



James R. Mancham Peace and Diplomacy Research Institute



NEWSLETTER 2019 (1) - First Edition

Welcome to the first edition of our bi-annual newsletter.

As we begin this year with new plans and new ideas, let's go back to some of the activities we organised and events we attended last year.

2018 was a fruitful year, only one year on after its official launch, the Institute was able to slowly make itself known in Seychelles, within the Indian Ocean region and also in other parts of the world. This was primarily through networking and collaboration with several distinguished individuals and reputable organisations.

As we embark on a new journey, we also remember the late Sir James R. Mancham, Founding President of the Republic of Seychelles, after which the Institute was named. We continue to honour him by promoting the ideals which he strongly advocated - peace, unity and national reconciliation.

For 2019, we have several activities planned to carry forward our mission of making a practical contribution to the promotion and maintenance of peace and stability within the region and beyond. We would like to thank everyone for their support and we look forward to continue working together.

Diana Benoit - Director of the Institute

Institutional changes implemented in 2018

Following extensive discussion and consultation – with the recent endorsement of the University's Senate and in line with recommendations made by the committee formed by President Danny Faure to identify suitable recognition of the late president – the following changes have been made:

Change in name of institution

The name of the institution is now known as:

James R. Mancham
Peace and Diplomacy Research Institute

Change in structure and governance

The structure of the institution comprises a Director, who will be directly accountable for the performance of the Institute to the University's Research Committee and to Senate. As a result, the post of President of the institution together with the Board of Trustees and Steering Committee were dissolved.

With these changes, the Institute will operate in the same way as the University's other research institutes and the system of governance will be consistent with the University's requirements.

Our Vision

“To be an international hub for peace and diplomacy studies contributing to global peace through research, education, training and mediation.”

SEMINARS

A series of seminars were held on different aspects of change. The idea is to encourage participants not only from the University of Seychelles (UniSey) but also from interested organisations and the general public.

“Who cares about Somalia?”



The topic of the first seminar (which was held in May) was Somalia, a country with an unenviable modern history but which is now making every effort to find a place in the international community. Known best in Seychelles for its pirate activity and threats to our fishing and tourism industries, Somalia is commonly thought of as a failed state. But is that a fair indictment and what is being done to improve things? To brief the audience and encourage discussion on the way forward, a panel was formed with three specialist speakers: the Political Counsellor at the British High Commission in Victoria, Mr Matthew Harper; Superintendent of the Seychelles Prison Service, Mr Raymond St Ange and Associate Professor at UniSey, Dr Ashton Berry.

“France in and France of the Indian Ocean”

The second of the seminars was held in June, also at The Station. This time the subject was France, the country being in the unusual position of having territory within the region and, in addition, having a wider influence. For this event, the main speakers were the French Ambassador, His Excellency, Lionel Majesté Larrouy; former Minister of Foreign Affairs and now Health Minister, Jean-Paul Adam; and the Dean of UniSey’s Faculty of Arts and Social Development, Ms Joelle Perreau.



India’s Indian Ocean Policy



To provide an overview of his nation’s place in relation to the Indian Ocean, the High Commissioner of India in Seychelles, Dr Ausaf Sayeed, made a presentation that was as wide-ranging as it was perceptive. All of this is of great interest to Seychelles as a small island nation in a region of change but also because the islands contain an influential community of people of Indian descent. It is little wonder that the event was well attended and attracted extensive media coverage.



IN THE NEWS

Seychelles Diplomatic Convention

The Seychelles Diplomatic Convention 2018, previously known as the Honorary Consuls' Conference, was officially launched by the Department of Foreign Affairs on October 1st at the Eden Bleu Hotel. This is a biennial event organised by the Department which brings together all of Seychelles' Honorary Consuls and Ambassadors.



SA IORAG's Academic Outreach Programme



The South African Chapter of the Indian Ocean Rim Association Academic Group (SA IORAG) visited Tanzania, Seychelles and Mauritius to spearhead its academic networking programme in Africa. Participants included academics, students and research institutes from the UniSey; as well as other private and public organisations in Seychelles. Mrs Kelly Hoareau, the Director of the James Michel Blue Economic Research Institute at UniSey led the discussion and the participants

had the opportunity to introduce their respective area of expertise and also interact with the SA IORAG representatives.

