and most populous are Mahé, Praslin, and La Digue. The country has a population of approximately 122,000, making it one of the smallest independent states in the world<sup>7</sup>. Despite its small size, Seychelles holds strategic significance due to its location along key maritime trade routes.

Seychelles was uninhabited until 1770 after it was colonised by France in 1756. Having been under British occupation since 1811, the islands were officially ceded to Britain in 1814 under the Treaty of Paris. Seychelles remained a British colony until it gained independence in 1976. The country initially operated as a one-party state under President France-Albert René, who led the nation from 1977 to 2004. In 1993, multiparty democracy was introduced, allowing for competitive elections and a more open political system. Since then, Seychelles has maintained political stability, with peaceful transitions of power and ongoing governance reforms<sup>8</sup>.

Seychelles is a unitary presidential republic, with a democratic system that has undergone significant evolution since gaining independence from the United Kingdom in 1976. The executive branch is headed by the President, who serves as both the Head of State and Government. The National Assembly, a unicameral legislature, exercises legislative authority and plays a key role in governance<sup>9</sup>. The judiciary operates independently, guided by the Constitution.

Since the introduction of multiparty democracy in 1993, Seychelles has seen competitive elections, with peaceful transfers of power. The most recent presidential and legislative elections were held in 2020, marking a historic shift in leadership when the opposition party, Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (LDS), won both the presidency and a majority in the National Assembly, ending decades of rule by the United Seychelles (formerly Parti Lepep)<sup>10</sup>. Political discourse in Seychelles is shaped by issues such as governance reforms, economic resilience, and social policies, with a strong emphasis on transparency and accountability.

Seychelles has a high-income economy, with one of the highest GDP per capita figures in Africa<sup>11</sup>. The economy is largely driven by tourism, fisheries, and offshore financial services. Tourism remains the primary economic pillar, contributing significantly

4 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

5 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

6 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *How is the CPA supporting Commonwealth Parliaments?* [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/what-we-do/institutional-parliamentary-strengthening/>.

7 National Bureau of Statistics Seychelles – *Population and Demographic Statistics*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nbs.gov.sc/downloads/population-statistics>.

8 Encyclopaedia Britannica – *Seychelles: Government and Society*. [online]. Available at: [www.britannica.com/place/Seychelles/Government-and-society](http://www.britannica.com/place/Seychelles/Government-and-society).

9 Encyclopaedia Britannica – *Seychelles: Government and Society*. [online]. Available at: [www.britannica.com/place/Seychelles/Government-and-society](http://www.britannica.com/place/Seychelles/Government-and-society).

10 Electoral Commission of Seychelles – *Past Presidential and National Assembly Elections*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.ecs.sc/>.

11 World Bank – *Seychelles Overview: Country Context*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/seychelles/overview>

to GDP and employment. The country's pristine beaches, diverse marine life, and luxury tourism offerings make it a leading destination in the Indian Ocean region.

Fisheries, particularly tuna exports, form the second-largest sector, providing revenue and employment opportunities. Seychelles has also positioned itself as a financial services hub, with an offshore banking sector that has attracted international business, albeit with increasing scrutiny regarding compliance with global anti-money laundering standards<sup>12</sup>.

Despite its economic strengths, Seychelles faces challenges due to its vulnerability to external shocks, such as fluctuations in tourism demand, climate change impacts, and global economic downturns. The government has undertaken economic diversification efforts and fiscal reforms to enhance resilience, including policies to encourage sustainable tourism, blue economy initiatives, and foreign investment in emerging sectors<sup>13</sup>.

Seychelles has high human development indicators, ranking among the top in Africa for education, healthcare, and quality of life<sup>14</sup>. Cultural diversity is a defining feature of Seychellois society, with influences from African, European, and Asian heritage. Creole is the most widely spoken language, alongside English and French, which are both official languages. The nation's social fabric is characterised by religious tolerance and communal harmony.

Key social challenges include income inequality, housing shortages, and substance abuse, which have prompted government intervention through social programmes and policy reforms. Additionally, Seychelles has been actively working to strengthen gender equality and youth empowerment through legislative measures and civil society engagement<sup>15</sup>.

Seychelles' political stability, economic growth, and strong social policies position it as a model among small island developing states. However, ongoing efforts are required to address economic diversification, environmental sustainability, and social welfare enhancements. The National Assembly plays a critical role in shaping policies that ensure long-term prosperity while upholding democratic values and governance standards<sup>16</sup>.



12 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) – *Jurisdictions under Increased Monitoring: Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/countries/seychelles.html>.

13 World Bank – *Seychelles Overview*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/seychelles/overview>.

14 United Nations Development Programme – *Human Development Reports: Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/SYC>.

15 UN Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platform – *Seychelles Voluntary National Review 2020*. [online]. Available at: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/seychelles>.

16 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Official Website*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/>.

# I. GENERAL

## OVERVIEW

### Elections

Seychelles' electoral framework is founded on strong constitutional principles and a longstanding commitment to democratic participation. The country has conducted regular, peaceful, and competitive elections for decades, with high levels of public engagement and trust in the process. Turnout in national elections remains notably high by global standards, with 89% of eligible voters participating in the 2020 general elections<sup>17</sup>. In a region where logistical and infrastructural challenges can significantly affect electoral delivery, Seychelles' performance reflects a commendable level of administrative coordination and public confidence.

A particularly significant milestone in Seychelles' democratic evolution was the peaceful transfer of power following the 2016 parliamentary elections—the first time since the multiparty state system that the opposition won a majority in the National Assembly<sup>18</sup>. This was followed by the 2020 presidential elections, which saw the opposition candidate win the presidency for the first time, reinforcing the credibility and maturity of Seychelles' electoral system and marking a major democratic transition in the country's political history.

The constitutional and legal provisions governing elections are clear, comprehensive, and largely align with international democratic norms. Article 24(1)(b)<sup>19</sup> of the Constitution guarantees all citizens aged eighteen and above the right to vote by secret ballot in elections conducted on the basis of universal and equal suffrage. This is consistently upheld in practice and contributes to a strong foundation of representative legitimacy.

The timing and regularity of elections are similarly well safeguarded. Article 79(1) of the Constitution mandates that general elections must be held every five years, a requirement further reinforced by supporting provisions under Articles 106, 110, and 111<sup>20</sup>. This provides predictability and stability in democratic renewal. Election planning is also timely and systematic, with the electoral calendar for the upcoming 2025 elections already agreed.

Elections are held over three days, with voting on Mahé followed by access to special stations on outer islands. While this helps to maximise inclusion across Seychelles' dispersed geography, it places a significant logistical and financial burden on the Electoral Commission. Costs associated with air travel to outer islands and limited infrastructure create challenges that require ongoing support and budgetary planning. Despite these challenges, Seychelles continues to deliver elections efficiently and securely.

Oversight is provided by an Electoral Commission whose independence is enshrined in the Constitution<sup>21</sup>. Articles 115 to 118 outline its mandate, which includes monitoring the conduct of elections, overseeing political broadcasting and campaign finance, and supervising the registration of political parties. Article 115(2) clearly states that the Commission shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person or authority<sup>22</sup>. In recent years, the Electoral Commission has undergone positive institutional development, including relocating to a new and improved premises to better support its operational needs. The Commission's internal capacity has grown, reflecting an increasing professionalisation of its functions. Its leadership has prioritised civic education and accessibility reforms, including the introduction of braille ballots and expanded use of digital platforms. This strengthening of the Electoral Commission mirrors a broader trend in Seychelles of consolidating and enhancing the capacity of constitutional and oversight bodies, including institutions such as the Law Commission and the Office of the Ombudsman.

Campaign finance is regulated by Articles 93 and 94 of the Elections Act<sup>23</sup>, which require candidates and political parties to account for all income and expenditure and submit certified reports to the Electoral Commission. While these provisions exist, they are only partially met in practice. Enforcement and compliance monitoring could be strengthened, as stakeholders noted inconsistencies in how financial disclosures are followed up. The Commission has indicated that it now has an independent auditor and is increasing its oversight capacity, which is a welcome step.

Some additional challenges were identified during the assessment and consultations:

- Public access to information on candidate financing and political party contributions remains limited. This affects transparency and accountability.
- Although the legal framework is strong, civic education on campaign finance, voter rights, and the role of the Electoral Commission is still evolving.

17 Electoral Commission of Seychelles – *Past Presidential and National Assembly Elections*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.ecs.sc/>.

18 Commonwealth Observer Group – *Seychelles National Assembly Elections, 8–10 September 2016: Final Report*. [online]. Available at: <https://thecommonwealth.org/sites/default/files/inline/COG%20Final%20Report%20Seychelles%202016.pdf>.

19 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

20 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

21 Electoral Commission of Seychelles – *Official Website*. [online]. Available at: [www.ecs.sc](http://www.ecs.sc).

22 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

23 Republic of Seychelles – *Elections Act (Cap 262)*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylit.org/akn/sc/act/1995/17/eng@2015-05-15>.



- The country's geographic realities make outreach and election delivery costly and logistically complex.

Despite these challenges, Seychelles stands out in the region for its electoral integrity. The independent functioning of its Electoral Commission, consistent voter participation, and adherence to constitutional timelines demonstrate a mature and credible electoral environment.

Several opportunities for enhancement emerged during consultations:

- Strengthen enforcement of campaign finance laws by increasing the Electoral Commission's capacity for monitoring, auditing, and public reporting.
- Expand civic education campaigns—particularly outside election periods—focusing on citizen engagement, media literacy, and political finance awareness.
- Formalise petition and citizen feedback mechanisms to allow more structured public participation and to reduce reliance on informal communications.
- Invest in infrastructure and digital systems to support inclusive, island-wide participation while improving internal transparency (e.g. publishing summaries of candidate expenses).

Seychelles' elections are a regional model in many respects. With reforms focused on improving transparency, expanding civic participation, and building on its institutional strengths, the country can continue to lead by example in democratic governance.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

**The National Assembly should support efforts to strengthen enforcement of campaign finance laws through greater monitoring and transparency, expand year-round civic education, and invest in digital tools and outreach to ensure inclusive access to elections across all islands.**

## Separation of Powers

The constitutional framework of Seychelles establishes a clear and formal separation of powers among the three branches of government: the Legislature, the Executive, and the Judiciary. This structure is explicitly set out in the Constitution which vests legislative authority in the National Assembly (Article 85), executive authority in the President (Article 66), and judicial authority in the Judiciary (Article 119)<sup>24</sup>.

Benchmark 1.3.3 is met in Seychelles. Members of the National Assembly are prohibited from serving concurrently as civil servants or judicial officers, thereby helping to safeguard the autonomy and integrity of the legislative branch. This clear institutional delineation is essential for upholding democratic principles and ensuring that each branch can fulfil its responsibilities without undue interference.

Beyond these formal provisions, the principle of separation of powers also plays out in the interactions between Parliament and other constitutional bodies. Seychelles has made notable strides in recent years in strengthening the independence and capacity of oversight and integrity institutions such as the Electoral Commission, the Law Commission<sup>25</sup>, and the Office of the Ombudsman<sup>26</sup>. The growth and consolidation of these institutions reflect a broader commitment to democratic governance and institutional accountability.

