



CAYMAN ISLANDS
GOVERNMENT

2010 THRONE SPEECH

Delivered by His Excellency the Governor, Mr Duncan Taylor, CBE

Tuesday, 15 June 2010 / Cayman Islands Legislative Assembly Building

Introduction

Madam Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, it is with humility and a real sense of honour that I present my first Throne Speech to you today. This will be the first Throne Speech under the new Constitution and, therefore, the first in the presence of a Premier and Deputy Premier of the Cayman Islands.

I will come back to the Constitution in a moment. But first, I would like to thank you Madam Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly and all the people of the Cayman Islands for the warm welcome that my wife, my son and I have been given since our arrival. We have been in the Cayman Islands five months today. In that time we have tried to get out and about around all the Districts and communities as much as possible. We have been made to feel very welcome by everybody we have met, from all walks of life, throughout the Cayman Islands.

Talking to people across the islands has, however, also made me understand clearly the anxiety and concern that people feel about the challenges we face, particularly with regard to crime and to the economic situation. Madam Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, we live in challenging times, with continuing uncertainty in the world economy and crime levels, in part because of that economic uncertainty, rising across the Globe. But challenges often bring out the best in us. Indeed, sometimes we need a challenge to be able to understand and realise our potential. I believe that we in the Cayman Islands, God willing, can overcome the challenges we face and move on to make Cayman a better and a stronger place for all. To do so, we will all need to work together.

Let me return to the Constitution. Adopted in a historic referendum last year, the new Constitution gives more responsibility for the running of the Territory's affairs to the Cayman Islands Government; and a greater say to the people of the Cayman Islands. Its key themes are the promotion of human rights and of good governance. We have much to do if we are to ensure the efficient functioning of the Constitution for the good of the Cayman Islands. Much has already been done. We have set up a Human Rights Commission, a Commission for Standards in Public Life, a Constitutional Commission, and a National Security Council. The Electoral Boundary Commission has concluded its work and has submitted its report to me and to this Assembly. But there is much, also, still to be done. We need to establish the Judicial and Legal Services Commission, the Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy and the Advisory District Councils. We also need to set up a separate office of Director of Public Prosecutions.

And, over the next two and a half years, we need to prepare for the introduction of the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities, rightly referred to in the Constitution as “a cornerstone of democracy in the Cayman Islands”. You will hear reference to some of these bodies when I turn in a moment to the plans of the various Ministries, Portfolios and Departments.

The Constitution provides the core foundation and structure for our society. We need to draw strength from it to build a better and stronger Cayman Islands.

I would pick out three key themes for the coming year.

We need to adapt **public finances** to the new reality and you will hear later the presentation of a cost-cutting budget, part of a three year plan to bring public finances back on to a sustainable track.

We need to provide **security** for our people, ensuring a safe and supportive environment for all and especially our children. The Royal Cayman Islands Police Service has a lead role in this regard; but other law enforcement agencies have important contributions to make. As does the wider community. I attach importance to the work of the National Security Council. We have met several times and will do so again shortly. The Council will agree a crime reduction strategy, pulling together the ideas, experience and commitment of Ministries, Departments and Agencies across Government and of the wider community to provide a roadmap to help make our streets safer. Everyone has a role to play in this; every member of the community can contribute.

We need constantly to work to promote and ensure **good governance** and respect for **human rights**: to ensure the independence of the judiciary; and to ensure that the many checks and balances established in the Constitution and referred to earlier can operate freely and independently. I have no doubt that it will help ensure we build a better and stronger Cayman Islands over the longer term.

I turn now to the plans of the various Ministries, Portfolios, and offices.

Auditor General's Office

The Auditor General's Office will continue to carry out its mandate to provide information, advice and assurance on whether government's activities have been carried out and accounted for, ensuring value-for-money and the avoidance of waste. The United Kingdom has a strong Audit Office and as a Government we support such a model.

Office of the Complaints Commissioner

The Office of the Complaints Commissioner will continue its efforts, through public education and outreach, to be fully accessible to all residents of the Cayman Islands.

It will also encourage Government departments and agencies to serve the public better. The Office will achieve this by carrying out fair, thorough and independent investigations; and by setting standards for, and monitoring, the effectiveness of internal complaints processes throughout government.

Information Commissioner's Office

The Information Commissioner's Office will promote the public's understanding of the Freedom of Information Law.

