



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI
TO H.E. Mrs VIVIANE FOCK TAVE
NEW AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF SEYCHELLES
TO THE HOLY SEE**

*Clementine Hall
Thursday, 16 December 2010*

Madame Ambassador,

I welcome you with pleasure at this moment when you are presenting the Letters that accredit you as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Seychelles to the Holy See. I thank you for conveying to me the greetings of H.E. Mr James Alix Michel, President of the Republic, whom I had the honour to receive during his recent visit to the Holy See. I would be very grateful if you would kindly pass on to him my gratitude for the cordiality he expressed at our meeting. Through you, I likewise greet the authorities, the various political leaders and the whole of the people of Seychelles.

Your country is continuing to progress and to establish itself on the path of peace, prosperity and stability. This is without a doubt the result of the persistent efforts and generous contribution of all the political and social spheres, in both the public and private sectors.

I am pleased to congratulate the Government and the people of Seychelles for having surmounted the challenge of the world economic crisis. This is evident from a recovery in tourism and direct foreign investments and from the relaunching of the national economy, which is creating a favourable budgetary space for the reduction of the debt and for priority expenses.

However, the liberalization of the economy while preserving acquired social rights is not a change that can be achieved without overturning existing mentalities: thus it is a question of accompanying this development so as to anticipate its effects, which cannot always be controlled

over time, with the provision of a necessary ethical foundation and by playing the card of responsibility. “Everyone has the right to participate in economic life and the duty to contribute, each according to his own capacity, to the progress of his own country and to that of the entire human family” (*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, n. 333).

The programme of economic development must also pay careful attention to the need to respect the integrity and rhythms of nature, for natural resources are limited and some of them are not renewable. The solution to the ecological problem requires economic activity to show greater respect for the environment; by reconciling its needs with those of environmental protection, “it must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment” (*Caritas in Veritate*, n. 69).

I appreciate in particular, in this domain, the Government’s initiative for restoring and preserving the coral reef. It is the first line of defence against rising ocean levels and remains an important habitat for breeding fish — that constitute the country’s main source of protein. This initiative also provides income and employment in the sectors of fishing and tourism. It is therefore necessary that consumers and the agents of industrial activities develop greater responsibility in their behaviour.

Increasing the responsibility of all also involves active and efficient cooperation for the respect and protection of human dignity in the face of every effort to propose reductive and debasing images or of the exploitation of each person. International tourism, a major factor of economic development and cultural growth, can also become an occasion for exploitation and moral degradation (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 61). Only the recognition of human dignity makes possible the common and personal development of all (Jas 2: 1-9).

To encourage this integral human development and to reinforce intergenerational solidarity, it is necessary to protect the family. Promoted and upheld by the State and society, the family plays an absolutely original and irreplaceable role in the education of children. With the family, your nation will continue to build its future by giving to its young generations an appropriate formation capable of transcending the limits within which it is sometimes desired to enclose them and of providing them with the practical means to combat social evils, particularly unemployment and drugs.

In this perspective I underline and encourage once again the efforts that have been made for some time to introduce a high quality educational system. It is also right to support the least privileged and to fight corruption, guaranteeing across the various social classes objective equality before the law.

For her part, the local Church wishes to continue to make a specific contribution to your nation, to support the family and the education and formation of young people, as well as the integral development of each person. This development will not only embrace material but also spiritual

growth, whose guiding criterion is found in the active power of charity in truth (cf. *Caritas in Veritate*, nn. 76, 77).

The quest for the spiritual, which dwells in the hearts of the people of Seychelles, finds its meaning and fullness in Christ. It dynamizes the whole of society, with its capacity for inspiring the power of reconciliation in order to promote justice and brotherhood and to build prosperity and peace. To this end, I encourage perseverance in this collaboration and I wish, through you, to greet warmly the Bishop of Port-Victoria and his collaborators, as well as all the Catholic faithful present in your country.

At the time when you are inaugurating your noble mission of representation to the Holy See, I would like to renew the expression of my pleasure in the excellent relations that the Republic of Seychelles and the Holy See maintain, and I offer you, Madame Ambassador, my best wishes for the success of your mission. You may be certain that you will always find with my collaborators the welcome and understanding that you may need.

Upon you, Your Excellency, upon your family and upon your collaborators, as well as upon the people of Seychelles and upon its leaders, I cordially impart an abundance of divine Blessings.

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