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INFORMATION FROM NON-SELF-GOVERNING TERRITORIES

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION ON AFRICAN AND
ADJACENT TERRITORIES UNDER UNITED KINGDOM ADMINISTRATION

Note by the Secretary-General

SEYCHELLES

In accordance with the statement of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 27 September 1961, the Government of the United Kingdom has transmitted to the Secretary-General, the following political and constitutional information on the Territory of Seychelles.

This information, which was received on 7 March 1963, is herewith submitted to the General Assembly at its eighteenth session.^{1/}

^{1/} In accordance with General Assembly resolution 1700 (XVI) of 19 December 1961, this information is also submitted to the Committee on Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories.

SEYCHELLES

POPULATION

1. The Territory of the Seychelles consists of ninety-two islands; most of the land area, and of the population, is concentrated on the island of Mahe. The population of the Seychelles at the census taken in May 1960 was 41,425. Apart from a very small number of Asians engaged in trade and commerce, and a few Europeans, all are Seychellois.

CONSTITUTION

2. The present Constitution, which dates from 1960, provides for a Governor, assisted by an Executive Council and a Legislative Council. Its main features are as follows:

Governor

3. The Governor (at present the Earl of Oxford and Asquith) is head of the administration of the Territory. In the exercise of his powers, he is advised by the Executive Council. He normally acts in accordance with the advice he receives from the Executive Council and can only act against this advice in specified circumstances.

Executive Council

4. The Executive Council is the principal executive organ and normally takes decisions on all matters affecting the internal government of the Territory. It is composed of four non-official members (of whom three are elected) and four ex officio civil servants. The present membership of the Executive Council, under the chairmanship of the Governor, is as follows:

Dr. M.H. Stevenson-Delhomme

Mr. H.C. Gontier

Mr. L.M.H. Savy

Mr. F.H. Ah-Mane

Mr. G.P. Lloyd (Colonial Secretary)

Mr. A.F.M.A. Sauzier (Attorney-General)

Mr. J.W. Jeffrey (Administrative Secretary)

Temporarily vacant (Treasurer).

All but the last three named are local inhabitants. The last Treasurer was also a local inhabitant.

Legislative Council

5. The Legislative Council passes laws, with the assent of the Governor, for the peace, order and good government of the Seychelles. It consists of six non-official members (of whom five are elected) and six civil servants, including four ex-officio and two nominated, under the presidency of the Governor.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM

6. The five elected members of the Legislative Council are chosen by virtually universal adult suffrage (there is a small property and literacy qualification). The last elections were held in 1960 and the following were returned:

Dr. M.H. Stevenson-Delhomme
Mrs. E. de Coulhac-Mazerieux
Mr. L.M.H. Savy
Mr. H.C. Gontier
Mr. F.W. Parsons.

All represent the Taxpayers and Producers Party, except for Mrs. E. de Coulhac-Mazerieux who stood as an independent.

JUDICIARY

7. There is a Supreme Court in the Territory, presided over by the Chief Justice, with full civil and criminal jurisdiction. In addition there is a magistrates' court, which has civil and criminal jurisdiction in respect of less serious offences. Appeal in civil cases lies to the Supreme Court of Mauritius, and in criminal cases to the East African Court of Appeal. The legal system in the Territory is based on the Napoleonic Code (which was in force at the time Seychelles became a Crown Colony), as amended from time to time by local ordinance.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

8. There are two district councils in the Territory elected on a basis of universal adult suffrage, viz., the Victoria District Council (the capital) and

the Praslin District Council (which covers the island of Praslin and five other islands). These councils perform the normal range of local government functions such as maintenance of roads and markets and street cleaning, and raise revenue from property on taxes and fees. There are local boards in North Mahe and South Mahe, La Digue and Silhouette. Members of these boards are appointed by the Governor and their powers are more restricted.

9. A local government board is responsible for supervising the work of the Victoria and Praslin District Councils and acts as adviser to the local boards.