During consultations, the assessment team heard differing perspectives on the practical application of the separation of powers. Some stakeholders raised concerns about the perceived dominance of the Executive in setting the legislative agenda, and about limited opportunities for private Members' Bills to progress through Parliament.

Another challenge identified during consultations relates to Members elected through the proportional representation system. It was noted that political parties retain the ability to de-select and replace proportional Members during the life of the Parliament. While this practice is legally permissible, it raises concerns about the stability of parliamentary membership and the independence of individual legislators. Frequent turnover of Members can affect the continuity of committee work, disrupt constituency representation, and diminish the effectiveness of legislative scrutiny.

While there is a clear constitutional distinction between the roles of different branches, further reforms to operationalise legislative independence—such as enhancing the role of parliamentary committees and improving the scrutiny of government legislation—could help to reinforce these boundaries in practice. These themes, including legislative scrutiny, committee independence, and the relationship between Parliament and the Executive, will be explored in greater detail in subsequent sections of this report.

24 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

25 Republic of Seychelles – *Law Commission Act, 2022*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylit.org/akn/sc/act/2022/16>.

26 Commonwealth of Seychelles – *Office of the Ombudsman: Welcome*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.sc/>.



A number of practical recommendations could help deepen the application of separation of powers in Seychelles:

- Ensure greater institutional autonomy for Parliament by continuing to pursue reforms under the proposed Governance of the National Assembly Bill, particularly provisions relating to financial and administrative independence.
- Strengthen legislative scrutiny mechanisms, including through more systematic use of the Scrutiny of Bills Committee and enhanced research support.
- Expand opportunities for private Members' legislation, potentially with additional legal drafting support and structured guidance on bill preparation.

The constitutional framework for the separation of powers in Seychelles is sound, and recent institutional developments show progress in strengthening the independence of key institutions. With targeted reforms, the balance between branches of government can be made more effective and more visibly aligned with democratic best practice.

## Privileges and Immunity

The legal framework governing parliamentary privileges and immunities in Seychelles is strong and constitutionally embedded. These protections ensure that Members of the National Assembly can perform their legislative functions without external interference, promoting the independence and effectiveness of the Legislature.

The principle of parliamentary privilege is clearly articulated in Article 102 of the Constitution<sup>27</sup>. This provision guarantees freedom of speech and debate within the National Assembly and protects Members from legal liability for words spoken or acts performed in the course of parliamentary proceedings. Specifically, Article 102(1) provides that Members "shall not be subject to the jurisdiction of any court or to any proceedings whatsoever" for the exercise of their legislative functions. Further, Article 102(5) extends this protection to other persons acting under the authority of the Assembly.

These constitutional protections are further supported by the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities, and Powers) Act, 2011<sup>28</sup>. Section 3 of the Act affirms the Assembly's freedom of speech and explicitly states that this shall not be questioned in any court or place outside the Assembly. Section 4 of the Act provides additional protection for Members, preventing civil or criminal proceedings from being brought against them for anything said or submitted in the Assembly.

The immunity provided is not absolute and is guided by rules designed to protect the public interest and the integrity of judicial proceedings. The Standing Orders<sup>29</sup> of the National Assembly contain sub judice rules which restrict Members from referring to matters that are currently before the courts. Order 36(h) and Order 59(2) both prohibit questions or references to issues under judicial consideration, helping to preserve the separation of powers and prevent undue influence over judicial processes. The application of these rules was described as consistent during the assessment.

The Constitution<sup>30</sup> also recognises the importance of accountability by providing a mechanism for individuals to respond to adverse references made in the Assembly. Article 102(6) allows any aggrieved person who is not a Member of the Assembly to submit a written reply to the Speaker, which must be circulated to all Members and read at the next sitting. This provision ensures that parliamentary privilege is balanced with the rights of individuals to seek redress and maintain their reputation.

While the current framework is comprehensive, one area of uncertainty was raised in relation to the application of freedom of speech immunity to former Members of the National Assembly. The Assembly's own assessment suggested that no explicit provision exists for this protection. However, Section 4 of the Privileges, Immunities, and Powers Act<sup>31</sup> appears to extend protection for words spoken or matters introduced in the Assembly, without time-bound limitations, and in line with accepted practice elsewhere in the Commonwealth, it would be reasonable to interpret this as continuing to apply post-tenure. Clarification through formal guidance or rules could help codify this understanding and ensure legal certainty.

During consultations, the issue of Members' conduct in the Chamber was also raised, particularly in relation to respect and decorum. While not directly a matter of privilege, the use of freedom of speech must be tempered by respect for parliamentary standards and civil discourse. Strengthening internal enforcement mechanisms, including through updates to the Code of Conduct, could reinforce the appropriate use of speech protections.

In summary, the National Assembly of Seychelles operates under a well-established framework of privileges and immunities, supporting both the independence of the Legislature and the rights of individuals. There is scope to clarify protections for former Members and to continue reinforcing respectful conduct through internal procedures. As Seychelles continues to strengthen the rule of law and institutional resilience, these foundational safeguards will remain essential to a transparent, accountable, and democratic parliamentary system.

27 Republic of Seychelles – Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

28 Republic of Seychelles – National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, 2011. [online]. Available at: <https://seylli.org/akn/sc/act/2011/3/eng@2011-04-18>.

29 National Assembly of Seychelles – Standing Orders 2020. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

30 Republic of Seychelles – Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

31 Republic of Seychelles – National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, 2011. [online]. Available at: <https://seylli.org/akn/sc/act/2011/3/eng@2011-04-18>.

## Natural Justice

The principle of natural justice is fundamental to democratic legislatures. It ensures that individuals are treated fairly and that proceedings, particularly those involving allegations, sanctions, or disciplinary matters, are conducted in an impartial and transparent manner. In Seychelles, while some formal mechanisms exist, the assessment identified significant gaps in both the codification and consistent application of natural justice principles within the operations of the National Assembly.

Benchmark 1.8.1 of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks is not met. The National Assembly does not currently have specific laws or comprehensive rules that formally incorporate the principles of natural justice into its proceedings, especially in situations where serious allegations are made against named or identifiable individuals. Although some practices exist, they are inconsistent and lack formalisation. This absence of clear, codified protections can risk undermining the perceived fairness and integrity of parliamentary processes.

Benchmark 1.8.2 is partially met. The National Assembly, through the National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act<sup>32</sup>, has provisions relating to contempt of Parliament and the enforcement of discipline. However, application of natural justice protections during proceedings related to contempt or offences against the Legislature has not been consistent. Stakeholders noted concerns about perceptions of partisanship and inconsistencies in how disciplinary matters are handled.

Benchmark 1.8.3 is also only partially met. The Standing Orders provide mechanisms for discipline under Part XII (Orders 49–56)<sup>33</sup>, including the authority to impose punishments such as suspension. However, consultations revealed a perception, particularly among Opposition Members, that punishments are sometimes imposed inconsistently or without sufficient procedural safeguards. Instances were cited where Members were removed from the Chamber for the day following disruptions, raising questions about the fairness and proportionality of enforcement.

Further compounding these concerns, some Members reported a lack of clear processes for challenging rulings from the Speaker, particularly in disciplinary contexts. While the Speaker holds significant procedural authority under the Standing Orders, the absence of a formal appeals mechanism or review process for disciplinary decisions may contribute to perceptions of imbalance or partisanship.

The assessment also noted the broader context of a need to update and strengthen the National Assembly's Code of Conduct and procedural rules. A more robust ethical framework could support a clearer, more consistent application of natural justice principles.

Opportunities for improvement include codifying natural justice principles directly into the Standing Orders and related procedural rules, explicitly requiring fair hearing processes for any serious allegations made during proceedings. The Assembly could strengthen its disciplinary procedures to guarantee consistency, proportionality, and transparency, supported by clear timelines, standards of evidence, and rights of response. Establishing an internal appeals or review mechanism for disciplinary decisions would help reinforce procedural fairness and address perceptions of bias. A broader review and modernisation of the Code of Conduct and Ethics framework, embedding natural justice principles, would also be beneficial. Finally, providing targeted training for Members and staff on natural justice and disciplinary fairness would enhance institutional understanding and application of these critical standards.

## Remuneration and Benefits

A transparent and fair system of remuneration for Members of Parliament is an essential element of any democratic legislature. Adequate compensation enables Members to prioritise their parliamentary duties, strengthens independence from undue influence, and supports a diverse and representative legislature. Seychelles has a legislated framework in place to provide for Members' salaries and benefits, but the current arrangements fall short of international best practice in terms of independence and transparency.

Benchmark 1.5.1 of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks is met. The National Assembly Members' Emoluments Act<sup>34</sup> provides the legal basis for the salaries, pensions, and gratuities of Members. The system is formalised and consistently applied, and there is no indication of partisan allocation of salaries or benefits. Members are also entitled to reimbursements for expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties, and these are administered according to established rules.

However, Seychelles does not currently meet Benchmark 1.5.2, which calls for an independent mechanism to determine the remuneration and benefits of legislators. At present, decisions on remuneration are made through the executive, specifically the Ministry of Finance, National Planning and Trade. The absence of an independent remuneration body introduces the potential for perceptions of politicisation and does not align with practices in many other Commonwealth jurisdictions<sup>35</sup>, where arms-length commissions or parliamentary services boards are used to make such determinations transparently and objectively.

32 Republic of Seychelles – *National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, 2011*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylil.org/akn/sc/act/2011/3/eng@2011-04-18>.

33 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

34 Republic of Seychelles – *National Assembly Members' Emoluments Act (Act 4 of 1993, consolidated to 30 June 2012)*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylil.org/akn/sc/act/1993/4/eng@2012-06-30>. See sections on salary, gratuity, and pension provisions.

35 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Commonwealth Parliamentarians' Pay and Remuneration Report 2020–2021*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/1z3fwmeu/cpa-members-remuneration-report-2020-2021-final.pdf>.

During the assessment consultations, concerns were also raised by civil society stakeholders about the level of pensions and benefits available to Members, particularly when compared to other public servants. This perception of disparity has occasionally fuelled public debate and underscores the importance of ensuring both fairness and public trust in the system. The current model lacks a mechanism for periodic review, which could help ensure that adjustments are made in a structured and accountable way, in line with economic conditions and broader public sector remuneration.

In addition, there is limited public information available regarding the full scope of benefits and allowances provided to Members. Improving transparency in this area would not only strengthen accountability but also help build public confidence in the integrity of parliamentary operations.

To align with international good practice and enhance public trust, the following improvements could be considered:

- **Establish an independent remuneration commission or similar mechanism** to determine Members' salaries, allowances, and benefits based on clear and objective criteria.
- **Introduce a regular review cycle** to reassess remuneration packages in line with economic indicators and public sector norms.
- **Publish detailed information on Members' salaries and allowances** to support transparency and public understanding.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should pass legislation establishing an independent Remuneration Authority that regulates salaries and allowances for Members of the National Assembly, with adequate mechanisms for monitoring and publishing relevant financial disclosures relating to these.**



The CPA team (Fathimath Niusha and Jack Hardcastle) meeting with the Clerk of the National Assembly (Mrs. Tania Isaac).



