

**Allocution de S.E.Mme Olivia BERKELEY-
CHRISTMANN, Ambassadrice de France aux
Seychelles**

Inaugural session 'The Climate Show'

18 mars 2024 at 16.00 hrs

NSC Hall, Victoria, Mahé – Seychelles

**Honourable Mr Wavel Ramkalawan, President of the
Republic of Seychelles**

**Honourable Mr Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister for
Foreign Affairs and Tourism**

**Honourable Mr Roger Mancienne, Speaker of the
National Assembly**

**His Excellency Mr Velayoudom Marimoutou,
Secretary-General of the Indian Ocean Commission**

Dear representatives from various Ministries

**Dear Colleagues Ambassadors and Representatives
from the EU Member States**

**Dear representatives from various NGOs, youth
associations and private sector**

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to be here with you this afternoon for this exciting event which is the Climate Show, an initiative brought to you by the European Union and the Indian Ocean Commission.

France, the country I represent, was one of the founding members of the European Union. I am very pleased and honoured today to be representing the European Union and Team Europe. The European Union Ambassador Mr. Oskar Benedikt sends you all his best regards. Unfortunately he could not be with us today as he has travelled out of the region.

We are pleased to launch in Seychelles our series of events with the twin objectives of

- awareness raising among the young people of Seychelles on the issues of climate change and hearing their voices on the issue, and
- at the same time showcasing EU-IOC cooperation and partnership.

We feel honoured to have in our midst today his Excellency the President of the Republic of Seychelles, as well as very high level dignitaries.

Cooperation between the European Union and the Indian Ocean Commission dates back almost 40 years. In that period more than 300 million euros worth of projects have been funded for the Indian ocean region, of which 29 projects (worth around 100 MEUR) in the area of sustainable development alone.

Such an event is first of all a way of showing our attachment to regional cooperation through our work with the Indian Ocean Commission. Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations said "***The only path that offers any hope for a better future for all humanity is that of cooperation and partnership.***" I think he was right.

I remain convinced that the partnership between the European Union and the Indian Ocean Commission is essential for the well-being of the populations who live on these islands qualified as Small Island Developing States, and who are therefore exposed to particular fragilities, many related to climate change. Cooperation between the European Union and the Indian Ocean Commission covers many sectors that are key to the economy.

This takes on all its importance in view of the dichotomy in the Indian Ocean islands: they may be Small Island States but are also giants when it comes to the surface of their territories. The size of their exclusive economic zone exposes them to many challenges.

Any response to these challenges requires cooperation between strategic partners. We, the European Union, are such a strategic partner of the Indian Ocean Commission, and also of the IOC Member states, not least Seychelles. I had the privilege to take part in the political dialogue in October 2023 between the European Union and the Republic of Seychelles, and I can only commend and laud the authorities in Seychelles for their commitment to multilateralism. It is only through partnerships that we will overcome global scourges, and one such global scourge is the impact of climate change.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Climate change is real. We observe its effects daily, whether in terms of rising temperatures or torrential rains. In Europe we have experienced temperature peaks in the middle of winter. Here in the region, island states like the Seychelles are particularly vulnerable to more frequent and intense weather events - storms, heavy rainfall, flooding - as well as sea level rise. We all

remember the disastrous floods which affected Seychelles last December.

Some skeptics will say it is too late to act. But that's not what scientists tell us. Fortunately!!

There is still time, though not much.

And in order to act, we need to understand what the challenges of this climate change are, both to adapt to its consequences and to mitigate where possible its causes. This is not an easy task with a subject as complex as climate change, and awareness raising is key. This is why the EU and the IOC have partnered to bring the Climate Show to the Indian Ocean region, starting with Seychelles .

This show is destined to be interactive with a primarily young audience to discuss and address global issues related to climate change. It showcases issues in Europe, which are equally relevant for small island states, thereby showcasing the truly global nature of the problem.

Young people are certainly not responsible for climate change, but they will be most affected by it. That is simply not fair !

This is the reason why, throughout the world, young people are getting involved, expressing themselves and asserting themselves, in some cases even taking legal action to assert their right to a healthy environment.

Here, in Seychelles, I see many young people who are committed to the climate and the environment. I would like to salute their actions and efforts and encourage them to continue their commitment.

We must continue to give young people the means to make themselves heard. Environmental education is an essential aspect of this approach. It allows us to inform and share available data in order to allow young people to decide how to act for their environment, and in short for their future.

We are therefore very pleased to present, for the first time in Seychelles, The Climate Show, an interactive experience, combining videos and questions asked to participants on climate change.

It is an event open to all, but particularly dedicated to young people who will find it a unique opportunity to express themselves on climate change and to be real actors in the response to this global issue.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I would really like to thank the President of the Republic of Seychelles and the Government for their continued commitment to act against climate change. The European Union has a number of projects in the area of sustainable development with Seychelles, and we are currently formulating new projects. I can reassure the Government of Seychelles, civil society, the private sector and all young people present here today of the continued commitment of the European Union to support Seychelles in its fight against climate change.

Our gratitude also goes to the Indian Ocean Commission. We have been longstanding partners since almost 4 decades. I am very proud of what the EU and the IOC have managed to do by working together in the Indian Ocean region. I would like to address a special word of thanks to the team at the IOC who worked relentlessly for this Climate Show to be a success.

My thanks also go to Jean Remy Daue, our consultant, and his team, who made it possible for the Climate Show to travel all the way from Europe to Seychelles.

Last but not least I would like to point out that the Delegation of the European Union to Republic of Seychelles has sent one of its experts, Mr. Rajesh Parboteeah, who will be participating in the

panels tomorrow and Wednesday and explain the EU's policies and actions in the fights against climate change.

I would now like to invite you all to sit back, relax and enjoy the Climate Show!

Thank you for your kind attention.