

Second World Summit for Social Development

4-6 November 2025

Doha, Qatar

**Statement by Ambassador Gervais Moumou
Republic of Seychelles**

Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First and foremost, on behalf of the President and the Government of the Republic of Seychelles, I wish to convey our profound appreciation to His Highness the Amir, the Government, and the people of the State of Qatar for their warm hospitality and for graciously hosting this important Summit. We also extend our sincere gratitude to the United Nations for its steadfast leadership and unwavering commitment to advancing social development and global solidarity.

Thirty years have passed since the world gathered in Copenhagen to chart a new course for social development. Since then, our world has been transformed by globalisation, technological innovation, and unprecedented economic growth.

Yet, we are also witnessing widening inequalities, social fragmentation, and the growing threat of climate change. The promise of prosperity has not reached all, and the social contract in many societies remains fragile.

Today, as we meet in Doha, we are reminded that progress is measured not by national wealth, but by the well-being of people. Social development is not a by-product of growth; it is the foundation of inclusive, equitable, and resilient societies.

For Seychelles, a Small Island Developing State, placing people at the centre of development has guided us since independence. Despite our size and limited resources, we have built a social model rooted in equity, solidarity, and inclusion.

Our citizens benefit from universal free education and healthcare, ensuring every child can learn and everyone can access care. A strong social safety net protects the most vulnerable — the elderly, persons with disabilities, and those facing economic hardship.

As a result, Seychelles today has a Human Development Index of 0.848, ranking first in Africa. We have also maintained social cohesion in an increasingly complex global environment. These achievements, however, have come through careful balancing — between economic realities and social aspirations, between vulnerability and resilience.

Yet our high-income status tells only part of the story. Seychelles remains economically fragile — heavily dependent on tourism, exposed to external shocks, and highly vulnerable to climate change. Rising sea levels, coral bleaching, and extreme weather events threaten both our environment and our livelihoods.

We also face persistent social challenges. Gender inequality in the workforce limits our potential, while youth unemployment and substance abuse weaken the social fabric we strive to protect. These issues are not unique to us, but their impact is magnified in small island contexts, where every individual matters and every challenge is shared by the whole community.

Our response has been one of determination and innovation. Seychelles is investing in skills development and youth empowerment, aligning education with the needs of a modern economy. We are promoting women's economic participation and leadership, strengthening public health systems to address the social impacts of substance abuse, and advancing digital transformation to drive innovation and sustainable growth.

But we cannot do it alone. Sustaining social progress in small island states requires partnerships and international cooperation that recognise the unique vulnerabilities of small economies, alongside financing frameworks that look beyond GDP to consider social and environmental sustainability.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Second World Summit for Social Development offers us an important opportunity to renew the global social contract and to reaffirm that people must remain at the heart of policy and progress.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development remains our shared roadmap, but its promise will only be realised if we confront inequality in all its forms — between and within nations, across generations, and between men and women.

As we advance the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS, we underscore that the unique vulnerabilities of Small Island Developing States must remain central to global development efforts. The Multidimensional Vulnerability Index — and its timely operationalisation by international financial institutions — is essential to this agenda. We count on the continued leadership of the United Nations to champion its full implementation and recognition.

As we look ahead, let us remember that development is ultimately about transforming lives. Our shared success will depend on turning commitment into action that uplifts people, strengthens communities, and secures opportunity for generations to come.

Thank you.