

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism, Sylvestre Radegonde
Minster of Transport, Antony Derjagues,
CEO of the Seychelles Civil Aviation Authority, Gerry Albert,
Associate Vice President, IndiGo Airlines, Mr ,
Senior officers of the Ministry of Transport,
Members of the Indian Diaspora
Travellers in the inaugural flight,
Members of the media,
Distinguished Guests,

It is with immense pleasure that I participate today to celebrate the inaugural direct flight of IndiGo Airlines' from Mumbai to Seychelles. This momentous occasion not only marks the arrival of a new airline to Seychelles, but also signifies a strengthening of the bonds between India and Seychelles, through an augmentation of connectivity.

India and Seychelles enjoy friendly relations. Seychelles is an important part of the Neighbourhood First policy of India and enhancing connectivity is a vital part of this policy.

We are all aware prior to the pandemic, connectivity between India and Seychelles was increasing steadily, but the pandemic, like in many other areas, caused disruption in these plans.

In this context, I commend IndiGo Airlines who recognized the opportunity present and made it a reality. There were challenges along the way but they made it a reality.

Distinguished guests,

It is said that enhanced connectivity is a game changer and the benefits of the new flight to India and Seychelles easily suggest themselves.

First and foremost, the new flight enhances accessibility to idyllic islands of Seychelles, making it more convenient for travelers from India

and beyond, to immerse themselves in the Seychelles experience, the pristine beaches, crystal-clear waters, and lush landscapes. I am confident that Seychelles will now figure prominently in the tourism map for Indians, along with other Indian Ocean destinations.

India and Seychelles share a rich history of cultural ties. The commencement of IndiGo's direct flights, 4 times a week, is especially relevant in the context of India-Seychelles engagement as Seychelles is home to a substantial Indian diaspora and expatriate population. India has just been brought a lot closer for them, which will further boost trade and investment!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mumbai is the commercial capital of India. IndiGo Airlines, has its centre of operations in Mumbai. No part of India is more than 3 hours of flying time from Mumbai. With the flying time to Seychelles only 4 and a half hours, the beautiful country is now easily accessible to the rest of India – be it Chennai, cities of Gujarat or Delhi and the rest of North India. While this will enhance tourism and bring the Indian market closer to Seychelles, at the same time it will offer Seychellois a unique opportunity to go and explore India. Many people from Seychelles go to India for medical purposes and the commencement of these flights will aid this segment also.

Friends,

I acknowledge the role played by Minister of Transport, Antony Derjacques and his team, as well as Minister Radegonde, whose support to this effort was instrumental in making this a reality. I would also on record the efforts of the Ministry of Civil Aviation in India.

In conclusion, I once again congratulate IndiGo airlines for making beautiful Seychelles their 39th international destination. I am confident that this will have a great beneficial effect on bilateral relations in all areas of engagement.

Thank you.
