



**Message for the Occasion of International Human Rights Day
10th December 2020**

Theme: Human Dignity- Bedrock of Humanity



As the Chairperson of the Seychelles Human Rights Commission, it is with great humility that I share these few words on this significant occasion in honour of International Human Rights Day, which is observed every year on the 10th December, commemorating the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nation's General Assembly in 1948. A document which came into existence in response to one of the most appalling period of human history (World War II) whereby atrocities plagued the conscience of mankind. To prevent past events from being repeated and remind humans of their humanity, Article 1 of the charter beautifully states that *All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.* This year, the world has been besieged by a different kind of war- a deadly virus which has put every man, woman and child in

grave danger. We have been engulfed by uncertainty and forced to adapt to situations which have brought a new meaning to survivability.

Amongst many other factors, the **COVID 19** pandemic has significantly impacted the way we treat one another as human beings. Based on current situations; The United Nations has declared “**Recover Better- Stand up for Human Rights**” as the theme for 2020. Alongside the same, we at the Seychelles Human Rights Commission are promoting **Human Dignity** as a foundational principle of the rule of law, of which human rights form an integral part. It is worth noting that placing focus on such will play a crucial role in facilitating a victorious outcome from the crippling economic and social effects brought about by the pandemic on our country.

As such, the Seychelles Human Rights Commission believes that there is a need to reflect, refocus and reinvigorate the foundational principles of the rule of law:- *Human Rights and Freedoms, Equality, and Human Dignity.*

It is imperative that we ensure that our nation becomes fully aware of their rights and the incredible power that we hold as a society. Essentially, in a country where its people can stand together for the rights of one another, a society where all can flourish in dignity is guaranteed. Thus, let us make this year and the coming years an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of human rights by building a culture of dignity where everyone has the deep desire to be treated and to treat others with dignity worthy of human beings. Let us take time to remind ourselves and others around us how valuable we all are!

On behalf of the Seychelles Human Rights Commission, I call on all the people of Seychelles to engage with us through our different programmes and to courageously stand for Dignity, Equality, and Human Rights- not just for ourselves, but also our brothers and sisters. We need to acknowledge once and for all, that silence in the face of injustice is an injustice in itself! But when we speak out and actively take the correct routes to resolve it, then not only do we become agents of change but also as guardians of DIGNITY, show what it is to be HUMAN.

Justice Bernardin Renaud (Retd), Chairperson, Seychelles Human Rights Commission