## Professional Development

Providing structured support and training for newly elected Members is essential to enable them to fulfil their parliamentary roles effectively. Legislators must quickly acquire knowledge of legislative procedures, parliamentary ethics, and constituency responsibilities. Seychelles has taken important steps to meet this need, although consultations during the assessment highlighted opportunities for strengthening professional development programmes further.

Benchmark 1.6.1 of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks is formally met. The National Assembly organises an induction programme for new Members following elections. This orientation is intended to familiarise incoming Members with the Legislature's rules of procedure, their constitutional roles, and the internal processes that support legislative functions.

Benchmark 1.6.2 is also met. The Legislature has policies and procedures that aim to assist Members in developing their skills and knowledge throughout their term. However, as with the induction programme, consultations indicated that access to structured ongoing training is limited and would benefit from greater formalisation and consistency.

Feedback gathered during consultations suggests that the induction process has not always been systematic or consistently applied across parliamentary terms. Some stakeholders noted that while an orientation programme is typically organised after general elections, there have been instances where newly elected Members joining mid-term did not benefit from a comprehensive induction. In addition, Members themselves expressed the need for ongoing professional development, indicating that the initial training often does not extend into a structured programme throughout the legislative term.

The absence of a continuous learning approach means that Members may not always stay fully informed about procedural developments, emerging policy challenges, or best practices in legislative scrutiny and oversight. This is particularly significant in small jurisdictions such as Seychelles, where parliamentary capacity is limited and Members may be required to play multiple roles across committees and constituencies.

The broader context of limited internal capacity also affects Member support. The Research Division consists of only two officers, often facing tight deadlines and high demand for briefings on legislation, motions, and committee activities. This limited research support can restrict Members' ability to fully scrutinise legislation or engage in informed debate. Similarly, while procedural and legal advice is available, the National Assembly's overall staffing constraints mean that Members often rely heavily on their political party caucuses for procedural guidance and legislative strategy.

This reliance on caucuses has both strengths and weaknesses. Political caucuses can provide valuable support, helping to coordinate parliamentary business and maintain discipline. However, over-reliance on party structures can sometimes limit independent thinking and diminish the Assembly's collective capacity to scrutinise the Executive. Strengthening independent parliamentary support services would help to balance this dynamic.

Seychelles' geographic isolation further compounds the challenges associated with professional development. While the National Assembly engages with regional and international parliamentary networks such as the CPA<sup>36</sup> and others, opportunities for broader peer exchange and capacity building are often limited by distance and resourcing. Exploring enhanced collaboration with larger parliaments in the region—particularly those with established professional development units—could help bridge this gap and offer Members access to additional training and mentoring resources.

Stakeholders also noted that greater investment in specialised training, including on legislative drafting, budget scrutiny, public engagement, and international obligations, could strengthen the effectiveness of the National Assembly as a whole. Peer-to-peer learning, regional workshops, and participation in international parliamentary networks were identified as valuable but underutilised opportunities.

To enhance professional development for Members, the National Assembly could consider the following measures:

- **Formalise a comprehensive induction programme** to be delivered after each election and for any new Member taking office mid-term<sup>37</sup>.
- **Develop an annual training calendar** offering workshops and seminars on legislative, budgetary, and governance topics.
- **Encourage participation in regional and international parliamentary networks** to promote peer learning and comparative understanding.
- **Explore partnerships with larger regional parliaments** to access external training and professional development opportunities.
- **Introduce mentoring initiatives** pairing experienced Members with new Members to support knowledge transfer and institutional memory.

36 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Seychelles Branch*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/directory/seychelles/>.

37 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Professional Development*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/what-we-do/professional-development/>. These seminars—delivered to newly elected and returning parliamentarians—provide structured orientation covering roles, procedures, committee work, ethics, and media engagement. They serve as a practical model for formalised induction programmes in Member legislatures

- **Expand the capacity of research and procedural support services** to provide more timely and in-depth assistance to all Members.

Seychelles has a good foundation in place through its existing induction activities and emerging professional development efforts. With structured enhancements and a more consistent approach to continuous learning, the National Assembly can ensure that all Members are fully equipped to discharge their responsibilities and contribute to an increasingly effective and professional Legislature.

### RECOMMENDATION 3

**The National Assembly should formalise a comprehensive and consistent professional development framework for Members by:**

- **Establishing a standardised induction programme for all newly elected and mid-term Members; and**
- **Developing a structured annual training calendar focused on legislative functions, oversight, and governance.**

### Infrastructure

Adequate physical infrastructure is fundamental to the effective functioning of a legislature. It enables Members and staff to carry out their responsibilities efficiently, supports transparency and public engagement, and underpins the independence of the institution. In Seychelles, while the National Assembly benefits from a dedicated parliamentary building and basic infrastructure, significant limitations were identified during the assessment.

Benchmark 1.9.1 of the CPA Recommended Benchmarks is only partially met. The Legislature has a permanent building and provides core facilities such as office space for caucuses, committee rooms, a library, and ICT infrastructure. However, the available space is insufficient to meet the needs of the growing parliamentary service and evolving parliamentary practices.

Consultations revealed that office and committee space is extremely limited. Most Members do not have exclusive offices, and staff often share facilities that were not originally designed for parliamentary purposes. Committees have restricted access to meeting rooms, leading to scheduling pressures and an inability to conduct multiple activities simultaneously. This is particularly problematic as the Assembly seeks to strengthen its committee system and expand public engagement activities.

The building itself, constructed in 2009, was not originally designed to accommodate a fully functioning modern legislature. Planned expansions, such as additional wings, were never completed. Architectural plans exist but have been delayed, with the Ministry of Finance indicating that budgetary provision for an extension may not be available until 2027. Until then, the Assembly remains constrained in its ability to grow its services or offer adequate facilities for independent Members, cross-party groups, or expanded committee work.

Specific challenges highlighted include:

- Lack of sufficient committee rooms, leading to competition for space and difficulties in scheduling meetings.
- Overcrowded offices for Members and staff, with some rooms partitioned to accommodate multiple users.
- Limitations on hosting public events, hearings, or educational activities within the Assembly due to space constraints.
- Storage issues impacting operational efficiency, including for IT services and archival materials.

Despite these challenges, the Assembly has taken some innovative steps to maximise the use of available space and to continue functioning effectively. Staff and Members have adapted flexibly to difficult working conditions, and there is a strong commitment to making the best use of limited resources.

However, to fully support the institutional strengthening of the National Assembly, substantial investment in physical infrastructure will be essential. Opportunities for improvement include:

- **Accelerate plans for the extension of the parliamentary building**, including dedicated spaces for committees, cross-party groups, and public engagement activities.
- **Incorporate accessibility improvements** to ensure full access for Members and visitors with disabilities, building on the Assembly's recent initiatives in this area.
- **Expand dedicated office space for Members** to enhance their ability to carry out legislative work.
- **Enhance facilities for support services**, including IT, research, and library services, to enable professional development and institutional memory.

The physical infrastructure of the National Assembly currently reflects the resource constraints faced by a small island developing state. However, the commitment to institutional growth and strengthening is evident. With strategic investment and forward planning, the Assembly will be better equipped to meet the demands of a modern, dynamic, and accessible legislature.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

The National Assembly of Seychelles should prioritise investment in the expansion and modernisation of its parliamentary infrastructure, including the development of additional committee rooms, dedicated office space for Members, and accessible facilities to support effective legislative work and public engagement.



Front view of the National Assembly



## II. ORGANISATION OF THE LEGISLATURE

### Rules of Procedure

Clear, consistent, and accessible rules of procedure are essential for the orderly, transparent, and effective functioning of any legislature. The Standing Orders of the National Assembly of Seychelles provide the formal framework that regulates parliamentary proceedings, Member conduct, and legislative processes. Overall, the National Assembly has a strong foundation of procedural rules, although some areas present opportunities for refinement and strengthening.

The Standing Orders reflect and support the actual practice and culture of the institution, consistent with Benchmark 2.1.1. They provide detailed guidance on the functioning of the Assembly and its committees, the conduct of debates, and the responsibilities of Members. Regular reference to the Standing Orders by the Speaker and Members was observed, confirming their relevance and centrality to the parliamentary culture<sup>38</sup>.

Amendments to the Standing Orders are the sole prerogative of the National Assembly itself, as required by Benchmark 2.1.2. Proposals for changes are first considered by the Standing Orders Committee, a standing sessional committee of the Assembly, which reports to the full House. Order 49 of the Standing Orders<sup>39</sup> outlines the procedure for proposing amendments. This framework upholds parliamentary sovereignty over its own procedures. While reviews of the Standing Orders do take place—typically following the collation of issues during the parliamentary term and reviewed after general elections—the process is largely informal and tends to be reactive.

Benchmark 2.1.3, which calls for regular review of procedures, is therefore only partially met. Although Order 49 provides a clear mechanism for amendment, reviews generally occur in response to specific incidents or challenges rather than as part of a planned, proactive review cycle. Stakeholders, including the Deputy Speaker, recognised the value of the current approach but also indicated that a more structured and regular process could help ensure that parliamentary procedures remain relevant, consistent, and responsive to evolving needs.

Regarding the process of amending the rules, Benchmark 2.1.4 is only partially met. Amendments require a two-thirds majority, ensuring a relatively high threshold for procedural changes, but not unanimity. In practice, while broad consensus is often sought, changes can be made without near-unanimous support. Although this reflects the Assembly's majoritarian nature, it could risk undermining cross-party ownership of critical procedural norms if not carefully managed.

The Standing Orders allow Members to raise genuine and succinct points of order, in line with Benchmark 2.1.5. Order 49(1) and (2)<sup>40</sup> set out clear procedures for raising points of order, and Members are permitted to interrupt debate where necessary to draw attention to breaches of rules. While the rules are clear, feedback during consultations indicated that in practice, Members' familiarity with procedural rules varies. Some concerns were raised about points of order being occasionally misused for political purposes rather than strictly procedural issues, suggesting a need for ongoing training.

The National Assembly's rules, procedures, and practices are broadly accessible, fulfilling Benchmark 2.1.6. The Standing Orders are publicly available on the Assembly's website<sup>41</sup>, supporting transparency and enabling public understanding of parliamentary processes.

In summary, the National Assembly has well-established rules of procedure that support parliamentary practice and uphold core democratic principles. To build on this foundation, the following enhancements could be considered:

- Introduce a regular schedule for comprehensive review of the Standing Orders, such as every parliamentary term or mid-term.
- Encourage greater Member training on procedural rules to promote more effective and appropriate use of procedural mechanisms like points of order.
- Foster a culture of broad consensus-building around significant procedural reforms to ensure enduring and cross-party ownership of the Assembly's rules.

The National Assembly's procedural framework provides a sound basis for its effective operation, and with targeted refinements, can further support the Assembly's evolution as a modern, responsive, and inclusive legislature.

