



**Opinion**

**Seychelles and its Neighbouring Islands: Synchronizing Foreign Policy Discourses Relating to UK from Conservative to Labour**

by Dr. Srimal Fernando

Britain aims to pursue a forward-looking foreign policy, associating with nations around the globe while strengthening the rules-based international system. During the era of 'new imperialism,' Britain secured diplomatic footing for its significant Indian Ocean regional territories in the late nineteenth century. Her

Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was the longest-serving British monarch in history, ascending to the throne in 1952. King Charles III (formerly referred to as "The Prince of Wales") ascended to the British throne upon the passing away of Queen Elizabeth. The legacy of the empire continues to influence modern times. The four Indian Ocean islands of Mauritius, the Seychelles, the Maldives, and Sri Lanka, which were governed by the British at different points in history, are the UK's (United Kingdom's) closest Commonwealth allies in the Indian Ocean region (IOR). Over the past seven decades, the UK's commerce, aid, and infrastructure expenditures have increased prospects for the growth and development of the Indian Ocean islands. One of the fundamental goals of British diplomacy is to develop and implement the country's foreign policy responsibilities in collaboration with both the Conservative and Labour Parties. The Conservative manifesto emphasizes Britain's global historical position, followed by a pledge to strengthen ties and increase influence. Thatcher, Prime Minister from 1979 to 1990, believed in the importance of competition and the free market. Margaret Thatcher's ideals and teachings inspired the conservative philosophy known as 'Thatcherism'. One of David Cameron's Conservative Party campaign themes was 'Our Society, Your Life,' which highlighted his shared values with Thatcher. On the other hand, the Labour Party aspires to reset and reorient Britain's global role, based on human rights and international law. In terms of electoral performance, Tony Blair, the UK's Prime Minister from 1997 to 2007, remains the most successful Labour leader of all time. Blair was Labour's longest-serving and youngest Prime Minister since 1812. In its interactions with the four Indian Ocean islands, the UK stands to benefit strategically and economically by achiev-

ing the right combination of factors. Given their vital linkages to the UK, the potential of these four Indian Ocean states can be realised by transforming UK foreign policy, with a focus on the larger goal of regional stability.

**Foreign Affairs of the UK—Seychelles**

Over the course of decades, diplomatic ties between the UK and the Seychelles have come across numerous milestones on the path to fruitful two-sided diplomacy. Her Majesty the Queen toured the Seychelles in 1972, while the islands were still a British colony. The Seychelles and the UK have maintained solid bilateral relations since the establishment of diplomatic relations in June 1976. The Seychelles place a high priority on their historically strong connections with the UK. Trade links have resulted in thriving commercial partnerships between both countries. Total UK The total commerce in goods and services between the UK and Seychelles was £287 million in 2023 (Trade and Investments UK, 2024). Tourism is an integral component of the country's economy, with an increasing number of visitors each year. The share of UK travellers visiting the Seychelles was 19,870 (Tourism analytics), accounting for 5.7 %.

**Uni Sey at 15 : Longstanding ties to the UK**

Since its inception, high-level UK dignitaries have visited the University Of Seychelles which has led to significant discourse and academic collaborations. The Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage at the Uni Sey now offers a three-year Bachelor of Sciences (BSc, Honours) in Travel and Tourism Economics (BTTE) program with the finest standards in line with the British

curriculum.

**The UK -Mauritius, The Maldives, Sri Lanka**

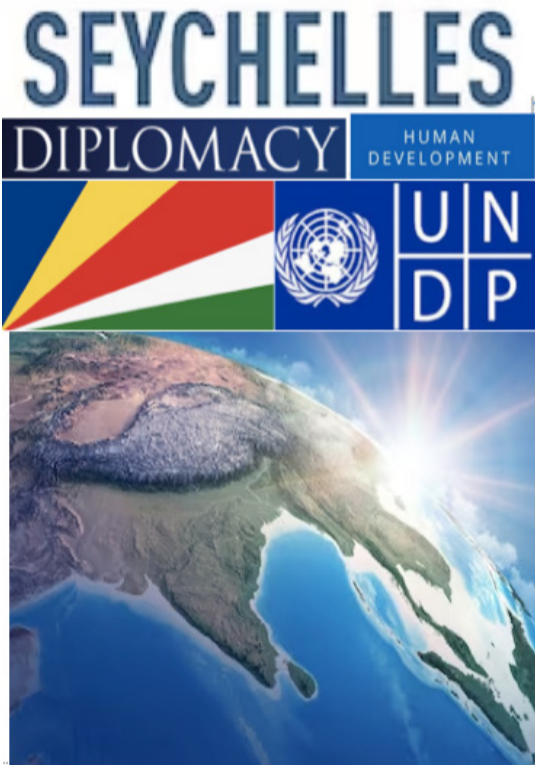
The Mauritius place a high priority on its historical ties with the UK. The Maldives was the UK's 110th largest commercial partner. In 2023, the UK will remain one of the top ten investors in Sri Lanka, with over 100 British companies having operations there. Businesses from the UK operate on the island, generating total revenue of £1.4 billion (Department for International Trade, 2023).

