

Statement of Henry Jardine
Nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Mauritius and Seychelles
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
November 29, 2022

Chairwoman Shaheen, Ranking Member Portman, and Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before this Committee today as President Biden's nominee to be the next United States Ambassador to the Republic of Mauritius and the Republic of Seychelles. I am thankful for the trust that the President and Secretary Blinken have placed in me to nominate me for this role, and I consider it a great privilege to represent the United States.

My parents immigrated to this country from the United Kingdom in the 1950s. My father experienced a childhood of poverty in North Wales and my mother the devastating Nazi bombings of Liverpool. They understood the promise that the United States could offer, and from their example and experience comes my commitment of service to this country over the past 30 years in both the Army and the State Department.

As a career member of the Senior Foreign Service with extensive work experience in the Indo-Pacific region on a range of policy and management issues, I have developed the skills that will allow me to strengthen our relationship with both countries.

While my professional experiences have prepared me for the opportunity to serve as Ambassador to Mauritius and the Seychelles, this was only possible with the great support of my wife, Kathleen Jardine, presently a Fairfax County public school teacher, who was there as a partner through the long years far from family and in some difficult circumstances. I also note with pride my son Thomas, who, while experiencing many disruptions in his young life and education as a result of my career, is now a successful college student in the Netherlands.

In just over 50 years since gaining independence from the United Kingdom, Mauritius has achieved political stability through a commitment to democracy, establishment of a strong economy, and acceptance of ethnic diversity. Mauritius has shown the global community that it is a model, both politically and economically, for Africa, the Indian Ocean region, and beyond.

The United States also enjoys a positive bilateral relationship with the Government of Seychelles, which in 2020 held free and fair elections and peacefully transitioned power to the opposition party for the first time since independence 46 years ago. We support Seychelles' efforts to solidify its democratic transition, support regional peace, and tackle climate change. Despite its high per capita income, Seychelles needs support to strengthen its financial system and anti-corruption regime. The United States is well-placed to provide assistance in these areas. Regional security is an important element of our bilateral relationship with both Mauritius and Seychelles, and I will seek additional ways we can partner to combat drug trafficking, transnational criminal activity, and illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing in the Indian Ocean.

Although the United States Embassy is located in Mauritius, I intend to travel to Seychelles frequently as we continue to focus on expanding our bilateral relationship.

Democracy promotion continues to be an important element of our foreign policy in Africa. Both Mauritius and Seychelles are models for the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. The 2020 election in the Seychelles showed the world that the Seychellois are fiercely committed to democracy, while Mauritian general elections are set to take place in 2024. I would work with both countries to strengthen their democratic systems and to spread their example elsewhere.

Of course, while pursuing all these objectives, I would make protecting Americans living and travelling in both Mauritius and Seychelles my highest priority.

Again, I am honored to be nominated to be the next ambassador to Mauritius and Seychelles. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you and other members of the committee. I welcome your questions.