38 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

39 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

40 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

41 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

## RECOMMENDATION 5

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should introduce a regular review cycle for the Standing Orders, strengthen Member training on procedural rules, and promote broad consensus around major procedural reforms to ensure clarity, consistency, and cross-party ownership of parliamentary practices.**

### Presiding Officers

Presiding Officers play a central role in shaping the tone, order, and inclusiveness of parliamentary proceedings. Their authority is essential to maintaining a respectful and functional legislative environment, and their impartiality is fundamental to building trust in the institution.

In the National Assembly of Seychelles, the roles and powers of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker are clearly defined in both the Constitution and the Standing Orders. These frameworks outline procedures for election (Article 83(1) of the Constitution and Standing Order 4)<sup>42</sup>, responsibilities for maintaining order (Standing Orders 8 and 110), and powers of discipline (Standing Order 51)<sup>43</sup>. These provisions collectively ensure continuity, procedural clarity, and flexibility based on precedent.

In practice, Presiding Officers regularly exercise these functions to facilitate debate and guide proceedings. The rules provide them with appropriate authority to maintain order and resolve procedural issues, and they are routinely referenced by both Members and the Chair to uphold parliamentary decorum.

Nonetheless, given the small size of the legislature and the close-knit nature of political relationships, the exercise of procedural discretion is often subject to high levels of scrutiny. In this context, reinforcing perceptions of fairness and clarity becomes particularly important. Practices such as clearly explained rulings, engagement across party lines, and participation in regional peer learning initiatives can help strengthen procedural confidence and support an inclusive parliamentary culture.

The institutional foundations for Presiding Officers in Seychelles are strong. With continued emphasis on transparent communication and consistent application of rules, the role of Presiding Officers will remain central to the effective functioning and credibility of the Assembly.

### Convening Sessions and Setting the Agenda

The National Assembly of Seychelles benefits from a stable and structured sitting calendar, which is developed annually by the Office of the Clerk and finalised through consultation with the Assembly Business Committee. The calendar is publicly available, supporting transparency and allowing Members and stakeholders to anticipate the legislative programme<sup>44</sup>.

In addition to regular sessions, the National Assembly has clear constitutional and procedural provisions for convening extraordinary sittings. The Constitution enables the President to summon special sessions in specific circumstances, such as a state of emergency (Articles 41 and 42), and allows the Assembly itself to extend its sessions under Article 106(3)<sup>45</sup>. These provisions ensure that the Legislature retains its ability to function and uphold oversight responsibilities during exceptional situations.

However, while the procedural framework for convening sessions is well-established, the ability of individual Members to influence the legislative agenda remains limited. At present, no formal time is allocated for non-Government business. This can inhibit broader participation in legislative planning and limit the visibility of issues raised by Opposition or independent Members.

Ensuring time is set aside for non-Government business would enhance parliamentary inclusivity and better reflect the diversity of representation in the House. It would also strengthen the National Assembly's role as a forum for national debate beyond the Executive's immediate priorities.

### Debate and Voting

The National Assembly of Seychelles operates under a clear framework for structuring debates and managing the flow of parliamentary business. The Assembly Business Committee, chaired by the Speaker, determines the content and sequence of the Order Paper, with input from the Deputy Speaker, the Clerk, the Deputy Clerk, the Leader of Government Business, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief Whips of the parliamentary political party groups, as outlined in Standing Orders 13(5), 25, and 43

42 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

43 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

44 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Sittings*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/sittings>. The site provides a regularly updated calendar of sittings showing dates and durations for each session during the year.

45 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

and 92<sup>46</sup>. This framework supports orderly proceedings and ensures that Members are given the opportunity to debate legislation and motions prior to a vote (Benchmarks 2.5.1 and 2.5.2).

While the procedural rules provide adequate scope for debate, Members highlighted several practical constraints that limit their ability to prepare effectively. This included, receiving insufficient notice to review documents which can affect preparation time—particularly for complex or technical matters. This is owed to limitations in synergies between the Executive and the Legislature for legislative proposals. The limited capacity of the Legal and Research Department compounds this issue, especially in regard to tailored assistance for backbench and opposition Members, who often depend on party caucuses for support.



Hon. Gervais Henrie, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

Although debates and votes in the chamber are open to the public and livestreamed, there is currently no formal procedure for recorded votes, and voting records are not routinely published (Benchmark 2.6.2). This limits transparency and makes it difficult for constituents to monitor how their representatives have voted on key issues.

In addition, as in many Commonwealth legislatures, the majority of business considered by the Assembly originates from the Executive. While this is common practice, providing dedicated opportunities for non-executive Members to propose business can help uphold the principle of minority rights in a democratic legislature. Currently, there is no provision in the Standing Orders for set 'Opposition Days' or non-Government business slots<sup>47</sup>. Introducing such provisions would enhance inclusivity and ensure that matters raised by all Members—not just those in Government—are considered in plenary sittings.

To improve the quality of debate, strengthen transparency, and support greater parliamentary inclusiveness, the following areas could be considered:

- Introduce a formal procedure for recorded votes and publish voting records routinely;
- Improve the advance circulation and scheduling of the Order Paper to support timely preparation;
- Expand access to research and technical support to strengthen Members' contributions to debate;
- Consider dedicating specific days for non-Government business, including motions and debate topics raised by opposition or independent Members, to support wider participation and uphold the democratic principle of minority rights.

46 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

47 UK Parliament – *Opposition Days*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/glossary/opposition-days/>. Under Standing Order 14, 20 opposition days are allocated per session, during which non-Government parties set the agenda.



## RECOMMENDATION 6

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should introduce a formal mechanism for recorded votes and consider allocating dedicated time for non-Government business to enhance transparency, strengthen public accountability, and ensure that all Members have opportunities to shape the legislative agenda.**

### Petitions

At present, the National Assembly of Seychelles does not have a formal system in place for the meaningful consideration of petitions from the public (Benchmark 2.7.1). There are no standing procedures, laws, or designated mechanisms that allow citizens to submit petitions for parliamentary review or debate. As a result, there is limited scope for the public to channel collective concerns through the legislature in a structured or transparent manner.

During the assessment, Members noted that citizen concerns are often conveyed through informal and personal channels—such as WhatsApp messages, text, or Facebook communications with individual Members. While this reflects the close-knit nature of Seychellois society and the accessibility of parliamentarians to their constituents, it also creates challenges in terms of transparency, documentation, and consistency. There were also concerns raised about verifying the accuracy of claims made under such informal systems, especially when raised during parliamentary proceedings.

Developing a formal petitions mechanism would help strengthen public participation in the work of the National Assembly and ensure that citizen voices are more systematically considered. Such a process—whether through a dedicated Petitions Committee, amendments to Standing Orders, or online submission portals—could enhance transparency and public trust and provide a more equitable route for civic engagement with the legislative process<sup>48</sup>.

## RECOMMENDATION 7

**The National Assembly should establish a formal procedure for receiving and considering public petitions to ensure citizen concerns are considered transparently and systematically.**

## COMMITTEES

### Organisation

Committees play a critical role in the scrutiny and functioning of the National Assembly, and the framework for their establishment and organisation is largely in place. The National Assembly has both sessional and select committees with their basis well grounded in the Constitution and Standing Orders. Article 104(1) of the Constitution<sup>49</sup> provides for the establishment of standing or other committees, while the Standing Orders (particularly Part XVIII)<sup>50</sup> offer detailed provisions on committee types, membership, and procedures. Benchmark 3.1.1 is therefore met.

The assignment of Members to committees is required to reflect, as far as practicable, the composition of political parties and independent Members within the Assembly. This is outlined in both Article 104(2) of the Constitution<sup>51</sup> and Standing Order 90(3)<sup>52</sup>, fulfilling Benchmark 3.1.2. While party representation is formally considered, the process for assigning Members is largely led by party caucuses and occurs at the beginning of the parliamentary term. It was noted during the assessment that although Members can indicate their preferences, there are no formal gender considerations in the composition of committees, often resulting in an underrepresentation of women in more high-profile or technical committees. This may merit reflection going forward as part of broader institutional strengthening efforts.

Committees are supported administratively by secretaries and clerks assigned to each committee. These officers are typically responsible for scheduling meetings, preparing agendas, drafting reports, and ensuring the documentation of proceedings. While

48 New Zealand Parliament – *Petitions*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/scl/petitions/>. The Petitions Committee is a specialist select committee appointed to oversee the petitions process, accepting petitions online, coordinating their referral to Ministers or other committees, and reporting outcomes to the House—providing a transparent, accessible model for public participation.

49 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

50 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

51 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

52 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

there are Standing Orders governing the responsibilities of these staff (see Order 91)<sup>53</sup>, the assessment identified several resource constraints that hinder regular committee functioning. Several committees do not meet consistently due to quorum challenges, scheduling conflicts, and limitations in research or administrative support. These challenges were particularly apparent outside of core committees such as FPAC (Finance and Public Accounts Committee)<sup>54</sup>, Scrutiny of Bills Committee and COGA (Committee on Government Assurances)<sup>55</sup>, which were noted as among the most active.

Committee calendars are not formally published, and legacy reports are not currently produced at the end of each parliamentary term. These represent missed opportunities for transparency and continuity. Additionally, the majority of committees lack formal terms of reference that clearly define their roles, responsibilities, and areas of oversight. This has contributed to variability in the scope and ambition of committee work and can limit their ability to plan proactively or hold external actors accountable. Strengthening these practices could support institutional memory, improve consistency, and ensure that committee work is effectively built upon in successive Assemblies.

The Assembly currently lacks a system to ensure equal resource allocation across committees. Several stakeholders raised concerns that committee funding is not allocated predictably or equitably. In practice, committees must submit funding requests to the Clerk's Office, but given budgetary constraints, approval is not always assured. This has led to uncertainty and delays in planning activities. This situation underscores the importance of considering mechanisms for more transparent and structured financial planning at the committee level.

Finally, while committee meetings are not held in public as a matter of routine, there are provisions in place to allow for public hearings, particularly for COGA and FPAC. However, the National Assembly does not currently publish minutes of committee meetings or publicise their schedules. There is also no dedicated petitions mechanism linked to committee processes. Taken together, these gaps suggest that further steps could be taken to enhance openness, predictability, and the impact of committee work. These issues will also be revisited in the next sub-section, which focuses on committee powers and effectiveness.

## Powers

The powers of committees in the Seychelles National Assembly are broadly defined within the Standing Orders and legal framework<sup>56</sup>, and in several areas are operating with a high level of institutionalisation. Sectoral committees have demonstrated an increasing ambition to carry out oversight functions more substantively, and core committees such as the Financial and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC) and the Committee on Government Assurances (COGA) have begun to adopt more assertive and methodical approaches to holding the Executive to account. This includes a growing culture of calling for documents, scrutinising government pledges, and holding public hearings. The Assembly also reports that committees generally have unrestricted access to key government documents and officials, and that their powers are outlined in writing.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness and independence of these committees are constrained in practice by several institutional and cultural factors. Resource limitations are particularly acute. Several committees reported that the limited number of staff — often only one secretary without dedicated research or legal support — hampers their ability to conduct in-depth scrutiny. The issue is compounded by the uneven distribution of funding across committees and a lack of clarity and transparency over how committee funds are allocated. In some instances, committee activities have had to be postponed due to budget constraints. Members cited frustration with the lack of predictability in committee planning, as their proposed activities are often subject to the availability of funds or decisions by other parts of the institution.

