

## **Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

On behalf of the government of the Republic of Seychelles, I would like to thank the Government of Kenya, Kenya Space Agency, International Astronautical Federation and La Agenzia Spaziale Italiana for the invitation to participate in this very important forum.

Seychelles is the smallest African state. Most of the time, it is not visible on the maps of the continent. *I could not see Seychelles on the maps so far shown in this forum today.* It is not uncommon that it is missed out when drawing the maps. It is often missed out and when asked where is Seychelles, one just takes a pen or a marker and draws a few dots somewhere south east of the equator and writes the name Seychelles on the side. However, Seychelles is very visible through Space Science and Technologies.

Being a small oceanic archipelago, Space Science and Technologies are crucial to our socio-economic development, even to our own existence in the future. We are threatened by Climate Change. Our own neighbour, the Maldives islands are already at considerable risks of this phenomenon.

Seychelles is seriously embracing the Blue Economy as one of the main pillars of the economy. We are approximately 1% land and 99% sea, having over 1 million square kilometers of Extensive Economic Zone (EEZ). *Knowing how to swim may be a recommendable survival skill.* This huge EEZ presents a great challenge and we need to harness Space Science and Technologies to tap the resources of this vast ocean space. We are in need of Space Science and Technologies for:

1. Maritime security
2. Accurate weather forecasts
3. Harnessing our seabed resources
4. Development of our fishing industry
5. Support to emergency operations
6. Environmental and disaster management

Another very important area is the efficient operational management of one of the largest Flight Information Region (FIR) of the continent that Seychelles holds

responsibility for its safe operation. The list is not exhaustive, so we look forward to be a partner of the African Space Agency.

Before, I conclude, I would like to state that it may turns out to be that the few dots somewhere southeast of the equator may have a comparative geographical advantage for the continent in relation to Space Science and Technologies.

I thank you all for your attention.