This will encourage wide participation from the public in exercising their rights to information.

The Office will:

- hear, investigate and rule on appeals filed under the Freedom of Information Law, and conduct own-initiative investigations, to ensure all applicants and public authorities are treated fairly.
- Review the Freedom of Information Law, within the deadline set down in the law with a view to improving its consistency and effectiveness.
- Expand the Information Commissioner's Office website, to provide guidance and information to public authorities and the public at large.

In addition, the Information Commissioner will, as legally required, provide an analysis to the Legislative Assembly of the Freedom of Information Law's first year of operation.

The Information Commissioner's Office will also continue to strengthen its independence, through the establishment of reporting lines to the Legislative Assembly, as provided for under the law, putting in place arrangements to manage its own budget.

Judicial Administration

Turning to Judicial Administration, the courts building project has been suspended because of budgetary constraints. But the Government remains committed to taking this project forward preferably using a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) model.

The work of the Grand Court will be facilitated, in part through the recent increase in judges for the Financial Services Division, and the soon-to-be completed court for this division.

The Drug Rehabilitation Court will seek the community's support in the area of job provision, and will seek dedicated funding in order to optimise the programme's benefits.

Cabinet Office

With increased Constitutional responsibilities, the Cabinet Office will focus more attention on improving the monitoring of policy implementation, and prepare for the eventual increase in the size of Cabinet. The Cabinet Office will place particular attention on ensuring that its departments and units improve service delivery, based on the principle of doing more with less.

Within the Cabinet Office, the Protocol Office will promote greater understanding of the interdependent relationship between protocol and diplomacy, through civil service workshops. Another key focus will be identifying and drafting protocol procedures, in line with the provision of the Constitution and in consultation with the offices of Premier and Deputy Premier.

The Freedom of Information Unit will offer public-sector training and support, on requirements arising from the Freedom of Information Law. It will also work on the eventual introduction of data-protection legislation.

Computer Services will extend an electronic content management system to core Government Agencies, for personnel management as implemented by the Portfolio of the Civil Service and for the newly approved Financial Management File plans.

Government Information Services Marketing and Communications will launch a radio version of the award-winning *GIS Spotlight*. It will also make available communications training for Government officials and civil servants, in order to improve the flow of information to the public. Government Information Services will build a new *Cayman Islands Gazette* website, to expand availability, and allow e-commerce transactions.

In addition, the department's graphics, electronic media, and strategic communications sections are working with Economics and Statistics to promote the 2010 Census.

Portfolio of the Civil Service

The Portfolio of the Civil Service will introduce e-learning and undertake amendments to the personnel laws, in order to enhance efficiency and accountability.

Its Civil Service College will embark on blended learning by adding web-based courses to complement existing classroom training. The numerous benefits of this programme include cost reductions; an expanded curriculum; and automated means to link learning and performance management.

Portfolio of Internal and External Affairs

Within the ambit of the Portfolio of Internal and External Affairs, the Royal Cayman Islands Police Service will continue to strengthen its crime-fighting capabilities by hiring suitably qualified staff; by training and developing personnel; and by ensuring that officers have the necessary equipment to carry out their functions, complementing existing resources, including the helicopter and marine assets.

The Royal Cayman Islands Police Service will develop its intelligence capabilities, in order better to secure our borders against the illegal entry of persons, guns, and drugs.

The Immigration Department will also work to secure our borders and reduce immigration-related crime. The Advanced Passenger Information System will identify undesirable persons prior to their arrival in these Islands; and speed up processing for legitimate passengers.

The fingerprinting of all work-permit holders will begin in late 2010. The department will also work with the Immigration Review Team to process work permits and key employee applications more efficiently and quickly.

The Prison Service will encourage inmates' involvement in educational courses, including adult literacy; and it will expand rehabilitative opportunities for drug and alcohol abusers, in order to address recidivism. At the Department of Community Rehabilitation, staff will implement services to address domestic violence.

The Legislative Assembly has five main initiatives. It will establish a Legislative Assembly library; staff will replace historical records destroyed during Hurricane Ivan, while preserving and cataloguing existing records and photographs; the Legislative Assembly's website will be improved; Standing Orders will be brought in line with best practice; and the method by which laws are sold to the public will be reviewed. This year the Legislative Assembly will be made to function more autonomously.