There is also an inconsistent application of practices that would help to institutionalise committee scrutiny. For example, while some committees proactively follow up on recommendations and track progress, this is not systematic across the board. In a number of cases, stakeholders noted that committee inquiries result in little follow-up from the Executive, and that there are no formal mechanisms to compel a government response or monitor implementation of committee recommendations. The absence of any requirement for the Executive to respond to committee reports was identified as a key weakness in the oversight framework.

In terms of openness and transparency, some committees — notably FPAC and COGA — do hold public hearings, which are filmed and transcribed by Hansard. However, these practices are limited to specific committees and are not common across the board. The public does not have regular access to committee minutes or reports, and there are no systematic channels for

53 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020).

54 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC)*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/committees/standing-committees/finance-and-public-accounts-committee>. The FPAC examines public expenditures, reviews Auditor General reports, and holds public hearings with government entities—making it one of the most active oversight committees.

55 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Committee on Government Assurances (COGA)*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/committees/select-sessional-committees/committee-government-assurances>. COGA scrutinises all assurances and undertakings made by the Executive during Assembly sittings and actively pursues followup with Ministries, reinforced through public hearings and outreach activities

56 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020>. See for provisions on committee powers and procedures. Republic of Seychelles – *National Assembly (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, 2011*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylia.org/akn/sc/act/2011/3/eng@2011-04-18>. This Act provides the legal foundation for the powers and protections afforded to committees and their proceedings.

external stakeholders — such as civil society or the media — to follow committee work in real time. Nor are committee schedules or workplans routinely published. The result is a mixed picture of transparency and accessibility, where pockets of good practice exist but are not institutionalised across the committee system.

Despite these challenges, there are several positive trends to note. Committees have shown initiative in engaging with external actors, including through site visits, expert consultations, and in some cases outreach to civil society. COGA, for instance, was cited as a committee that seeks to follow through on assurances and is active in its engagement with line ministries. Additionally, the current committee system reflects a willingness to innovate — for example, through the creation of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development<sup>57</sup>, which was established outside the standard committee structure to address cross-cutting policy concerns.

Meeting discussions with committee chairs and secretaries suggested that Members and staff are aware of the current limitations and are keen to explore opportunities to build greater capacity and independence. There is interest in tapping into external sources of expertise and in receiving technical assistance to develop more robust follow-up mechanisms, budget transparency, and policy scrutiny.

Ultimately, while the formal powers of committees are largely in place and in many respects strong on paper, the capacity to exercise these powers effectively — and to do so in a systematic, well-resourced, and transparent manner — remains a key area for institutional strengthening.

## RECOMMENDATION 8

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should strengthen the effectiveness and transparency of its committee system by formalising follow-up mechanisms for committee recommendations, ensuring equitable and predictable funding across all committees, and enhancing public access to committee work through the regular publication of schedules, reports, and hearings.**

## RECOMMENDATION 9

**To improve the quality and depth of committee scrutiny, the National Assembly should invest in capacity building through targeted training for Members and committee staff and make greater use of external expertise—such as policy specialists, civil society input, and technical consultants—to support committee inquiries and oversight activities.**

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND PARTY GROUPS

### Political Parties

Seychelles maintains a legally robust framework for the registration and operation of political parties. Article 23(1) of the Constitution<sup>58</sup> provides the foundation for political pluralism, allowing parties to form and operate with their own constitutions. The Political Parties (Registration and Regulation) Act<sup>59</sup> requires parties to submit annual reports detailing funds received and disbursed, along with declarations of assets and liabilities. This legislative framework aligns with international standards, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights<sup>60</sup>, and provides mechanisms for financial transparency and accountability. However, while the legal framework sets out clear requirements for financial reporting, the visibility and accessibility of these disclosures to the broader public could be further enhanced to reinforce public trust in political finance.

The National Assembly also ensures that the Opposition is afforded appropriate facilities and resources to carry out its parliamentary functions. The Leader of the Opposition has dedicated office space within the Assembly building, and opposition Members are able to access caucus rooms and support from the Legislature's administrative divisions. This provision of infrastructure and services aligns with good parliamentary practice and reinforces the Assembly's commitment to supporting a pluralistic and functional multiparty system.

57 National Assembly of Seychelles – Food Security & Sustainable Development Committee. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/committees/select-sessional-committees/food-security-sustainable-development-committee>.

58 Republic of Seychelles – Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

59 Republic of Seychelles – Political Parties (Registration and Regulation) Act (Act 19 of 1991, consolidated to 30 June 2012). [online]. Available at: <https://seylit.org/akn/sc/act/1991/19/eng@2012-06-30>.

60 United Nations – International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). [online]. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>. Article 25 guarantees the right of citizens to participate in public affairs, including through political parties, and supports international standards for transparency, accountability, and democratic governance.



## Caucuses and Interest Groups

The ability of Members to organise themselves into party or interest-based groupings is a foundational component of a functioning parliamentary democracy. In the National Assembly of Seychelles, this practice is present but remains relatively informal and unevenly institutionalised.

The Standing Orders do not currently set out a comprehensive framework regarding the formation, rights, and responsibilities of formal parliamentary party groups. While party groupings are a *de facto* reality—particularly through the functioning of Government and Opposition caucuses—the absence of clear and consistently applied rules has resulted in an *ad hoc* approach. This was reflected in stakeholder feedback, which highlighted that while party caucuses do meet and coordinate internally, the extent of their role within formal legislative processes is less clearly articulated.

In terms of support and resources, there is no standardised or transparent formula to ensure that all party groups—especially smaller parties or independent Members—receive adequate support to engage fully in legislative business. This presents a challenge in maintaining equity of participation across the political spectrum, particularly where one party holds a significant majority.

The environment for cross-party collaboration in Seychelles is relatively limited. While legislators technically have the right to form interest-based caucuses, there are few examples of these in practice. One notable exception is the Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC)<sup>61</sup>, which consists of all women Members and functions similarly to a formal committee. The WPC plays an important role in raising gender-related issues and contributing to parliamentary debates on inclusion. Its existence highlights the potential for cross-party collaboration on thematic issues, though similar caucuses around other areas of shared interest have not yet emerged. Developing a clearer policy framework to encourage and formalise such caucuses could strengthen consensus-building and diversify parliamentary engagement.



The CPA team meeting with members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus.

61 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Women's Parliamentary Caucus*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/committees/standing-committees/womens-parliamentary-caucus>.

## PARLIAMENTARY STAFF

### Recruitment and Management

The recruitment and management of parliamentary staff in the Seychelles National Assembly faces a number of structural and operational challenges, many of which were consistently highlighted across multiple stakeholder consultations during the assessment.

At present, the National Assembly's staffing framework lacks an independent human resources architecture dedicated solely to parliamentary service. Staff are recruited and managed in line with general public service procedures and scales. This practice continues despite the unique and specialised nature of parliamentary work, which requires a dedicated professional cadre.

There is currently no independent parliamentary service commission or legal framework that provides the National Assembly with autonomy over its own staffing and management processes. Benchmark 5.1.2, which calls for a clear legal framework<sup>62</sup> enabling the Legislature to recruit and manage staff independently from the Executive, is not met. This is widely recognised within the National Assembly itself, and during the assessment, officials referred to the development of a proposed "Governance of the National Assembly Bill."

This draft bill, still under consideration, is intended to lay the foundation for an independent parliamentary service, separate from the civil service, and would create the necessary governance structures to support such autonomy. According to stakeholders, the bill has undergone several internal discussions and has gained conceptual support, but progress has been delayed due to political sensitivities and a lack of clarity on implementation. Staff expressed cautious optimism about its potential to resolve current ambiguities over roles, reporting lines, and salary disparities.

The current situation has created a number of practical challenges:

- Disparity in recognition and pay: Staff undertake specialised tasks but are paid according to generic civil service bands that do not reflect the demands of parliamentary roles.
- High workloads and multitasking: Staff often perform multiple functions, including policy research, clerking, technical support, and communication, especially given the limited size of the Secretariat.
- Limited professional growth: Career progression is perceived to be constrained, and the lack of a dedicated parliamentary staffing structure inhibits targeted capacity-building.

Despite these limitations, there is an evident commitment among staff to deliver high-quality support to Members. Many staff are cross-trained and exhibit adaptability and institutional knowledge, which has become an informal strength of the Assembly's internal culture.

Some areas of good practice include formalised induction for new staff (Benchmark 5.1.4), annual performance appraisals (Benchmark 5.1.3), and the presence of defined staff responsibilities for most positions (Benchmark 5.1.1). However, these remain undercut by the systemic limitations outlined above.

Staff consistently advocated for the formalisation and passage of the Governance of the National Assembly Bill, highlighting its importance not only for institutional clarity and staff motivation, but also as a necessary step towards strengthening the Assembly's independence and professionalisation. This reform would bring Seychelles in line with practices observed in many other Commonwealth jurisdictions<sup>63</sup> and could serve as a foundation for longer-term human capital development within the Legislature.

### RECOMMENDATION 10

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should prioritise the enactment of the proposed Governance of the National Assembly Bill to establish a dedicated parliamentary service independent of the wider civil service. This reform would provide a clear legal framework for staff recruitment, management, and career development, and help align roles, responsibilities, and remuneration with the specialised demands of parliamentary work.**

62 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Model Law for Independent Parliaments: Establishing Parliamentary Service Commissions for Commonwealth Legislatures* (2020). [online]. Available at: [https://www.cpahq.org/media/usdnwcqp/modellawforindependentparliaments\\_final.pdf](https://www.cpahq.org/media/usdnwcqp/modellawforindependentparliaments_final.pdf). This model outlines how a service commission, independent of the Executive, can oversee recruitment, staffing, financial controls, and administrative autonomy.

63 New Zealand Parliament – *Parliamentary Service Act 2000*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/sc/scl/petitions/>. Under this Act, the Parliamentary Service—established as an independent corporate entity and overseen by a bipartisan Parliamentary Service Commission chaired by the Speaker—provides staffing, administrative, ICT, and library services to Members, thereby ensuring Parliament's autonomy over its own human resources and operational support

### III. FUNCTIONS OF THE LEGISLATURE

#### LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION

##### Legislative Process

The legislative function of the National Assembly of Seychelles is constitutionally well-established and central to the country's democratic framework. Article 85 of the Constitution<sup>64</sup> vests legislative authority in the National Assembly, and this is clearly observed in practice. All laws must be passed by the Assembly, and legislation, including the national budget, requires approval from Members before it can be enacted. This centrality of the legislature in law-making is a major strength, particularly when considered in the context of other small island developing states where legislative authority may be more limited in practice<sup>65</sup>.