International Day of Peace

The Institute partnered with the Citizens Engagement Platform Seychelles, Seychelles National Youth Council, Seychelles Police, Youth Hostel and the Universal Peace Federation and formed an Organising Committee which prepared activities for the 2018 International Day of Peace on September 21st. The event started with the official launch of the International Day of Peace 2018 which included presentations which focused on the issue of peace, religion and living values.



Peace Road

The Peace Day seminar was followed by a march – Peace Road – which led to the Peace Park where some entertainment had been organised by various students and youth groups.



INTERNATIONAL EVENTS

6th World Ocean Council Sustainable Development Summit

The Blue Economy continues to make headlines and is likely to do so well into the future. It is only a few years since the idea was first promoted in its present form, with Seychelles (under the then leadership of former president James Michel) soon recognized as a pioneering nation. Even in a world of electronic communication, face-to-face contact is still effective, and well-chosen conferences, where experts come together, provide an opportunity to achieve this. One such event, organised by the World Ocean Council, took place in Hong Kong in November 2018. An important link with peace issues is the likely impact of climate change and the way it will affect different country's resources.

Second Africa Summit Convenes in South Africa

The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and the Royal House of Mandela sponsored the Second Africa Summit which was organised in Cape Town, South Africa from the 21st to 24th November 2018. The Summit, under the theme: "Peace and Human Development in Africa: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values" was dedicated to Honouring the Legacy of President Nelson Mandela. The Summit is one of a series of events which have been organised this year to commemorate the Nelson Mandela Centennial Celebration Year (1918-2018).



Visit on Robben Island

The Seychelles delegation did not miss the opportunity to visit Robben Island – a unique symbol of "the triumph of the human spirit over adversity, suffering and injustice". The visit began with a bus tour around the island and then a tour of the prison by Mr Dumisani Mwandla, an ex-political prisoner on Robben Island from 1989 to 1991.



VISITS

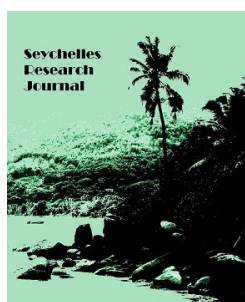
On UniSey's Graduation Day - November 15th, we had the pleasure of welcoming our friends from Madagascar - Milly Ibanda and Miss Jonah Rabakomalalanirina who visited the Institute and University.



Prof. Dennis Hardy met with Dr. Florian Krampe, a researcher from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), within the Climate Change and Risk Programme in November 2018. It is hoped that this will lead to collaboration between our two institutions.

UniSey Launches New Research Journal

UniSey is launching a new publication, Seychelles Research Journal. It is an online journal with two issues each year, in February and August. In the interests of sharing knowledge as widely as possible it is open access, making it free to all readers.



The aim of the journal is to not only to highlight research at the university but also to offer researchers across Seychelles an opportunity to share their various findings. It includes research undertaken within as well as about Seychelles. Boundaries are drawn loosely in another way, too, with relevant studies undertaken in neighbouring islands and other small island states.

Volume 1, Number 1 of SRJ can now be viewed at:

www.seychellesresearchjournal.com, together with details of how to contribute to future issues.

OUR PLANS FOR 2019

We will continue working on our three main areas of activity: peace and reconciliation, the development of a Diplomatic Academy, and geopolitics in the Indian Ocean. We will also start developing a postgraduate programme, an MA in Peace Studies in partnership with the Durban University of Technology, South Africa.

OUR STAFF

- Ms. Diana Benoit - Director
- Emeritus Prof. Dennis Hardy - Research Professor
- Prof. Christian Bueger - Honorary Professor (Denmark)
- Prof. Geoffrey Harris - Honorary Professor (South Africa)
- Prof. Kris Valaydon - Honorary Professor (Mauritius)

STAY CONNECTED



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New Website Coming Soon

For more information, or if you have any comments and/or suggestions, kindly contact Diana Benoit by sending an email to Diana.Benoit@unisey.ac.sc.