

An Effective State

WHAT THE SEYCHELLES NATIONAL PARTY STANDS FOR TODAY

by Wavel Ramkalawan

The mission of the SNP today is to make Seychelles An Effective State.

An Effective State means one that functions efficiently for its citizens. It must provide a solid and whole framework for people to live their lives in stability and security, sure of their rights, pursuing their goals and ambitions and contributing to the creation of a nation we will all be proud of.

Putting right what has gone wrong

An Effective State will set things right where they have gone wrong.

Seychelles has gone through a lot of turmoil in its short independent history. During these past 34 years, we have experienced the joy and unity of Independence, the sadness of a coup d'etat, the systematic division of our people, the abuse of human rights, a weak judiciary, a politically influenced civil service, an unsafe society, discriminatory state decisions, and a lack of principle and order in the way the state runs its affairs. Corruption and the lack of transparency have plagued us.

Today our system of government is disjointed. Many state organisations are groping their way along. The parts do not all work well together and we are in danger of slipping into a mood of complacency. We must not let this happen.

Seychellois should note that today many branches of our Government are totally controlled by teams of foreign nationals. Thirty years after Independence, we have had to surrender control of our own affairs. Our Police Force is controlled by retired Irish policemen. Our Tax system is controlled by Australians.

Our utilities company is controlled by a wholly French team of managers.

Seychellois participation in our main industries is marginal and we are turning over much of our territory to foreign individuals. In the meantime, Seychellois continue to live in anxiety, unable to shed away the fear of victimization in gaining their rights.

From the Past to the Future

Over the nearly 20 years of its existence, the movement which is today the Seychelles National Party has achieved a lot against great odds. We have fought hard and succeeded in moving Seychelles away from the one-party state and helped it to get a system of multi-party democracy. Our members and supporters made the greatest contribution to make this system work.

Our first two decades have been concentrated on two key goals:

1. Establishing Democracy
2. Achieving a Liberal and Responsible Economic System

Today the ideas of the SNP on these subjects are in the mainstream, accepted by everyone. The Government in power has moved in our direction with the economic



reform programme and with the establishment of some institutions to serve the democratic systems.

Much needs to be done in those areas and the SNP still has a number of plans in those fields.

But it is also time to move to a new vision.

Confidence in our country

Today, we want to build a strong country where people can live a normal life, having confidence in the state, knowing that opportunities will be shared and wealth distributed justly among everyone. We need to have full confidence in our country.

Everyone must be secure of where they stand in order to move forward. The ground must not be shaky under your feet.

This calls for a new relationship between citizens and their country. Everyone should see himself as a participant. Nobody should place himself above others or be on the sidelines. Let us build an effective state that truly becomes our motherland.

Confidence in our country is the key. In order to achieve this, citizens must know where they stand. There must

no longer be any doubt about whether you are entitled to get a house, whether your child will have educational opportunities, whether your job or your business is at risk. Everyone must be secure of where they stand in order to move forward. The ground must not be shaky under your feet.

Stability

One of the first goals of An Effective State is stability. Seychellois have endured enough shocks and surprises. We aim for government that will plan well, move carefully and ensure a system that endures. Some lessons from the past that the SNP will put

into application are:

1. Consult widely and let everyone have a say
2. Plan decisively and carefully
- 3 Do not allow mistakes to go uncorrected
4. Maintain a culture of transparency

These rules will allow people to know what is happening and give them a stake in what is going on. It will mean

you will know where your Government stands and will not face nasty shocks.

Security

Part of stability is safety and security for every Seychellois. We must once and for all have a nation where lives and property are protected from lawlessness. We are a small country and we do not need to put up with the threats that we face today. It will be said that there is crime in every country but we maintain that much of our problem lies in the neglect of our police force and a disregard for the rule of law.

Crime will be fought effectively when the police function with the knowledge that they are accountable for the security of every citizen, and that every one needs to be treated with the same courtesy. This will mean an effective institution that resorts to community policing instead of the present MP/Police bashing of citizens. Our vision is to see a regular professional police force which works for the interest of everyone and society. Can this be achieved? We say 'Yes'!

