

# Making a major contribution

## INTERVIEW WITH GILBERT FAURE

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, SEYCHELLES CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (SCAA)



### GILBERT FAURE

began his career with the SCAA as a Meteorological Assistant and progressed through the ranks to Airport Manager, Director General and finally CEO in 2005. He has negotiated air services agreements with many countries and played a key role in the upgrade of Seychelles main airport as well as that on Praslin, Seychelles' second largest island.

### How would you assess the SCCA's work over the course of 2013?

Last year we concluded no less than 15 air services agreements, from Brazil to Saudi Arabia, as well as with the fast-growing tourism markets of Scandinavia and the Netherlands, illustrating our commitment to reaching far and wide to invite global travellers.

These agreements set the stage for new air links to be established from strategically important regions in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. The enormous economic multiplier effect of liberalised aviation markets is well documented, and we can look forward to more inbound visitors, increased trade, and a flourishing tourism industry.

We have also pursued a liberal air-access policy that gives airlines increased flexibility, allowing them to arrange charters, direct scheduled services, or code share with Air Seychelles and other carriers.

### Please tell us about the ongoing extension and refurbishment of Seychelles International Airport.

Last year also saw the completion of a number of important infrastructure improvements to Seychelles International Airport, allowing importers and passengers to benefit from more comfortable and efficient service delivery from the newly extended and refurbished cargo terminal and customs building at Seychelles International Airport.

Our cargo terminal and customs building was extended via a new dry cargo import area for perishable goods with cold storage facilities. This new import area will improve capacity and security for storing and handling cargo and mail. It will also be able to hold perishable goods before delivery, provide more room for staff, and enhance customer service.

The expansion and refurbishment of both facilities was necessary to cater for the significant increase in cargo traffic over the last five years and to improve the delivery of services, reflecting the increased expectations of customers for greater efficiency and ease of transactions.

The newly extended and renovated customs building now provides adequate office space to accommodate more staff and better facilities to serve customers more comfortably and efficiently.

Meanwhile, the cargo terminal has increased its warehousing capacity by 512 square meters for dry

cargo imports and 133 square meters for export cargo. An additional new import dry cargo delivery area, covering some 367 square meters, has also been constructed. More back office and customer service facilities have also been constructed at mezzanine level in the new dry cargo import area.

The new areas available have made it possible to introduce separation between processing of inbound and outbound cargo in line with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) and the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) requirements, as well as space for the installation of new cold and chilled storage facilities.

### What has been the impact of the work to the airport?

Seychelles International Airport will continue to experience an increase in air traffic as our airport continues to welcome more frequent flights and new airlines. The extension and refurbishment of these essential facilities are needed to accommodate the continuous increase in the volume of air cargo and the number of staff to maintain service levels.

The extended facilities amount to an overall increase of 85 per cent in the warehouse/handling capacity, thus positioning Seychelles to significantly accommodate foreseeable growth in transhipped cargo. It is expected that there will be an increase of about 65 per cent in throughput cargo by 2020.

Last year, Seychelles International Airport's check-in area and departure lounge was also extended via the installation of four additional check-in counters, enlargement of the pre-immigration area within the departure lounge, and the construction of offices above all extended areas at first floor level.

In May, work started on our new telecommunication and information system, which is designed to give the SCAA better financial control system as our organization grows. Phases one and two of this five-phase project have already been completed. Phase three has now begun, and we expect it to be completed in the first quarter of this year.

### What is the outlook for the SCCA in 2014?

After an exciting and eventful 2013 that produced many remarkable achievements, the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority (SCAA) will continue making a

vital contribution to our country's tourism industry and economy throughout this year by opening up to new airlines and destinations, as well as offering passengers a better-than ever experience when arriving and departing, thanks to improvements to our international and domestic terminals.

Work is expected to begin on extending the international terminal arrivals lounge in April. This will provide additional space for passenger handling and baggage delivery facilities, thus improving capacity and service levels.

The international passenger departure lounge mezzanine floor will also be extended to provide more seating capacity and commercial areas.

This year will also see the extension and refurbishment of the domestic terminal, which is just a short walk from the international building. This project involves the construction of new departure and check-in facilities, as well as refurbishment of the building to convert the current departure area into the arrivals zone.

The project will take two years to complete and has to be executed in three phases due to the need to continue operations and ensuring services are not significantly affected.

In 2014, safety, security, and protecting the environment will remain SCAA priorities. Emphasis will be placed on environment as the 'go-green' concept has been incorporated in the planned infrastructures. Furthermore, efficiency in flight operations, resulting in less carbon emissions and fuel savings, will be targeted with the implementation of performance-based navigation in the Seychelles air-space.

These improvements are all part of the SCAA's mission to develop, regulate, and manage a safe and effective civil aviation system in Seychelles in line with international standards. The SCAA has been a member of the International Civil Aviation Authority since

1977, and today we can boast that our safety record meets international standards.

#### **What are the competitive advantages of Seychelles International Airport?**

The competitive advantage of Seychelles International Airport is not just that it is strategically located in the Indian Ocean, but that it is also blessed to be on one of the world's most beautiful island states, a place where tourists from all over the world dream of coming to spend their holidays. We have perfect weather, a well-protected environment, a rich cultural heritage, and the hospitality of our people. The facilities at Seychelles International Airport add further value, thanks to having one of the most modern air navigation services systems in the region, and a smooth passenger flow through the terminal that allows an easy entry by the visitors into Seychelles.

Seychelles is an emerging market. Over the last four decades, the SCAA has maintained an impeccable record in terms of international standards for civil aviation operations. We look to the next 40 years with confidence to ensure the sustainable growth of our business by remaining focused on the needs of our clients and stakeholders, while meeting the needs of traffic demands with adequate facilities to ensure our visitors continue to enjoy a smooth, safe and secure arrival and departure to and from Seychelles International Airport.

I am delighted to see Seychelles continuing to open its skies, a development sure to reap benefits for us as well as the country. Thanks to these new agreements, coupled with ongoing improvements to our airport, Air Seychelles has new options for its own services and will be setting up new partnerships with airlines around the world. In this way we are confident we will be able to continue attracting new generations of travellers to our beautiful shores. 

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A pilot's view of the gateway to the Seychelles