



Mr Burt was on a one-day working visit to Seychelles and attended the official opening of the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecution and Intelligence Coordination Centre (RAPPICC) – a joint project agreed upon by President Michel and British Prime Minister David Cameron during Mr Michel’s official visit to the United Kingdom in February 2012.

During President Michel’s visit to the United Kingdom he took part in a conference on Somalia, and an agreement was signed for collaboration and pooling of resources in the fight against piracy.

The visit to State House took place yesterday morning, and speaking to the press shortly afterwards Mr Burt said it has been a busy year since the signing of the agreement.

“The work that has been done in Seychelles has been encapsulated by the opening ceremony of the RAPPICC centre. We have seen during the past year, the success in the number of attacks that has been deterred and we have also seen success in the number of processes of making sure that people are prosecuted and tried and the legal processes that are necessary have been worked on very hard,” he said.

“The new RAPPICC centre will emphasise the work that is done on cooperative information-sharing, which is so important and will above all send a message out to those who organise the gangs of piracy that they have no impunity and they are being targeted.”

President Michel said that the conference was a ‘window of opportunity’ and that improvements had been achieved in Somalia in terms of capacity building and the stability of government but that much more effort would be needed to return the rule of law in Somalia.

He added that Seychelles would work to ensure that the multi-national and multi-disciplinary RAPPICC, of which Seychelles is co-director with Britain, would become a successful centre for tackling transnational crime.

“We are grateful for the support that Britain has extended to us in the fight against piracy in terms of capacity building and resources in the prison system, in the legal assistance for the prosecution of pirates, as well as anti-piracy patrols. We are building a strong partnership in intelligence gathering as well, in order to catch the financiers of piracy, and Rappicc will provide the key coordination for our partnership efforts,” said President Michel.

Apart from attending the opening of the new centre, Mr Burt was also due to visit the Seychelles People’s Defence Force’s Air Wing, and meet local ministers and officials to discuss anti-piracy work being undertaken.