

*Good afternoon fellow delegates. I thank the PGA and Mr Peter Barcroft for this invitation to attend this Workshop.*

My name is Flory Larue, MP from the Republic of Seychelles, an island state made up of 115 islands and an EEZ of approximately 400,000 square nautical miles, with a population of just under 100,000 souls. Even though classed as a high income, we are still a developing country; especially in relation to specialized fields.

In Seychelles we pride ourselves and we are known worldwide for our pristine environment. We have done everything in our power to preserve this natural gift that as a nation we are obligated to preserve for humanity and future generations.

*We invite you all to come and visit.*

As our environment is fundamentally linked to our socio-economic survival through both tourism and fisheries; we have mainly concentrated on the requirements for the commercial and non-commercial movements of animals and plant materials, machinery and equipments which may pose a biosecurity risk to the Seychelles through the possible introduction of pests, diseases and invasive alien species. These regulations are mainly found in the Animal and Plant and Biosecurity Act.

The main port of entry for people and goods into Seychelles is through the airport and seaport on Mahé, the main island, and in addition there is significant recreational boat traffic and emphasis has been put on the monitoring of these ports of entry and awareness of sanitary and phytosanitary or biosecurity requirements.

We in Seychelles have mainly dealt with biological security issues from an environmental dimension and we now have to join the world in facing menaces which are becoming more common through a range of bio health and biosecurity threats.

The COVID global pandemic has brought the threat of biological to the forefront of discussions and underlines the urgency to assess our respective state's ability to be successful in dealing with it. And in order to do so it is necessary to extend partnerships, cooperation, and co-ordination between public health, clinical medicine, private business, law enforcement and other agencies locally, nationally and internationally.

The coronavirus pandemic leaves the world full of questions in the way it changed our way of living from complete global lockdowns, to social distancing and changing the way communities' functions, while not forgetting the enormous economic impact we are dealing with combined with the consequences of the Ukraine war.

The Health Dimension of biosecurity though addressed through legislation in Seychelles is being reviewed in relation to bringing the country up to date with the right technology. The size of our country brings its own limitations on how to address this and we appreciate the opportunity to discuss in this forum how states can regionally work together to assist others with these deficiencies.

Seychelles has been a state Party to The Biological Weapons Convention since October 1979 and covers the security aspect of biosecurity and just last year in March 2021 the Prevention of Terrorism Act was amended to address the criminal act of financing biological weapons.

As a small island state, we already have regulations in place to face new threats by non-state actors or a rogue state; though we do have gaps that needs to be addressed,

this forum will reinforce and extend our knowledge as parliamentarians in identifying the concrete steps to achieve our goals as a country, and as a global community.

I thank you.