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SPPF strengthens democracy through dialogue

DEMOCRACY should be judged by whether there is a constant and effective dialogue between the people and their leaders, SPPF Deputy Secretary-General James Michel said yesterday afternoon at a Maison du Peuple meeting between Central Committee members and branch chairmen.

For over two hours, the district representatives discussed a host of issues connected with the responsibilities or portfolios of the five members of the Seychelles People's Progressive Front (SPPF) Central Committee, three of them also government ministers, present at the meeting.

Such discussions, at which the party's grassroots representatives question, criticise, seek clarifications from and offer suggestions to party and government leaders, are not new. But Mr Michel said that it was the Front's intention that they take place at least once every two months. Thus the people would be able, through their district representatives, to continually exchange views with their leaders, making their

and support felt at the highest echelons.

"We have not come here to lecture each other but to discuss together the progress the country is making and the difficulties it is facing, the way the party's policies are being implemented, the steps being taken to attain the people's objectives and the solutions to any problems that might exist at whatever level," Mr Michel said in a brief opening statement.

People's views

Through such meetings, branch chairmen would be able to inform the party and government leadership about the people's views, criticisms and suggestions at the grassroots

districts with answers or explanations to any queries they had.

This shows clearly the democratic character of society and the party in Seychelles, Mr Michel said. "There are those who say that there cannot be democracy without more than one party, without institutions or a media set up on the Western model," he noted. "But to us democracy means the people being able to make their views heard at the top through their representatives having direct access to the country's leaders," he added.

He pointed out that through such meetings as that being held at the Maison du Peuple, views put to the branch chairmen by the people of their districts could end up being dis-



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discussed and acted upon in the SPPF Central Committee.

"It is obvious that there is a continuous dialogue going on at all levels of our society and this is what we mean by democracy," he said.

Talking on party unity later during the meeting, Mr Michel called on all young members of the SPPF to recognise and appreciate the struggle that older members, as supporters of the Front's predecessor, the Seychelles People's United Party (SPUP), went through to see the country free and on the way to a New Society. Younger party members should listen to what the older people had to say, take advantage of their experience and learn from their proven loyalty and dedication to the cause of the Revolution.

By making the older members feel wanted and respected and that their contributions were still welcomed and, in fact, needed, younger militants would go a long way to cementing the inner strength of the party, Mr Michel said.

The other Central Committee members present at yesterday's meeting were Mr Esme Jumeau, the Secretary for Finance who is also Minister of Health, Mr Ogilvy Berlouis, the Secretary for Organisation and Mobilisation who is also Minister for Youth and Defence, Mrs Sylvette Frichot, the Secretary for Information and Culture and Principal Co-ordinator of the SPPF, and Mrs Rita Sinon, the Secretary for External Relations and Chairperson of the Seychelles Women's Association (SWA). Mr Michel is also Minister for

Education and Information.

The subjects discussed included party affairs, the Seychelles People's Militia, the new security guards force, the stature of party and govern-

ment officials within the society, the progress being made in providing all districts with community facilities, improvements to the health system and others.



A get-together between SPPF youth and older members recently. Better relations between the two generations is crucial to party unity.