

## **HE MR JAMES ALIX MICHEL**

President of the Republic of Seychelles

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From 1974 to 1977, James Michel was a member of the Executive Committee of the Seychelles People's United Party (SPUP), the predecessor of the ruling Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF). In 1978 he became a member of the Central Executive Committee of the newly formed SPPF. He became deputy secretary general of the SPPF in 1984 and secretary-general in 1994, a party post which he occupied until June 2009. On June 2nd 2009, SPPF was rebranded as Parti Lepep (People's Party) and he was elected its president. He was running mate in the presidential elections of 1998 and 2001 and was Vice-President from August 1996 to April 2004. He succeeded Mr France Albert René as President upon the retirement of the latter in April 2004 and was elected to the highest office in July 2006.

President Michel presently has portfolio responsibilities for Tourism, Defence, Legal Affairs, and Information. Mr James Michel was, until he became President, the longest serving minister in Seychelles. His first ministerial appointment was in June 1977 when he was given the responsibilities for public administration and information. As Minister for Information, he promoted the development of a modern telecommunications system in Seychelles and that of the media. In his long career, he also held the portfolios for Education, Finance, Communications, Defence, Culture and Sports. In 1993 he was appointed First Designated Minister, a constitutional post in which he discharged the functions of the Office of the President during the absence of the Head of State. He also held the portfolios for Education, Finance, Communications and Defence.

President Michel is the recipient of several international awards and decorations. The Outstanding Civilian Service Medal was conferred upon him by the Secretary of the United States Army in 1995. In 2001 he was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order Pro Merito Melitensi by the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. In 2010 the Order conferred the Grand Cross of the Knightly Order, Special Class, pro Merito Melitensi, to President Michel, recognizing the exceptional relations that exist between the Order and the Republic of Seychelles.

In October 2009 he received the UNESCO Gold Medal of the Five Continents in recognition of his work to promote the ideals of peace, tolerance, and his work to sensitize the international community about the vulnerability of Small Island Developing States. The following month Michel was presented with the Most Innovative People Award (for Natural Innovation) by the Global Leadership Team at the Lebanon 2020 Summit. President Michel received the Special Award for Eco-Safety from the World Eco-Safety Assembly of the International Eco-Safety Cooperative Organization, in December 2010, in view of his leadership in the field of environment and the long-standing efforts of the Government to foster sustainable development.