In line with standard Commonwealth parliamentary practice, the National Assembly of Seychelles follows a three-reading process for legislation, providing Members with opportunities for scrutiny and debate at different stages<sup>66</sup>. A bill may be introduced by a government minister, a Member of the Assembly, or through a private Member's initiative.

The legislative process begins with the **first reading**, during which the bill is formally introduced and its title read, without debate. The **second reading** allows Members to debate the general principles of the bill, after which a vote is taken. If agreed, the bill proceeds to the **committee stage**, where it is examined in detail and may be amended. **The Attorney General**<sup>67</sup> plays a central role in providing legal advice and ensuring constitutional and legal compliance throughout.

Following the committee stage, the bill moves to the report stage for further consideration of amendments, and finally to the third reading, where Members debate and vote on the final version of the bill. Once passed, the bill is presented to the President for **assent**, becoming law upon its publication in the Official Gazette.

Legislation is introduced either by the Executive or, less frequently, by individual Members. While the Standing Orders and the Constitution enable the scrutiny of secondary legislation (6.1.3)<sup>68</sup>, in practice this function remains underdeveloped. There is little routine review of statutory instruments or regulations made by Ministers, and stakeholders noted this as a missed opportunity for increased parliamentary oversight. The development of procedures or committees specifically tasked with reviewing delegated legislation could enhance this aspect of the Assembly's work.

Members also lack access to an internal legislative drafting service (6.1.4), meaning that Member's Bills or amendments typically rely on external support or political party assistance. This can pose a barrier to individual legislative initiative, particularly among less experienced Members. Providing some form of technical assistance or legal drafting support—whether through staff training or external legal resources—could facilitate more proactive legislative engagement by all Members.

Another area for development is the incorporation of equality and human rights impact assessments into the legislative process (6.1.5). At present, the Assembly does not routinely apply any such analytical frameworks to legislation. While this is not uncommon in smaller legislatures, the growing complexity of policy and increased public interest in inclusive law-making suggest the value of establishing a simple screening mechanism or guidelines for considering the impact of legislation on vulnerable groups<sup>69</sup>.

Consultations with stakeholders during the assessment revealed frustrations over the timeliness and quality of communication between the Executive and the Assembly when transmitting bills (6.2.3). Several Members and staff cited instances where legislation was introduced late or with limited supporting information, making it challenging to properly scrutinise the content or consult affected stakeholders. Improvements in coordination and early engagement with parliamentary staff on upcoming legislative proposals would help address this challenge and strengthen institutional cooperation.

Post-legislative scrutiny remains in its infancy. While the Seychelles Law Commission<sup>70</sup> has a mandate to review legislation and has carried out some activities in this space (such as consolidation and repeal of outdated laws), the National Assembly itself has no formal procedures or mechanisms to systematically follow up on the implementation or effectiveness of laws it passes (6.2.4).

64 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

65 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – *Small Island Developing States (SIDS)*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/small-islands-developing-states.html>. OECD analysis notes that many SIDS “face limited institutional and human capacity,” which can constrain the ability of legislatures to exercise full legislative authority.

66 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures (Revised June 2018)*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/10jjk2nh/recommended-benchmarks-for-democratic-legislatures-updated-2018-final-online-version-single.pdf>.

67 Attorney General's Chambers, Republic of Seychelles – *Home Page*. [online]. Available at: <https://ago.sc/home-page/>. The Office is mandated to provide legal advice to the Government and ensure constitutional and legal compliance.

68 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

69 UK Parliament – *Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/have-your-say/equality-and-diversity>. The UK adopts a structured approach to screening proposed legislation or parliamentary proposals to understand their potential effects on protected groups—providing a model that could inform the development of a simple screening mechanism within the National Assembly of Seychelles.

70 Republic of Seychelles – *Law Commission Act, 2022*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylit.org/akn/sc/act/2022/16/eng@2022-08-08>.



This limits its ability to hold the Executive to account for the real-world impact of legislation and to learn from previous legislative efforts. The development of committee-led follow-up reviews or impact hearings may be a pragmatic first step.



In terms of financial legislation, the budget process is defined in law, and the Assembly approves the Appropriation Bill annually (6.2.5)<sup>71</sup>. However, the Executive, particularly the Ministry of Finance, retains significant influence over the formulation and timeline of budget proposals. While some pre-budget engagement exists, Members expressed a desire for earlier involvement and greater access to independent financial analysis to inform decision-making. The absence of a Parliamentary Budget Office<sup>72</sup> or equivalent technical body makes it difficult for the Assembly to carry out deep budget scrutiny. This reflects a broader capacity gap and is a shared challenge among many small legislatures.

Public engagement in the legislative process is largely informal (6.3.1). Some committees undertake ad hoc consultation with civil society, and sittings are broadcast via the Media Unit, but there are no formalised mechanisms—such as calls for evidence, public submissions, or citizen panels—through which the public can regularly contribute to legislative debates. As legislation becomes more complex and public demand for transparency grows, it may be beneficial for the Assembly to develop simple engagement guidelines for committees and Members, particularly around major Bills.

Finally, while there are efforts to communicate legislative developments to the public—such as through televised sittings and the National Assembly's website—these could be expanded and made more accessible (6.3.2). Clearer summaries of proposed legislation, use of Creole in public explanations, and more active social media content are examples of initiatives that could support improved outreach and understanding.

In summary, while the Assembly performs its legislative function with constitutional rigour and dedication, there remain opportunities to strengthen both the technical and participatory dimensions of law-making. Many of these challenges are common among small legislatures with limited resources, but the Assembly's strong legal mandate and history of innovation in other areas position it well to make incremental improvements in these domains.

## RECOMMENDATION 11

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should strengthen its legislative process by introducing formal mechanisms for pre- and post-legislative scrutiny, and by creating greater opportunities for public consultation during the drafting and review of legislation.**

71 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles). See Articles 148–154, which outline the national budget process, including the annual presentation and approval of the Appropriation Bill by the National Assembly.

72 Australian Parliament – *Parliamentary Budget Office*. [online]. Available at: [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Senate/Publications\\_and\\_resources/Papers\\_and\\_research/Papers\\_on\\_Parliament\\_and\\_other\\_resources/Papers\\_on\\_Parliament/64/c05](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Publications_and_resources/Papers_and_research/Papers_on_Parliament_and_other_resources/Papers_on_Parliament/64/c05). The Australian PBO is mandated by law to provide independent analysis of the budget cycle and fiscal policy, offering parliamentarians timely costings and research that enhance the legislature's ability to scrutinise public finances effectively.



## OVERSIGHT FUNCTION

The National Assembly of Seychelles plays an active role in oversight, with a number of mechanisms and practices in place that are broadly consistent with Commonwealth standards. In practice, Members are empowered to hold the Executive to account through questions, motions, and committee inquiries, and there is frequent use of these tools during plenary sessions.

One of the Assembly's core strengths is the regular and structured use of oral questions, including dedicated question time for Ministers. The Speaker's role in facilitating these sessions, alongside the participation of the Leader of the Opposition, underscores the routine nature of Executive oversight. Supplementary questions are allowed and Ministers are expected to respond directly in the House, creating a degree of accountability that is well institutionalised. Benchmark 7.1.2 is therefore met.

Committees also provide an important platform for oversight. Committees such as the Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC)<sup>73</sup> and the Committee on Government Assurances (COGA)<sup>74</sup> have established track records in reviewing government performance. FPAC, in particular, regularly reviews the Auditor-General's<sup>75</sup> reports and summons government officials for clarification and evidence, consistent with good parliamentary practice. Committee inquiries are typically conducted in closed sessions, but stakeholders reported that the quality of questioning and participation is steadily improving, although there are capacity constraints around staffing and support.

Parliamentary questions are another important tool, with Members regularly using them to raise concerns from constituents or request clarification on policy and implementation. While a review of Hansard suggests that these are frequently used, some stakeholders suggested that the mechanism could benefit from greater coordination and follow-up to improve impact and to avoid duplication.

While the Assembly has clear powers to summon Ministers, public officials, and other witnesses to provide evidence, there are some inconsistencies in how these powers are exercised. Benchmark 7.1.5, for example, highlights that while Committees have the power to compel evidence, enforcement remains a challenge, particularly when cooperation from the Executive is lacking. This issue is not unique to Seychelles but is a recurring challenge in many parliaments operating under strong executive dominance.

One gap noted during the assessment was the absence of a formal practice or mechanism for the Assembly to initiate independent performance audits or evaluations of government policies and programmes (Benchmark 7.1.1). While Committees do review reports and conduct oversight inquiries, this function is reactive in nature and lacks a formal structure for initiating more forward-looking performance reviews. Consideration could be given to establishing more institutionalised partnerships with independent bodies, such as the Office of the Auditor-General or the Public Service Commission<sup>76</sup>, to enhance the strategic oversight capacity of Parliament.

Oversight is further supported by the Public Appointments Committee, which has the mandate to vet and report on senior appointments. The Committee on Government Assurances also performs a useful tracking role in monitoring the fulfilment of promises made by Ministers in Parliament. That said, concerns were raised by some stakeholders that, in certain cases, responses from the Executive can be delayed or inadequate, undermining the effectiveness of the follow-up mechanism.

The institutional and political culture of Seychelles' National Assembly has generally enabled Members to exercise their oversight mandate. However, the extent to which oversight findings influence policy and practice remains variable, and could be strengthened by improving follow-up mechanisms, reporting standards, and Committee coordination. Benchmark 7.1.9 points to this inconsistency in how Committee reports are followed up and actioned by the Executive.

In discussions with constitutional oversight bodies such as the Office of the Ombudsman<sup>77</sup> and the Human Rights Commission<sup>78</sup>, stakeholders noted an absence of structured engagement with the National Assembly. While these institutions play a crucial role in promoting transparency and human rights, they face capacity constraints and reported challenges in ensuring their findings are acknowledged or actioned by Parliament. This points to the need for clearer mechanisms linking such bodies to relevant committees within the Assembly to ensure follow-up, enhance institutional accountability, and strengthen the Legislature's broader oversight ecosystem.

Overall, the oversight function of the National Assembly is solid and active, especially in comparison to many other small

73 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC)*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/committees/standing-committees/finance-and-public-accounts-committee>.

74 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Committee on Government Assurances (COGA)*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/committees/select-sessional-committees/committee-government-assurances>.

75 Office of the Auditor General, Republic of Seychelles – *Annual Reports of the Auditor General*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.oag.sc/reports/annual-reports-of-the-auditor-general>.

76 Public Service Commission, Republic of Seychelles – *Home Page*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.psc.gov.sc>.

77 Office of the Ombudsman, Republic of Seychelles – *Home Page*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.sc>. The Office is an independent constitutional institution responsible for investigating complaints of maladministration and promoting transparency in public administration.

78 Seychelles Human Rights Commission – *Home Page*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.seychelleshumanrights.com>. The Commission is a constitutionally established body mandated to promote and protect human rights through monitoring, investigations, policy review, education, and reporting.

legislatures. However, its effectiveness is at times constrained by limited research capacity, under-resourced Committees, and the lack of a comprehensive system for follow-up or escalation. Continued investment in Committee support staff, formalised follow-up procedures, and performance evaluation tools would go a long way in deepening the Assembly's capacity to scrutinise the Executive.

