

MINISTRY OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL AFFIARS

Seychelles lady Ministers showcasing the achievements of Seychellois women in every sphere of our society

The Minister for Employment and Social Affairs Mrs. Patricia Francourt, alongside her other colleague lady Ministers participated in the 'Women in Government Forum' on the 28th March 2022 held under the umbrella of the World Government Summit in Dubai.

The Forum, bringing together women leaders, presented an opportunity for a global dialogue on women leadership in the public sector and their important role in advancing inclusivity and enablement of women in government. Women empowerment is at the core of the portfolio responsibility of Minister Francourt being responsible for employment and social affairs, therefore her participation was crucial, particularly in the face of today's realities being experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister Francourt was a panelist along with two of her counterparts, the Minister of Human and Minority Rights from Serbia and the Minister of Community Development from UAE, whereby the topic of discussions was under the heading of 'Policies that drive societal resilience: Women at the core. Points of discussions comprised of; how governments adopt a more inclusive approach when designing social policies; examples of social policies and strategies that empower women and ensure societal resilience both emotionally and socially.

The Minister gave an overview of the Seychelles context where women participation in decision-making positions is concerned where a good number of women hold leadership positions particularly in areas where they are required to be preemptive and have foresight in order to remain current. She complimented the female domination within the different government ministries such as the women ministers, members of parliament, the judiciary, District Administration.

She spoke about how as a small island state Seychelles is trying to help its people to stop relying on the welfare system, informing of the well-important slogan adopted on the social welfare aspect 'empowering you to empower yourself', that was well received and sparked much interest from the audience. She informed of the different programmes targeting especially the youth, including young mothers, who have dropped out of school in areas of their interest to provide them with the necessary skills in order for them to secure employment. Her counterpart from the host country was particularly interested in the 'welfare to work' project currently on-going between the Employment Department and the Agency for Social Protection, earmarked for those who have been receiving financial assistance from the government for the longest time. During a side meeting with Minister Francourt she has expressed her desire to consolidate the collaboration for more discussions on the topic in the near future and the sharing of information.

The Minister addressed the different policies in discussion such as the one on flexible work arrangement, so more women can take up employment while at the same time keeping with their family commitment and to also enhance on the child care system so that it meets their requirement. She informed of statutory benefits introduced to assist women and children and provisions made available for teenage mothers to return to their education in order to have a better future for them and their family.

The Minister took the opportunity of the Forum to share her personal story as a strong and dedicated woman who has returned to her country of birth in order to share her vast experience and inspire other women of our society to ensure they remain resilient in the face of adversities. She shared of her participation on many platforms, especially during COVID-19 times, to give advice to targeted groups such as those who are prone to domestic violence, mothers on how to improve parenting skills and empowering women to use the time at home to reflect on their hopes, dreams and aspirations.

During the Forum Minister Francourt along with her other colleague Ministers pledged her support and commitment to empower more women in the highest level of decision-making.



