Unlocking Climate Finance for African Island States/ Regional Launch of RESIslands

Organised by the Republic of Seychelles & the UN Economic Commission for Africa

COP 31 | Africa Pavilion | 2:45 – 4:15 pm

Panellists:

1. **H.E. Marie May Jeremie**
   Minister for Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources, Republic of Seychelles

Ms. Marie-May Jeremie is the Minister for Environment, Climate, Energy and Natural Resources. She holds a Master's Degree in Environment from the University of Melbourne and an undergraduate degree in Biological Sciences from Edith Cowan University.



Ms. Jeremie is a highly skilled senior executive with extensive experience and a strong interest in biodiversity conservation, ocean governance, science-to-policy advocacy, and the establishment and management of protected areas in Seychelles. A trained conservation biologist, she has been actively involved in national biodiversity conservation and environmental management, as well as the development of environmental policies and legislation in Seychelles.

Over the past 15 years, Ms. Jeremie has worked across both governmental and non-governmental platforms, contributing significantly to conservation efforts. She has served, and continues to serve, on numerous boards in the fields of environment, conservation, and resource management, both locally and internationally.

She has played an instrumental role as a policy lead for ocean governance, notably contributing to the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan and, more recently, to advancing climate and ocean finance initiatives. Prior to her appointment as Minister, Ms. Jeremie was the Chief Executive Officer of the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT).

Ms. Jeremie also serves as the current President of the Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA).

2. **Mr. CASIMIRO JORGE SANCA**
Director-General of the Environmental Fund, Ministry of Environment and Biodiversity, Guinea-Bissau



Casimiro Jorge Sanca is a Guinean economist and public-sector professional with over 20 years of experience in financial and administrative management, public procurement, and the coordination and implementation of development and environmental projects.

He currently serves as Director-General of the Environmental Fund at Guinea-Bissau's Ministry of Environment and Biodiversity. Throughout his career, he has held several senior technical and coordination positions in national and internationally funded projects, particularly in the areas of climate change adaptation, climate-smart agriculture, environmental governance, and institutional capacity development.

His professional experience includes serving as National Director of the COASTAL Project, focused on strengthening the adaptive capacity and resilience of vulnerable coastal communities in Guinea-Bissau to climate risks, as well as National Coordinator of the Climate-Smart Agriculture Promotion Project in Eastern Guinea-Bissau. He has also contributed to the implementation of projects supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the European Union, and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA).

Casimiro has participated in several regional and international climate finance and adaptation processes, including Green Climate Fund capacity-building initiatives, NAP Expo, and technical meetings of the African Island States Climate Commission (AISCC).

He holds a degree in General Economics from Universidade Lusófona da Guiné and postgraduate studies in Finance and Accounting at the Catholic University of West Africa (UCAO).

His work focuses on strengthening institutional capacity, mobilising environmental and climate finance, and promoting sustainable and climate-resilient development in Guinea-Bissau.

3. **Dr. Ibrahim NORBERT RICHARD,**
Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) Secretary General

Dr. Ibrahim Norbert Richard was appointed head of the IOC General Secretariat for the remaining period of the current mandate, scheduled until July 2028. He became the 11th Secretary General of the IOC.



Doctor of law and career diplomat, Mr. Ibrahim Norbert Richard has a solid experience of international organizations and strategic negotiations.

Coming from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Madagascar, he had been Diplomatic Advisor to the Prime Minister since November 2025.Previously, he served for five years as Under-Secretary-General of the Organization of African, Caribbean and Pacific States, where he followed in particular political and human development issues. In this context, he has participated in strategic dialogues with the European Union and several international partners.

During his career, Dr. Ibrahim Norbert Richard was also:

- Chargé d'affaires at the Embassy of Madagascar in Brussels
- Research Officer at the Center for Strategic Studies and Analysis of the Malagasy Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Head of Africa and Consular and General Affairs Divisions

A specialist in international relations and official development assistance, he also contributed to the training of Malagasy diplomats as a lecturer at the National School of Administration of Madagascar.

4. **Ms. Hanan Morsy**
   Deputy Executive Secretary (Programme) and Chief Economist, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.



Ms. Morsy has a wealth of cross-country experience and vast expertise in leading top-quality policy and development work and building strong partnerships, working in international organizations and the private sector. She has published on a wide range of economic and development issues and led a number of major flagship publications.

Prior to joining ECA, Ms. Morsy was the Director of Macroeconomic Policy and Research at the African Development Bank between 2018 and 2021, where she provided thought leadership on economic issues and oversaw the production of rigorous analytical work that strengthened the Bank's policy dialogue and operations across its member countries.

Ms. Morsy worked previously as Associate Director and Lead Economist for the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Region at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London between 2012 and 2018. In that role, she established and headed the economic analysis and policy advisory services for the new region of operation, led country missions, and developed country strategies.

Prior to that, she worked at the International Monetary Fund between 2003 and 2012 in various capacities across different departments, including, Fiscal Affairs, Middle East and Central Asia, European, and Monetary and Capital Markets. She led and contributed to work on exchange rate assessments, fiscal vulnerability, financial and macroprudential policies. She has extensive experience in both IMF program and surveillance work across a wide range of countries from developing, to emerging, and advanced economies.

Ms. Morsy holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the George Washington University, USA, and a Master's degree in Economics from the University of California, Davis, USA. She is from Egypt.

4. **Hon Rajesh Bhagwan**
Minister of Environment, Mauritius



Rajesh Anand Bhagwan, G.C.S.K., is the Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change of the Republic of Mauritius, serving as a senior member of the Government of Mauritius with responsibility for advancing the country's environmental protection, climate change and sustainable development agenda. In this capacity, he provides political leadership on environmental governance, climate resilience, sustainable waste management and the conservation of Mauritius' natural resources, while contributing to national and international efforts to address the challenges of climate change and environmental sustainability.

He is a longstanding Member of the National Assembly, having represented the constituency of Beau Bassin and Petite Rivière since 1983. His distinguished political career spans more than four decades and includes previous appointments as Minister of Local Government and Minister of Environment, as well as service as Mayor of Beau Bassin–Rose Hill and Secretary-General of the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM). He was appointed to his current ministerial portfolio in November 2024 and was conferred the Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean (G.C.S.K.) in March 2026 in recognition of his distinguished contribution to politics.