## Financial and Budget Oversight

The Constitution of Seychelles and the Standing Orders of the National Assembly provide a formal framework for the legislature's role in overseeing the national budget and public finances<sup>79</sup>. Stakeholders generally acknowledged that the Assembly performs its core budgetary functions — including debating and passing the budget, considering supplementary allocations, and receiving audit reports — with increasing consistency and effectiveness. Benchmark 7.2.2, which refers to the legislature's role in budget approval, is met, with clear provisions in place for the presentation and passage of the Appropriation Bill.

The Finance and Public Accounts Committee (FPAC) serves as the principal mechanism for financial oversight. It is empowered to examine public expenditure and consider reports from the Auditor General, and stakeholders recognised its growing assertiveness in recent years. The committee meets regularly and has produced a number of reports that reflect a willingness to challenge public spending where necessary, including on politically sensitive issues. Notably, FPAC's visibility and engagement have been commended by civil society and some external actors.

However, the effectiveness of financial oversight remains uneven. While the Auditor General's annual reports are regularly submitted to the Assembly and passed on to FPAC, there have been delays in scrutinising these reports, resulting in a backlog. Additionally, the Auditor General indicated that special reports — which may raise urgent or thematic financial concerns — are often submitted without eliciting any formal response or follow-up from the Assembly. This indicates a missed opportunity to capitalise on the breadth of information produced by the Audit Office<sup>80</sup>.

Although the Executive provides quarterly budget execution reports, there is limited independent in-house capacity within the Assembly to scrutinise these in detail. This was raised as a notable gap during consultations, with stakeholders noting the heavy reliance on external actors (such as the Auditor General) and a lack of continuous analytical capacity within the legislature itself. Addressing this capacity shortfall would strengthen the Assembly's ability to scrutinise budgetary matters in real time and offer more informed input during the budget cycle.

In this regard, the establishment of a Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) — or a similar internal mechanism — was suggested as a key institutional reform. A PBO would enable the Assembly to access independent financial analysis, costing of legislative proposals, and long-term fiscal projections. Several other Commonwealth jurisdictions have adopted such mechanisms, tailored to the scale and resources of their respective legislatures. A small, dedicated budget and fiscal analysis team within the Assembly Secretariat would represent a significant step in institutionalising more robust and independent oversight.

Lastly, while the Constitution provides for the Assembly to control its own budget (Benchmark 7.2.9), this has not yet been fully realised in practice. Currently, budget submissions and financial management remain closely linked to the Executive, which can limit the Assembly's autonomy over its operational and programme funding.

## No Confidence and Impeachment

The Constitution of Seychelles provides a clear and detailed framework for motions of censure, no-confidence, and the impeachment of members of the Executive. Article 74 empowers the National Assembly to pass a vote of censure against a Minister with a two-thirds majority, while Article 54 outlines a comprehensive multi-step process for initiating and investigating allegations of constitutional violations or gross misconduct by the President<sup>81</sup>. This includes referral to the Constitutional Court, ensuring legal safeguards and the right to a defence. Although these mechanisms have not been frequently tested, their inclusion demonstrates a constitutional commitment to executive accountability, in line with international democratic norms. Strengthening public understanding and procedural readiness around these provisions could help reinforce institutional checks and balances over time.

### RECOMMENDATION 12

**The National Assembly should establish a small Parliamentary Budget Office or similar internal unit to provide independent fiscal analysis, support real-time scrutiny of public finances, and strengthen the legislature's role in budget oversight throughout the financial cycle.**

79 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

80 Commonwealth Association of Public Accounts Committees (CAPAC) – *Public Accounts Committees*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.uk-cpa.org/what-we-do/public-accounts-committees>. CAPAC promotes good governance by supporting PAC chairs, members, and clerks through training, resources, and peer engagement to strengthen scrutiny of public expenditure.

81 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).



The CPA team meet with members of the Citizen Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS)

## REPRESENTATIONAL FUNCTION

The National Assembly of Seychelles plays a critical role in representing the interests and concerns of citizens. Members engage regularly with their constituencies, including holding weekly surgeries—often on Thursdays and Fridays—where constituents can raise individual or community issues. While this direct interaction is commendable and reflects the personalised nature of politics in a small island state, the system remains largely informal and heavily reliant on the initiative of individual Members. Resources such as constituency allowances and travel support are provided, and Members are able to make use of local government offices in their constituencies. However, these arrangements vary in quality and accessibility, and stakeholders noted that Members' representational work would benefit from more consistent logistical support, including dedicated office spaces and staff<sup>82</sup>.

The Assembly's commitment to inclusion could be strengthened through more proactive efforts to substantively represent women and other marginalised groups in its work. While women are represented in the Assembly—primarily through the Women's Parliamentary Caucus<sup>83</sup>—there are currently no laws, policies, or parliamentary mechanisms in place to promote women's participation either as legislators or through targeted public engagement. The Women's Parliamentary Caucus plays a constructive role in convening Members around shared priorities and raising awareness of gender-related issues, but it functions informally and without the structured support that might enhance its policy influence.

Similarly, while Members often engage the public through social media or informal conversations, stakeholders noted that there is no formal petitions process, and limited mechanisms for incorporating community voices into legislative processes. As Seychelles continues to develop its democratic institutions, investing in more structured and inclusive representational mechanisms—including resources for constituency offices, targeted outreach initiatives, and greater institutional support for caucuses like the WPC—would help the Assembly better reflect the full diversity of public perspectives in its decision-making.

## RECOMMENDATION 13

**The National Assembly should expand capacity-building and peer exchange opportunities for its female Members, including through greater engagement with Women's Parliamentary Caucuses in other Commonwealth jurisdictions. The Assembly should also consider reviewing its facilities and internal support structures to ensure they adequately address the needs and challenges faced by female Members and staff.**

82 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Engagement, Education & Outreach Handbook for Commonwealth Parliaments* (2021). [online]. Available at: [https://www.cpahq.org/media/sbif14kt/engagement\\_education\\_outreach-handbook\\_final.pdf](https://www.cpahq.org/media/sbif14kt/engagement_education_outreach-handbook_final.pdf). This handbook offers best practices for constituency outreach—such as structured surgeries, public consultations, and consistent contact mechanisms—that can inform more systematic and supported representational work by Members.

83 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Women's Parliamentary Caucus*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/committees/standing-committees/womens-parliamentary-caucus>.



## PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANCE, NETWORKING AND DIPLOMACY

The National Assembly of Seychelles has a clear mandate to seek and receive development assistance, and it has engaged positively with a range of international partners over the years to strengthen the institution. This includes participation in technical assistance programmes, interparliamentary events, and capacity-building workshops—particularly through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)<sup>84</sup>, with whom the Assembly maintains an active and longstanding relationship. The Assembly is also a regular participant in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference and has sent delegations to a number of thematic and professional development programmes<sup>85</sup>.

The Assembly has demonstrated sound financial accountability in the implementation of grants and assistance, with funds spent in accordance with the guidelines provided by development partners. However, discussions during the assessment suggested there may be room to further formalise internal systems around how assistance is coordinated, monitored, and reported on, to ensure consistency and transparency.

Both Members and staff are aware of the benefits of peer exchange and routinely engage with counterparts from other Legislatures, though stakeholders noted that opportunities to do so are often limited by budgetary and logistical constraints. Seychelles' geographic isolation as a small island developing state creates additional challenges in terms of access to regional events or short-term exchanges, and Members expressed a desire for more flexible and targeted learning opportunities. While the CPA offers a valuable network for capacity support and technical collaboration, it was noted that additional partnerships—particularly with larger parliaments in neighbouring regions—could offer complementary support in areas such as research capacity, legislative drafting, and procedural reform.

Building bilateral and multilateral relationships with other jurisdictions that have mature parliamentary development structures, such as in India and the Southern or Eastern Africa region, could help address some of the structural limitations faced by the National Assembly<sup>86</sup>. These could take the form of secondments, remote advisory support, or twinning arrangements with other parliaments to share expertise and lessons learned.

### RECOMMENDATION 14

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should seek to broaden its inter-parliamentary engagement by exploring bilateral and regional partnerships with neighbouring Legislatures that have established parliamentary development programmes. These partnerships could support targeted capacity-building initiatives for Members and staff and complement existing engagement through the CPA and other multilateral forums.**



The CPA team meet with Committee Secretaries in the National Assembly

84 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Official Website*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org>. The CPA supports legislatures across the Commonwealth by promoting democratic governance, capacity building, and inter-parliamentary cooperation.

85 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Seychelles Represented at the 67th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/media/news/2024-11/seychelles-represented-67th-commonwealth-parliamentary-conference>.

86 Parliament of India (Lok Sabha) – *PRIDE: Capacity Building Programmes for Members of Parliament and Secretariat Officers*. [online]. Available at: <https://sansad.in/ls/pride/capacity-building-programmes>. These include orientation sessions, workshops, and expert-led seminars designed to enhance legislative skills and procedural knowledge—offering a model for Seychelles to engage in structured peer learning and targeted training with larger parliamentary institutions.



## IV. VALUES OF THE LEGISLATURE

### ACCESSIBILITY, OPENNESS AND ENGAGEMENT

#### Citizens and Public Engagement

The National Assembly of Seychelles has made notable efforts to enhance accessibility and engagement with the public, particularly in recent years. Members of the public are able to request visits through the Office of the Clerk, and sittings of the Assembly are routinely broadcast live and made accessible online<sup>87</sup>. The Assembly also maintains an active digital presence through its website and across various social media platforms, including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube. These platforms are used to share a wide range of public-facing resources such as legislative summaries, infographics, posters, and explainer videos, supporting efforts to increase public understanding of the work of Parliament (Benchmark 10.1.5).

The Assembly's website is regularly updated and includes key legislative documents, member information, and contact details (Benchmark 10.1.7). However, the website currently does not provide mechanisms for citizens to submit feedback or formally contribute to the legislative process, such as through consultation portals or public submissions on proposed legislation.

While there are no formalised procedures for identifying under-represented or marginalised groups, the National Assembly has shown a willingness to engage such communities through project-based initiatives. For example, the Assembly's "Deaf Cultured and Inclusive Parliament" project<sup>88</sup>, funded by the CPA's Commonwealth Partnership for Democracy (CwPD)<sup>89</sup>, aimed to improve the participation of the Deaf community in parliamentary life. While commendable, these efforts are largely ad hoc and not yet institutionalised into broader policies or outreach strategies (Benchmark 10.1.6).

Despite these positive developments, stakeholders noted that public awareness of the Assembly's role and impact remains limited. A number of civil society representatives also expressed interest in being more routinely engaged, particularly during legislative review or policy discussions. Currently, however, such engagement tends to occur on an informal or invitation-only basis. Expanding direct avenues for public engagement—such as structured consultations, civil society forums, constituency engagement frameworks, and inclusive parliamentary events—could further strengthen the legislature's connection to the citizens it serves and support more participatory and representative decision-making.