This means also building up our defences against external threats.

In all of these efforts we must rely on professionalism and using our resources wisely. There must be more transparency in the way defence resources are used.

One key concept that we must build into our policies and plans from now on is that our territory is not only Mahe and the islands close to it. We must do more to secure our outer islands and make them a part of our nation. To most Seychellois, our islands are names only. They must become real and familiar parts of our country, and part of their lives. We need to bring them into our national development plans and not leave them aside as just places where rich foreigners can buy holiday homes.

An Effective State - by Wavel Ramkalawan

Sure of Your Rights

Citizens of Seychelles need to live in a predictable environment. No one should be in a situation where he does not know whether a permission will be granted or a licence approved. A person following all the regulations set for a particular service needs to have the assurance that his case will be dealt with fairly and under the same guidelines as others who may apply. A child seeking a scholarship must know the standards set, and upon achieving them should have the confidence that his life dreams will be achieved. Doubt and favouritism must be eliminated if we want to build a strong, effective state.

Sound Institutions

An Effective State is based on sound institutions that have the right mandate and fulfil them honestly and capably. A country does not rest well on individuals but on institutions. Today, we have a system but the parts are not permitted to function properly. Too much depends on the top.

The role of the Executive is to provide strong leadership in setting policies and plans.

It is not an exaggeration to say today that our institutions are too much under the control of the Executive. Many are still weak and cannot fulfil the functions that they should. They need to be empowered to fulfil their

One of our cardinal principles is that normal life must be free from politics. People should not have to calculate and balance political considerations in their everyday lives.

mandate according to their charter.

The National Assembly is the first example. It acts as an arm of the Executive and does not provide the necessary check and balance that we need for accountability and transparency. Laws are too much dictated from the executive and not debated independently. New protocols to ensure effectiveness have to be established. An independent Speaker having no party connections will be the beginning of this process.

The Public Service suffers from too much political interference. People are afraid to take initiative. Public servants are not able to perform efficiently because they have to wait for the Minister or the President to give the signal. Service, especially in some

areas such as local government, are delivered with political calculations. The whims of individuals must cease to be a guiding factor as to who gets a house, who gets a scholarship, who gets a job, or who gets a promotion.

We need systems that remove subjective decisions from the state. This needs to be replaced by an objective approach that will help eliminate this lack of trust currently prevailing in our country.

One of our cardinal principles is that normal life must be free from politics. People should not have to calculate and balance political considerations in their everyday lives.

Some bodies such as the Ombudsman, the Human Rights Commission and the Ethics Commission have been made too weak and do not make democracy strong. We must look again at their charters and create new institutions such as a Public Service Commission.

Empowerment

Our people must be entrusted with the task of building An Effective State.

This means that all our people must be prepared and able to take their place in the life of the nation. Sound education is the key.

We cannot afford to have more than half of our young people leaving school with no real skills to take up work and life in a modern society, as is the case today.

We must also open up the doors to opportunity for

All our people must be able to share in what the country earns. If this happens, we can ensure a good standard of living for everyone.

everyone to participate. A vigorous initiative to turn our young people away from the devastating social ills that are damaging our society today is also necessary.

We can do this only by empowering people to act. Only by a larger engagement of all our people in secure jobs, meaningful occupation and concern for others will enable us to achieve this.

The SNP is committed to ensuring that we institute better salary schemes and rewards for work. This must

be able to reach all workers in the country.

It is our beliefs that our country earns well from its natural resources, industries and economic activities. All our people must be able to share in what the country earns. If this happens, we can ensure a good standard of living for everyone.

An Effective State will manage the wealth of the country efficiently and distribute it fairly. It will not allow classes of underprivileged that depend on welfare to develop.

One of our principles is opportunity in Seychelles for all Seychellois.

Conclusion

Making Seychelles An Effective State is the guiding direction of our political work today. It is what we will be elaborating on and following in our proposals and statements.

We will make our vision clear to the people of Seychelles and ensure that you join us in the realisation of this goal.

SNP - Leading The Way For Seychelles

