

National Assembly - Select committee visits Farquhar

23-February-2017



The Select Committee of the National Assembly with special mandate to look into the issues of islands has held its first visit to the outer islands.

Last Saturday members of the committee visited Farquhar, the southernmost island in the Seychelles archipelago.

Members of the Select Committee who went on the working visit were Wavel Ramkalawan, who is the chairman of the committee, Charles De Commarmond, Bernard Georges, Sebastien Pillay, Clifford Andre and Chantal Ghislain. The deputy Speaker Nicholas Prea and LDS (*Linyon Demokratik Seselwa*) chief whip, Ahmed Afif also formed part of the delegation.

They were accompanied by consultants for the two leaders, Irine Fonseka and Jerry Morin.

The visit was facilitated by the Islands Development Company (IDC), which manages Farquhar along with thirteen other island groups.

The IDC delegation comprised its chairman Patrick Berlouis, chief executive Glenny Savy and board member Patrick Lablache.

As part of the visit, members of the committee saw the extent of the damage caused by the 350km/h cyclone *Fantala*, which devastated the island in April last year. Some who had been to Farquhar before were shocked to see the extent the disaster caused to the environment and infrastructure.

IDC showed members of the Select Committee the work being done on all buildings on Farquhar to make them cyclone proof. These include staff accommodation, guest house, the generator and desalination plants.

Members of the Select Committee also saw the extent of damage to the environment, as well as work that has been done so far to clear the fallen trees in preparation for replanting to start.

They also saw damage to the radar facility on Farquhar.

IDC also took members of the Select Committee by boat to Goelette and Ile du Sud for them to experience firsthand the importance to have some islands and areas declared as protected areas. These two islands are important bird breeding and roosting areas.

At the end of the visit members of the Select Committee expressed satisfaction with the way things went.

“The visit shows that the decision to set up the committee was a good one. It gives us, as members, another perspective of the islands. I just wished that in the past Seychellois were made aware of what was happening on the islands,” said Mr Ramkalawan.

“The islands should be accessible to Seychellois for leisure and investment. They must be preserved for future generations, while we also exploit them in order to create greater wealth for our population,” he concluded.

Accompanying the article are some photographs taken during the visit.



