

Seychelles Tourism Minister says Praslin must claim back its tourism industry



Photo from Seychelles Ministry of Tourism and Culture

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Mr. Marco Francis, the Chairman of the Seychelles Chamber of Commerce and Industry, accompanied by his councilors this morning met with Minister Alain St.Ange, the Minister responsible for Tourism and Culture, at his offices at the National Cultural Centre in Victoria. The Minister who was accompanied by Anne Lafortune, the PS for Tourism heard from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, discussed points they wanted to follow-up on following their recent meeting at Praslin.

Minister Alain St.Ange welcomed the delegation from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and said that he appreciated the time they took to make this meeting possible. "We run our Ministry with an open door policy, and every day we welcome individuals or association representatives who need the support of our Ministry in one way or another," Minister St.Ange said.

Mr. Marco Francis, the Chairman of the Seychelles Chamber of Commerce and Industry, used the meeting to raise the points that has been brought up at the recent Chamber meeting on the island of Praslin. It was pointed out that at the Le Relax Hotel meeting at Grand Anse Praslin, points relating to illegal boat charters, vertical integration, yacht charters, and illegal taxi operators had been raised. After lengthy discussions, it was resolved that the Chamber would be officially writing to the relevant government ministries concerned to seek support to address these points seen as hampering the good running of the tourism industry at Praslin. Other general points raised were the welcoming of tourists from Africa, air access from Europe, especially for the months when Emirates would be in operation with one daily flight instead of twelve weekly flights, and the widening of the base used to calculate the yield from tourism.

Minister St.Ange, who shared the Chamber's approach of distribution of wealth in the country, said that the points raised were not only interesting, but also important if they wanted Seychelles to claim back its tourism industry. "We are all united in our desire to help people do business, but for this to happen we need to be guided by the laws of the land, and here it is often a matter of enforcement of the laws already in place. The rules of enforcement must be clear as we look at ways and means to address the various points raised. The illegal boat charter concern at Praslin keeps coming up, and it is destroying the genuine charter business at Praslin, I am sure that the SMSA and the Ministry responsible for Transport will take up this matter as it is the need to see passengers on charter yachts check-in their guests as is done by hotels. They are in one way or another a floating hotel and should be providing authorities with passenger details as and when required," Minister St.Ange said.

On the question of vertical integration, Minister St.Ange informed the representatives from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry that a report is due to be submitted in the coming weeks to the government following a series of inter-ministerial discussions on the matter.

The Chairman and Chamber Councilors present thanked Minister Alain St.Ange for his time availability.