**Regional Diplomacy with UK**

Global powers, such as the United Kingdom (UK), will need to change their foreign policy to safeguard long-term interests while identifying new global realities in a developing scenario in the Indian Ocean region. It is essential to rethink foreign policy direction of the four Indian Ocean islands' in light of the UK's presence there, as this influence is growing in significance.

**About the author:**

*Dr. Srimal Fernando is a Senior Lecturer, Department of Tourism and Cultural Heritage at the University of Seychelles. Dr. Fernando is the author of Politics, Economics and Connectivity: In Search of the South Asian Union and holds a PhD in International Affairs. (email srimal.fernando@unisey.ac.sc)*



**Minister's message for Earth day 2024**

**Uniting for a Plastic-Free Future  
Planet vs Plastics**

“Seychelles is joining the global community today to commemorate Earth Day under the theme "Planet vs. Plastics." This year's theme underscores the urgent need to tackle the issue of plastic pollution, recognizing its detrimental effects on human health and the environment. Plastic pollution is not merely an environmental concern; it poses a severe threat to human health, comparable to the challenges of climate change. As plastics degrade into microplastics, they release harmful chemicals into our food, water sources, and even the air we breathe. It is estimated that plastic waste makes up 80% of all marine pollution. According to BBC, there are more than 1.71 trillion pieces of plastics floating into the ocean. In recent years, the pervasive issue of plastic pollution has emerged as a significant threat to our environment. The convenience of single-use plastics has led to dire consequences—our

oceans, landfills, and ecosystems are now inundated with plastic waste, endangering biodiversity and human health. The Seychelles government has taken proactive measures to combat this crisis by implementing regulations to ban plastic bags, plastic utensils, and polystyrene boxes since 2017. These steps are vital in our commitment to safeguarding our environment and promoting sustainable practices. During the United Nations Environment Assembly 5.2, the global community reached a consensus on the necessity for a legally binding agreement to combat plastic pollution. An Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) was established with the responsibility of drafting this agreement by 2024. This comprehensive agreement aims to address all stages of the plastic life cycle, encompassing production, design, disposal, and the promotion of reusable and recyclable products. Seychelles is actively

engaged in this agreement, with the INC currently convening in Ottawa to finalize its provisions. It is imperative that we rethink our consumption habits, reduce our reliance on single-use plastics, and embrace sustainable alternatives. Every decision to refuse plastic bags, opt for reusable bottles, or minimize plastic waste contributes to the preservation of our planet. Efforts to reduce plastic production by 60% by 2040 are crucial in combating plastic pollution and ensuring a sustainable future for our planet. This reduction target, 2 endorsed by international bodies, underscores the pressing need for concerted action to mitigate the adverse effects of plastic pollution on our environment and health. As stewards of this Earth, it is our responsibility to lead by example and advocate for meaningful change. Governments, businesses, and individuals must collaborate to implement policies and initia-

tives aimed at curbing plastic proliferation and fostering a culture of sustainability. Our commitment to addressing the plastic crisis is unwavering. We are dedicated to implementing comprehensive strategies to reduce plastic pollution, promote recycling, and transition to a circular economy. Through innovation and collective action, we can mitigate the detrimental impacts of plastics and secure a cleaner, healthier future. As we unite to confront the challenge of plastic pollution on Earth Day 2024, let us each pledge to take meaningful action in our daily lives. Whether it's reducing our use of single-use plastics, participating in local clean-up initiatives, or advocating for policy changes to promote sustainable practices, every individual has the power to make a difference. Together, let's commit to building a cleaner, healthier planet for ourselves and future generations.”



• Minister of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment Flavien Joubert

**SEYCHELLES WEATHER FORECAST**

Temperature	Wind	Sunrise	Sunset	UV Index	Humidity	Moon Phase	Tides	Solunar Activity										
29°- 30°	SE10 mph	6:16 am	6:15 pm	11	78%	Waxing Gibbous	<table border="1"> <tr><th>Time</th><th>Metre</th></tr> <tr><td>HIGH 05:13am</td><td>(1.11m)</td></tr> <tr><td>LOW 11:03am</td><td>(0.26m)</td></tr> <tr><td>HIGH 05:24pm</td><td>(1.23m)</td></tr> <tr><td>LOW 11:27pm</td><td>(0.21m)</td></tr> </table>	Time	Metre	HIGH 05:13am	(1.11m)	LOW 11:03am	(0.26m)	HIGH 05:24pm	(1.23m)	LOW 11:27pm	(0.21m)	High
Time	Metre																	
HIGH 05:13am	(1.11m)																	
LOW 11:03am	(0.26m)																	
HIGH 05:24pm	(1.23m)																	
LOW 11:27pm	(0.21m)																	