#### Media

The National Assembly has generally maintained a positive relationship with the media, underpinned by non-partisan access protocols and a functioning Media Operations and Public Relations Unit. Journalists are permitted to attend sittings, access proceedings, and request interviews with Members and parliamentary staff<sup>90</sup>. However, while media access is facilitated through a routine request-based system, some stakeholders nonetheless indicated that, in practice, this approach may at times be perceived as less predictable or not consistently understood (Benchmark 10.1.4). There is scope for the Assembly to go further in its engagement with the press. Stakeholders suggested that media coverage could be strengthened by building a more proactive two-way relationship—particularly through formal media liaison practices and training opportunities. One option would be to develop a short handbook or companion guide for parliamentary reporters, explaining key legislative processes, committee structures, and procedural norms. This would help journalists report with greater context and accuracy, while also improving public understanding of the Assembly's role.

Additionally, the Assembly could consider including members of the press in its public outreach activities or orientation programmes, such as those offered to newly elected Members. These steps would not only promote transparency but also improve trust and cooperation between journalists and the legislature.

It is worth noting that efforts to expand external engagement—whether with the public or the press—should be designed with the Assembly's current staffing and resource constraints in mind. The Communications and Media Unit, while committed and skilled, is relatively small, and additional responsibilities should be matched with appropriate support and capacity building.

87 National Assembly of Seychelles – *The National Assembly Service*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/national-assembly-service>.

88 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) – *Deaf Cultured and Inclusive Parliament Project, Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/knowledge-centre/blogs/seychelles-deaf-project/>.

National Assembly of Seychelles – *National Assembly Hosts Focus Group with the Seychelles Deaf Community*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/media/news/2024-06/national-assembly-hosts-focus-group-seychelles-deaf-community>.

89 Commonwealth Parliamentary Association – *Commonwealth Parliamentarians with Disabilities (CPwD) Network*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/our-networks/commonwealth-parliamentarians-with-disabilities/>. The CPwD Network promotes the inclusion of persons with disabilities in parliamentary democracy and supports initiatives that enhance accessibility within legislatures.

90 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Rules for Media Related Activity at the National Assembly*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/sites/default/files/2021-11/Rules%20for%20Media%20Related%20Activity%20at%20the%20National%20Assembly.pdf>.

## RECOMMENDATION 15

**The National Assembly of Seychelles should look to further improve its working relationship with the Media by producing a bespoke companion guide for journalists on parliamentary practices and procedures, and by exploring opportunities for representatives of the press to engage with Members of Parliament during their initial induction or through ongoing learning and development activities.**

### Languages

Seychelles recognises three official languages—Creole, English, and French—and these are all spoken across different segments of the population<sup>91</sup>. In practice, parliamentary debates are primarily conducted in Creole, while official records and documentation, including the Standing Orders, are produced in English. Currently, there is no formal provision for simultaneous interpretation during sittings, nor for the translation of records into all three official languages.

Stakeholders cited both human resource limitations and financial constraints as key barriers to implementing a full multilingual policy within the National Assembly. While the predominant use of Creole in debates reflects the linguistic reality of most citizens, the lack of interpretation services or multilingual records may limit full accessibility and inclusivity—particularly for legal professionals, diplomats, and other stakeholders who may rely more heavily on English or French.

As the institution continues to grow, there may be merit in exploring phased or targeted translation and interpretation efforts, beginning with core parliamentary documents or key debates of public interest, in line with the country's trilingual policy framework.

## ETHICAL GOVERNANCE

### Transparency and Integrity

Maintaining the highest standards of ethics and integrity is central to public trust in the National Assembly. While Seychelles has made some progress in establishing a framework for ethical conduct among Members and parliamentary staff, stakeholders and documentation indicate that the current mechanisms require significant strengthening.

The National Assembly has adopted a Code of Conduct for Members since 2009<sup>92</sup>, <sup>93</sup>Benchmark 11.1.1). Members are also required to comply with the Public Officers Ethics Act . However, the Code was widely viewed during consultations as outdated and insufficiently robust in addressing the full scope of ethical challenges faced by modern legislators. The enforcement of existing rules—particularly those related to declarations of interest, gifts, and financial disclosures—was noted to be limited and not systematically applied (Benchmark 11.1.2).

Under the Public Persons (Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Business Interests) Act, Members must declare their assets to the Ethics Commissioner<sup>94</sup>. However, these declarations are not automatically made public, and members of the public must apply to access them. While this does provide a formal mechanism for financial transparency (Benchmark 11.1.3), it falls short of international good practice, which typically encourages proactive publication.

In terms of corruption prevention, there are clear rules for parliamentary staff through a dedicated staff code of conduct. However, there are no comprehensive parliamentary mechanisms to prevent, detect or address corruption among Members, nor are there well-established institutional procedures to bring cases to justice if wrongdoing occurs (Benchmark 11.1.4).

Taken together, the findings point to a pressing need for the revision and strengthening of the ethical governance framework, particularly in the areas of enforcement, asset declaration, and institutional safeguards. As part of this, the Assembly may consider developing a revised, more comprehensive Code of Conduct—accompanied by accessible guidance materials, clear sanctions for breaches, and training for Members and staff to ensure consistent application in practice.

## RECOMMENDATION 16

**The National Assembly should strengthen its Code of Conduct and establish clearer, enforceable rules on conflicts of interest, financial disclosure, and anti-corruption measures.**

91 Republic of Seychelles – *Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles*. [online]. Available at: [www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles](http://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/others/constitution-third-republic-seychelles).

92 National Assembly of Seychelles – *Standing Orders 2020*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.nationalassembly.sc/publications/standing-orders/standing-orders-2020>.

93 Republic of Seychelles – *Public Officers' Ethics Act, 2008 (Act 14 of 2008, consolidated to 31 December 2015)*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylit.org/akn/sc/act/2008/14/eng@2015-12-31>.

94 Republic of Seychelles – *Public Persons (Declaration of Assets, Liabilities and Business Interests) Act (Act 26 of 2016, as amended 2021)*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylit.org/akn/sc/act/2021/40/eng@2021-09-30>.

## Freedom of Information

Seychelles has a formalised Freedom of Information (FOI) regime through the Access to Information Act 2018<sup>95</sup>, which grants citizens the right to access information held by public bodies. The Act established the Information Commission<sup>96</sup>, headed by a Chief Executive Officer, which plays an oversight role in enforcing this right and ensuring transparency and accountability across the public service. Public bodies are required to appoint an Information Officer, whose contact details are gazetted, and must submit annual reports to the Commission on their dissemination of public information.

In practice, however, some challenges remain. Stakeholders highlighted delays in the publication of key parliamentary records, particularly the Hansard, which at times creates a lag between proceedings and public access. This backlog limits timely engagement by the media, civil society, and the broader public. Additional areas for improvement include the more systematic publication of committee reports and enhanced accessibility to historical documents and legislative materials via the National Assembly website.



The CPA Team meet with representatives of Seychelles media houses.

<sup>95</sup> Republic of Seychelles – *Access to Information Act, 2018*. [online]. Available at: <https://seylit.org/akn/sc/act/2018/4/eng@2018-07-24>.

<sup>96</sup> Information Commission of Seychelles – *Home Page*. [online]. Available at: <https://www.infocom.sc>. The Commission is an independent, selfgoverning statutory body established under the Access to Information Act 2018, led by a Chief Information Commissioner and a Chief Executive Officer in charge of promoting transparency, monitoring compliance, and enforcing public right to information.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** The National Assembly should support efforts to strengthen enforcement of campaign finance laws through greater monitoring and transparency, expand year-round civic education, and invest in digital tools and outreach to ensure inclusive access to elections across all islands.

**Recommendation 2:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should pass legislation establishing an independent Remuneration Authority that regulates salaries and allowances for Members of the National Assembly, with adequate mechanisms for monitoring and publishing relevant financial disclosures relating to these.

**Recommendation 3:** The National Assembly should formalise a comprehensive and consistent professional development framework for Members by:

- Establishing a standardised induction programme for all newly elected and mid-term Members; and
- Developing a structured annual training calendar focused on legislative functions, oversight, and governance.

**Recommendation 4:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should prioritise investment in the expansion and modernisation of its parliamentary infrastructure, including the development of additional committee rooms, dedicated office space for Members, and accessible facilities to support effective legislative work and public engagement.

**Recommendation 5:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should introduce a regular review cycle for the Standing Orders, strengthen Member training on procedural rules, and promote broad consensus around major procedural reforms to ensure clarity, consistency, and cross-party ownership of parliamentary practices.

**Recommendation 6:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should introduce a formal mechanism for recorded votes and consider allocating dedicated time for non-Government business to enhance transparency, strengthen public accountability, and ensure that all Members have opportunities to shape the legislative agenda.

**Recommendation 7:** The National Assembly should establish a formal procedure for receiving and considering public petitions to ensure citizen concerns are considered transparently and systematically.

**Recommendation 8:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should strengthen the effectiveness and transparency of its committee system by formalising follow-up mechanisms for committee recommendations, ensuring equitable and predictable funding across all committees, and enhancing public access to committee work through the regular publication of schedules, reports, and hearings.

**Recommendation 9:** To improve the quality and depth of committee scrutiny, the National Assembly should invest in capacity building through targeted training for Members and committee staff and make greater use of external expertise—such as policy specialists, civil society input, and technical consultants—to support committee inquiries and oversight activities.

**Recommendation 10:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should prioritise the enactment of the proposed Governance of the National Assembly Bill to establish a dedicated parliamentary service independent of the wider civil service. This reform would provide a clear legal framework for staff recruitment, management, and career development, and help align roles, responsibilities, and remuneration with the specialised demands of parliamentary work.

**Recommendation 11:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should strengthen its legislative process by introducing formal mechanisms for pre- and post-legislative scrutiny, and by creating greater opportunities for public consultation during the drafting and review of legislation.

**Recommendation 12:** The National Assembly should establish a small Parliamentary Budget Office or similar internal unit to provide independent fiscal analysis, support real-time scrutiny of public finances, and strengthen the legislature's role in budget oversight throughout the financial cycle.

**Recommendation 13:** The National Assembly should expand capacity-building and peer exchange opportunities for its female Members, including through greater engagement with Women's Parliamentary Caucuses in other Commonwealth jurisdictions. The Assembly should also consider reviewing its facilities and internal support structures to ensure they adequately address the needs and challenges faced by female Members and staff.

**Recommendation 14:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should seek to broaden its inter-parliamentary engagement by exploring bilateral and regional partnerships with neighbouring Legislatures that have established parliamentary development programmes. These partnerships could support targeted capacity-building initiatives for Members and staff and complement existing engagement through the CPA and other multilateral forums.



**Recommendation 15:** The National Assembly of Seychelles should look to further improve its working relationship with the Media by producing a bespoke companion guide for journalists on parliamentary practices and procedures, and by exploring opportunities for representatives of the press to engage with Members of Parliament during their initial induction or through ongoing learning and development activities.

**Recommendation 16:** The National Assembly should strengthen its Code of Conduct and establish clearer, enforceable rules on conflicts of interest, financial disclosure, and anti-corruption measures.



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Published by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) in November 2025

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