

ق - 68/(11/13)/033 - خ(0668)



كلمة

فخامة السيد / داني فور
نائب رئيس جمهورية سيشل

أمام
القمة العربية الأفريقية الثالثة

دولة الكويت: 19 - 20 نوفمبر 2013

**Arab-African Summit
18th-20th November 2013**

**Speech by Mr. Danny Faure, Vice President of the
Republic of Seychelles
Delivered on 20th November 2013**

“Partners in Development and Investment”

**His Highness Sheikh Sabah Alahmed Aljaber Alsabah,
Amir of the State of Kuwait,**

H.E Mr.. Hailemariam

**Majesties, Dessalegn, prime Minister of the Federal
Republic of Ethiopia, Chair Person of the African
Union and Co'Chairperson of the Third Arab African
Summit**

Highnesses,

Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Honourable Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and his government, for hosting this important summit and to the people of Kuwait who have warmly welcomed us in their beautiful country.

The Arab world has been a loyal partner to the African continent on its road to socio economic development. The Afro-Arabic relationship is one of the world's oldest examples of exchanges having existed between two civilisations.

In this year that we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the African Union, this Summit showcases to the whole world a shining evidence of the vitality of our long-standing partnership.

Mr. Chairman,

Africa is the world's new wonder continent.

Its population is the world's youngest and its sub-soil the richest. Add to these, the increased inflow of foreign direct investment into the continent and one understands the root cause of the unfolding African renaissance that is partly reflected through the doubling of the rate of growth of the continent's combined Gross Domestic Product, going from 2.2 to 5.6 percent over the last decade.

It is this feel good factor associated with the African renaissance that unsurprisingly led African leaders at the last United Nations General Assembly in September of this year, to make a bold statement by declaring that this century will be an African one.

Sceptics, or rather cynics, were quick to dismiss the idea of an “African Century”. However, not only do official statistics indicate otherwise but the feel on the grounds also strongly suggest that this time round Afro-pessimists will be proven wrong.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) which totalled US\$ 80 billion in 2011 is expected to reach US\$ 150 billion by the end of 2015.

As we work towards elaborating new development targets for post 2015, more concrete and effective measures to expand cooperation in economy and trade, energy, investment, finance, agricultural development, tourism and human resources development will bring renewed impetus to our long-standing ties.

Africa knows it can count on the support of the Arab countries in establishing a new world order based on peace, sustainable development, common prosperity, respect, justice and diversity.

The new synergies created today will therefore generate the right frameworks that will encourage the sustainable growth needed for the future generations of both civilisations.

Mr. Chairman,

The support of various partners from the Arab world has been decisive in creating the future that the Seychellois people aspire to.

At a time when support from traditional partners is dwindling due to our high GDP per capita, the assistance from the Arab countries has played a pivotal role in spearheading important development projects in the Seychelles.

Our Arab partners have understood that small island developing states like Seychelles are still very vulnerable to external shocks and need to be supported in maintaining their achievements.

Mr. Chairman,

Seychelles like Africa is open for business.

At present close to 90 per cent of imports enter our country under a duty-free regime. We are currently members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Free Trade Area (FTA) and currently in negotiations to accede to the Southern

African Development Community (SADC) Free Trade Area (FTA).

Seychelles is also an active member of the Tripartite Initiative which will create one of the world's largest Free Trade Area (FTA) in terms of land area and population. We have the potential to be a gateway between Africa and the Middle East. Seychelles' imports from the Middle East region account for a quarter of its total imports and imports from the African mainland have tripled since 2007.

Seychelles currently boasts a network of 28 Double Taxation Agreements (DTAs) of which 9 are with African States and 5 have been concluded with Arab States. We are also party to similar agreements with partner States in Asia and Europe.

Last year, the country was connected to the African mainland via a fibre optic cable which is connected through the Port city of Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania. This has created an opportunity for growth, which we hope that investors from both Africa and Middle East can seize particularly in the areas of financial, education and professional services.

Sea is to Seychelles what land is to most other African states – it is depository of our resources, it holds the promise of our economic potentials. This overriding importance of the ocean is reflected in the “blue economy” initiative that Seychelles is championing under the auspices of the United Nations.

In order to further discussions on how we could fully unlock the true potential of our blue economy, Seychelles in collaboration with the UAE, will be organising a meeting on the blue economy in January 2014 in Abu Dhabi as part of the sustainability week.

We look forward to the active participation of our various partners in this discussion and we would like to thank them for the support and strong interest shown in this initiative.

Protection of our oceans is essential for the sustainability of our world. Sustainable development entails an intelligent exploitation of resources found in the oceans.

On this note, I am also delighted to announce that Seychelles will be launching the bidding process as part of the second phase for oil exploration licenses early next year. I call upon Governments from both Africa and the

Arab countries to encourage their companies to take part in the process.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude once again to the Kuwaiti government, on behalf of myself and my delegation for hosting this very important summit.

Both regions remain lands of vast opportunities for development and investment.

I call on our Arab partners to further reinforce their partnership with Africa so that the 21st century delivers on its promises to be the African century.

I thank you.