



OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Speech

Tuesday, 23rd June, 2026

Ministers

Distinguished Chief Executives,

Colleagues and fellow servants of the nation,

Good morning.

Fifty years ago, the Republic of Seychelles stepped into independence with a vision and a promise. A promise that this young nation would be governed with purpose, administered with professionalism, and that the people of Seychelles would be placed, always, at the centre of everything we do.

Today, on Public Service Day, we honour fifty years of that promise being kept.

I chose to be here this morning in this room, with this audience because I believe that the conversation we are about to have is one of the most important conversations in the life of our nation. You are not simply heads of departments or agencies. You are the architects of how Seychelles functions. And it is fitting that, as we mark this anniversary, we ask ourselves: what does the next fifty years look like? And what is our responsibility in shaping it?

Let me be direct with you, as I believe leaders must be with one another.

The Seychelles Public Service has come a long way. We have built institutions, trained a generation of civil servants, and delivered services that have meaningfully improved the lives of our citizens. We have done this on a small island state, with limited resources, against real constraints. That is not a small achievement it is a remarkable one, and you should carry that pride.

But pride in the past must not become comfort in the present. And comfort in the present would be a disservice to the future.

The world our children and grandchildren will inhabit will be fundamentally different from the one we govern today. Artificial intelligence is already reshaping how governments deliver services. Climate change is placing new and urgent demands on our institutions. The expectations of citizens are rising they want faster, smarter, more transparent government. And the pace of change is not slowing down; it is accelerating.

So, my first aspiration for the Public Service and I say aspiration because I believe these things must be felt before they are planned is this: I want a Public Service that is not afraid of the future.

I want a Public Service that leans into change, that sees technology not as a threat to jobs or to tradition, but as a tool to serve people better. I want our institutions to be places where a young officer who has a better idea is encouraged to speak, and where leadership listens. I want us to move from a culture of compliance doing what we are told to a culture of initiative doing what is needed.

My second aspiration is this: I want a Public Service built on trust and accountability.

Trust between the Public Service and the citizens it serves. Trust between leadership and the officers on the ground. And trust within our institutions the kind of trust that makes collaboration possible, that makes accountability welcomed rather than feared.

Because accountability is not a threat. It is a foundation. A Public Service that cannot account for its decisions, its spending, and its outcomes is a Public Service that is slowly losing the confidence of the people it exists to serve. Accountability is not about finding fault it is about being answerable. To the public. To the government. And to each other.

Closely tied to accountability is good stewardship. The resources entrusted to you public funds, public assets, public land, public data do not belong to your institution. They belong to the people of Seychelles. Every decision about how those resources are used must be made with that in mind: not what is convenient, not what is expedient, but what genuinely serves the public interest.

When citizens lose faith in public institutions, they do not simply criticise a department or a ministry. They lose faith in government itself. They lose faith in the idea that the state is on their side. That is a corrosion that is very difficult to reverse and it begins, often, not with grand failures, but with small ones. A phone not answered. A letter not replied to. A service delivered without dignity.

Every interaction your institutions have with a member of the public is either building trust or eroding it. There is no neutral ground.

My third aspiration and this one falls squarely on the shoulders of everyone in this room is leadership that develops leadership.

Our public officers every one of them, at every grade have the right to be managed fairly. They have the right to be assessed on the merit of their work. They have the right to raise concerns without fear. And they have the right to go home at the end of each day knowing that their position is not at risk because of who they are, what they believe, or what they said in good conscience.

The greatest thing any of us can do in our time in these roles is not to be indispensable it is to become dispensable. To build institutions that are stronger for our having led them, and that will continue to grow long after we have moved on.

I call on each of you to look honestly at the cultures within your institutions. Are officers encouraged to speak? Are grievances handled with fairness and speed? Are promotions and opportunities based on merit? If the answer to any of those questions is uncertain, then that is where your leadership is needed most.

Let us return to why we are here.

We are not here to manage processes. We are not here to protect institutions. We are here to deliver to serve the people of Seychelles in a way that makes a tangible difference in their lives. A mother who needs a birth certificate for her child. A small business owner who needs a licence to trade. A patient who needs to understand their treatment. An elderly citizen who needs to know their pension is secure.

These are the moments that define us. Not the strategic plans. Not the annual reports. The moments when a real person encounters our institutions and leaves feeling either helped or failed.

I want a Public Service in which every citizen is treated with dignity, and in which the word “service” is taken seriously. Where the desk, the telephone, the digital platform whatever the point of contact is a place where people are met with competence, with respect, and with the genuine intention to help.

And we cannot deliver that kind of service without investing in the people who deliver it.

I have a clear aspiration: I want the Seychelles Public Service to become an exemplary employer. Not just a place of last resort, but a place of choice where talented young Seychellois are proud to build their careers, and where those who have served for decades feel that their contribution has been genuinely valued. That means creating workplaces where officers are developed, not just deployed. Where wellbeing is taken seriously. Where recognition is given, not just criticism.

In fifty years, someone will stand in a room like this and reflect on the decisions made today. They will either look back with gratitude grateful that the leaders of 2026 had the foresight, the integrity, and the courage to build something worthy of what came before or they will wonder why we did not do more when the moment called for it.

We have that moment now. The 50th anniversary of our independence is not merely a date on a calendar. It is a threshold. And the question this forum must answer not just in discussion, but in commitment, in the decisions each of you makes when you return to your institutions on Wednesday morning is this: what kind of Public Service do we choose to build?

I know what my answer is. And I believe, in your hearts, it is yours too.

Let us honour the fifty years behind us. Let us rise to the fifty years ahead.

I will close with the words of Abraham Lincoln, which have stayed with me throughout my years in public life:

“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

Abraham Lincoln

Let us be the leaders whose character is found worthy of the power that has been entrusted to us. Let us be accountable, let us be fair, let us be good stewards and above all, let us serve.

Thank you.

END