

A fresh future, a new direction

Today marks a milestone in the history of our party.

The cutting of a ribbon by two generations on the occasion of the re-opening of our headquarters symbolises the transition of the leadership of our party to a new generation, one which grew up amid the physical, economic and political changes and transformation of our country over the last 33 years. This new generation has had the good fortune to also see and appreciate the success of our party in bringing economic prosperity and social progress to our country in the first ten years of the existence of the party.

The DP will be 43 years old this year. The small exhibition we have mounted portrays the early years and the recent past. The first 10 years were baby steps; the years of building confidence in ourselves, discerning our fundamental philosophies and principles; of gaining the confidence of the people in them and in our ability to transform the country into a prosperous and stable society. Sadly, but not unexpectedly, the DP's absence from the political scene during the eighties coincides with the decline of the economic, moral, spiritual as well as social wellbeing of our young country. The recent past, is one of transition for our party as well as the country, after fifteen years of oblivion, dictatorship and socialism.

Our founder, James R Mancham did not seek power for his own personal aggrandisement and glory when he started this party 43 years ago. Indeed, even when the party did not have power, he took it upon himself to work for the betterment of the society by travelling at his own expense far a-field to alert the whole world about our need for development and for modernisation. He campaigned for an airport so tourists would come and spend money to generate new incomes that would drag our people from abject poverty and subsistence towards economic prosperity.

When the people voted for us and gave us an absolute majority in the general

elections of 1974 and entrusted us with the responsibility to take our country to independence in an uncertain world, they did so because they had seen and lived the tremendous economic progress the country had made in so short a time. More importantly, they had benefited from that progress. Those were the days when our currency was sound, jobs and new opportunities were plenty. Our people had seen too that economic progress had brought new opportunities for their future and the future of their children. It was in the superior interest of our country that our leaders at the time invited the leaders of the other political party into a coalition to lead our country into nationhood in order to consolidate the gains and build new prosperities for the next generation.

Today the people of Seychelles is looking to the DP once again, as they see that our country's direction is to further economic decline, social upheavals and national bankruptcy and the existing political parties unable to cope with the situation. Like the early years, the DP is not waiting until it comes to power to do what is in the national interest. Our decision to join forces with SNP was to instil a unity of purpose in the interest of the whole nation.

The people of Seychelles is eagerly searching for a fresh future and a new direction. Our slogan reflects that wish. Like the early years, the DP is proposing new ideas and providing a new vision. The DP today is a new party with a dynamic leadership, determined and able to offer real and concrete solutions to our country's problems. These solutions find resonance in our fundamental principles enshrined in our party's constitution.

Welcome to the new DP. Prepare for a fresh future and a new direction.

-- 1st March, 2008

BUILDING A NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY TO SERVE THE PEOPLE OF SEYCHELLES

- There is no point in being in politics and not in power.
- There is no moral purpose in holding power for its own sake, without an overriding moral purpose.
- We rest on real values and real policies that are in the interests of the people we seek to govern.
- We believe you can strengthen society, community, family and care for the unfortunate only with smaller government, less regulation, less taxation and strong institutions, greater freedom and more personal responsibility. It's called government in the national interest. That's a brand to die for.
- We must be seen to be ready to tackle long-term, difficult questions, such as viable currency, viable jobs, cost of living, devaluation, government debt, pensions, energy, competitiveness, deregulation, taxation, the fragmentation of family and society.
- We believe in policies that deliberately foster the growth of civil society: families, neighbourhood associations, private enterprises, charities and churches. These are the real source of economic growth and social vitality.
- The social justice agenda we endorse helps the poor discover the dignity of work, rather than making them wards of the state
- We believe in building a conservative alternative--a vision informed both by idealism and realism--we have evidence, experience and common sense on our side.

This year the DP will be 43 years old

I think it is appropriate to ask, what motivates anyone to become a politician today? After the decision by the two political parties represented in the National Assembly to award themselves as much as R5000 a month in salary increases based on the excuse that oil prices have risen, this question is very appropriate.

When Mr Mancham was old enough to understand the nature of the poverty our people were in, he did not seek political power before deciding to do something about it. He travelled overseas at his own expense seek ways to attract development to our country. He went to Britain to lobby the British Government for the airport to kick-start our economic development.

The development that he brought benefited all the people, not just a small clique. It was because the people saw that the development he encouraged benefited them that they gave the Democratic Party a landslide victory in the election of 1974, and trusted the DP to take our country to independence. Why didn't Mancham create an army from his supporters to keep himself in power and to make a lot of money for himself? If you can answer the question you will understand the principles on which the Democratic Party stand today.

At 43, we are the oldest political party in Seychelles today. We've known victory; we've known defeat. We've been in power and we've lost power even if inappropriately. We've won elections as well as loose elections, even if that too was inappropriate. Take look at our record as a party working for the people, and we will see why we should be proud, because we took our people out of abject poverty.

Consider the development that took place after the airport opened on 4th July, 1971? In 1971, the value of our imports was SR 84 million. In 1974 it reached SR160 million, increasing to SR191 million in 1975. Why is this important to know? We have been told that we have a forex problem because of all the development that has taken place. Let's see the development that we brought to the country.

Apart from the airport, we reclaimed more land to create a new commercial port and increase the size of our port city. We built the first international hotels Reef Hotel, the Coral Strand Hotel, the Beau Vallon Bay Hotel, the Mahe beach Hotel. We laid miles of mains water pipes starting from Anse Royal, down the East coast to Victoria, the North, Beau Vallon, Bel Ombre and St Louis back to Victoria. We constructed a new power station on the new reclamation. We installed the first sewerage plant and abolished the demeaning occupation of night soil disposal. We created the first housing estate and when we couldn't build houses fast enough because there were not enough Seychellois workers available, we imported them ready made from Malaysia. We made



PAUL CHOW,
LEADER OF THE
DEMOCRATIC PARTY

all those developments without foreign workers or shortage of foreign exchange.

In 1973 the world experienced one of the most serious shocks when the price of oil increased from three US dollars a barrel to thirteen US dollars a barrel when Egypt went to war with Israel. It sounds a small amount of money by today's standard, but it was a 300% increase in the price of oil. Does anyone remember what happened to us in Seychelles? We could still buy onions in the shops as and when we wanted without fear of shortages. How did we manage in 1973, which we cannot do today under the SPPF?

The answer is simple. Then we operated under a sound economic system, which is not the case today. This is why we did not have a forex problem then.

When we were in charge of the country we did not try to find excuses or blame others when things were not going well for the country. We were prepared to enter into an alliance with our political adversaries to find the best solution to pursue (economic) development to find the best solution to remove our people from poverty. Our founder had a noble principle. He placed the country first and foremost.

Today everyone respects our party, because we never abandoned our fundamental principles for short term gain. Today, many are looking at the Democratic Party for a definitive solution to our country's problems.

Yes we do have a solution. Soon we will announce our plan to turn the rupees in our pockets into dollars automatically. After that, we will no more hear the dreaded word not available when we visit the shops. After that, there will always be goods on the shelves in the shops even if they may not always be in the shelves at home. After that we would be in a position to deal with our larger problems such as the huge debts our government find impossible to repay.

The people of Seychelles have had enough. Today the people of Seychelles are yearning for a fresh future and a new direction. We are the fresh future, and we point to a new direction. The DP has a new dynamic and serious leadership. We welcome everyone in the new DP.

JOIN THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY TODAY.
CALL US ON 224916 OR 596096
OR VISIT US AT PROGRESS HOUSE, MONT FLEURI.
WE ARE OPEN MONDAY TO FRIDAY FROM 9 TILL 5.