



An Open Letter International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI) 28 September 2026

Fellow Seychellois,

Today, together with fellow global citizens, we honour the universal day dedicated on access to information. It is a moment to reflect on our shared humanity and reaffirm our commitment to building a peaceful, ethical, and just global society. The focus for this year is on upholding information integrity in the digital age and the role of access to information in addressing information disorder.

As I personally reflect on the meaning of this day, it is important to contextualize and highlight that the principle behind access to information is one that is based on human rights. The principle is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 and subsequent International Covenants and Bill of Human Rights which Seychelles has ratified, as well as Article 28 of the Constitution of the Third Republic of Seychelles, 1993, and national regulations such as the Access to Information Act, 2018.

The Information Commission, which I have had the privilege of serving as the Chief Information Commissioner for the past five years, has the profound constitutional, regulatory, and democratic responsibility of safeguarding ordinary citizens' *right to know* while balancing legitimate needs to protect sensitive information such as:

- **Personal information** – safeguarding individuals' privacy and preventing misuse of data.
- **Private commercial information** – protecting trade secrets and competitive business interests.
- **National security information** – preventing disclosure of sensitive details that could endanger public safety or strategic interests.
- **Other protected categories** – including protection of life, health and safety, or law enforcement or international relations or privileged documents or others.

The *citizens' right to know* is a cornerstone of democratic accountability, ensuring that government actions, decisions, and spending are open to public scrutiny. The access to information principles and regulations enhance transparency which in turn builds trust, deters corruption, and empowers informed participation. In its judicious role, the Commission's independence and duty bearers' impartiality is fundamental for maintaining integrity and upholding the rule of law, without pressure or interference.

The Commission fosters transparency and integrity by upholding and strengthening systemic proactive disclosure of public bodies to release accurate, timely, and accessible information and drive nationwide efforts to openness. Tangibly, the Commission's efforts to support administrative efficiency, transparency and integrity include:

- **Proactive disclosure policy innovation** – Introducing mandatory proactive disclosure policies and regulations in 2023 for public bodies to follow with long-term monitoring programs and capacity building recommendations. To date, 3 annual audit cycles have been completed on proactive disclosure for 73 out of approximately 125 public bodies. The national collated results are openly reported and published on the Commission's website.

- **Technological revolution** – Advocating for online records management and reporting systems, open portals, and linked citizen services with stakeholders.
- **Public engagement, inclusion, and literacy** – Organizing awareness raising, capacity building, and educational workshops on access to information topics for public officers such as Information Officers and Heads of Information Holders, youth groups, media and journalists, and civil society bodies.
- **Partnerships and collaboration** – Advancing joint integrity initiatives of the Open Government Partnership and the National Integrity Coalition with other independent bodies, and civil society organizations such as Transparency Initiative Seychelles and Fisheries Transparency Initiative, and other international bodies such as The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Information integrity is a shared responsibility. While the Commission plays a vital role, addressing information integrity in the digital age necessitates collective and sustained mass actions from all sectors of society, including responsible citizen behaviour. The clear and present threats of disinformation and misinformation disorder, and hate speech, pose global interrelated challenges fuelling conflict, eroding good governance and human rights, and undermining societal progress, now far more complex with the evolution of Artificial Intelligence. Seychelles, like many small island nations, faces unique challenges of limited resources and reliance on international information connectivity, calling for both targeted national and wider international interventions.

If we are to succeed as a global interrelated society and beyond the Commission's proactive disclosure efforts, other joint solutions, and actions addressing information integrity are paramount, such as:

- **Fellow Seychellois and global citizens personal awareness and moral code of conduct** – Cultivating self-empowerment and making thoughtful choices to refrain from knowingly using, supporting, or amplifying disinformation for any purpose.
- **Progressive government and good governance** – (i) Improving laws addressing comprehensive online-safety or platform liability. (ii) Guaranteeing free and independent plural media landscape. (iii) Developing strategic local and global partnerships for cooperation on online information integrity and security.
- **Ethical and human rights driven public and private companies** – (i) Respecting the principles of human rights and adopting standards and preventative approaches with lawful corrective actions for platforms use on misinformation or malicious content. (ii) Adapting policies on digital safety and personal privacy. (iii) Reporting misinformation or malicious content to sectoral organizations with the lawful mandate to enforce like the Information Commission, Media Commission, National Computer Security Incident Response Team within the Department of Information Communications Technology, and others, depending on the nature of the content.

Let us consciously and resolutely do our parts and work together to uphold information integrity and by doing so, progress a culture where peace, justice and dignity is a fundamental aspect of life.

In respect and solidarity,



Mumtaz H. Chaka
Chief Information Commissioner