The Judicial and Legal Services Commission will be established. It will be supported by the Commissions Secretariat.

Hazard Management Cayman Islands will focus on capacity building, public awareness, and policy development, together with the maintenance and further development of a seismic monitoring network.

And in support of the Alternative Sentencing Law, 911 Emergency Communications will expand its electronic monitoring function, to provide the option of tagging as a condition of bail determined by the courts, police, Immigration or Customs. The department will also implement a closed-circuit TV monitoring centre for the National CCTV Programme.

Portfolio of Legal Affairs

In the Portfolio of Legal Affairs, the Attorney General's Chambers will work with other key departments on a comprehensive crime-reduction strategy, including modernising legislation where required.

The Portfolio will also continue sensitising civil servants to the introduction of the Bill of Rights. It is anticipated that the new office of the Director of Public Prosecutions envisaged in the Constitution will be established in fiscal 2010.

Ministry Of Finance, Tourism and Development

(Public Finance)

The Ministry of Finance, Tourism and Development will bring a holistic approach to its three areas of responsibility in order to strengthen our financial and tourism industries while developing the country at a sustainable pace.

To promote fiscal management, the Ministry will oversee the Accounting Task Force, as it assists ministries and portfolios in completing annual financial reports. Internal Audit will continue evaluating compliance with the Public Management and Finance Law and Financial Regulations.

Customs will implement its Total Revenue Integrated Processing System, which will accommodate the new harmonised tariff codes while providing comprehensive statistics on imported goods. The department also plans to acquire scanners, to help detect contraband.

Risk Management will deliver programmes aimed at reducing Government's loss exposures. And the Maritime Authority will promote its consultancy services and expertise globally, in order to increase ship-registration revenue and to reduce equity injections from Government.

Lastly, in its finance sector, a key objective for the Ministry is preparing and conducting the 2010 Census.

In the area of tourism, initiatives include educating tourism service providers and public servants; and institutionalising the "Go Green" initiative, to promote the Cayman Islands. Developments to the airport and seaport facilities will feature safety and security enhancements for both visitors and locals.

In an effort to bring more visitors to our Islands, in 2010 the Ministry also plans to set up sport and medical tourism programmes, by supporting team and individual games as well as medical services that are technologically advanced and financially accessible.

Social agencies with strong connections to Cayman's maritime culture will be supported administratively and partially, to assist them to become self-sustaining and profitable.

Furthermore, it is expected that government expenditures for prestigious events such as the Cayman Jazz Fest will be reduced, as government seeks to initiate a quasi private-public sector sponsorship arrangement.

In the area of development, the Ministry will initiate an infrastructural development plan that encompasses a new cargo facility in East End; the improvement of the North Sound Channel, to accommodate mega yachts; and the development of new cruise berthing facilities.

The Government will arrange a vote to give people a chance to reject or accept gaming as part of economic development.

Both the Planning Department and a newly established National Scientific Research Council will work alongside other agencies, to ensure that our natural resources are preserved and protected. These initiatives will generate hundreds of jobs that will contribute to Cayman's gross domestic product, and diversify Cayman's maritime industry.

In addition, the Department of Investment and Commerce, working with the financial sector, will be heavily involved in fomenting ministerial plans to attract new business to the country, and to strengthen Cayman's global competitiveness as a well-regulated, international financial services centre.

The Government will move lead responsibility for gender affairs from the Ministry of District Administration, Works, and Gender Affairs, to the Ministry of Community Affairs and Housing. As a result, the former will now be known as the Ministry of District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture; and the latter, the Ministry of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing.

Ministry of District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture

The Ministry of District Administration, Works, Lands and Agriculture will focus on three areas:

It will support the economic and social development of the Sister Islands by:

- expanding the affordable housing programme;

- continuing the asphalt road programme, and chip-and-spray, in Cayman Brac and Little Cayman; and
- increasing shelter capacity, as it continues with Hurricane Paloma recovery efforts.

The Ministry will restructure entities and create innovative ways to:

- manage solid waste and water;
- increase food sustainability and security;
- improve mosquito research;
- develop the Doppler early-warning radar system for the region; and
- develop a comprehensive energy policy.

This year the completion of the divestment of the Water Authority will take place and the plans for a new National Sewerage System will become a reality.

In addition, the Government Office Accommodations Project, or GOAP, will be completed. It is on schedule and within budget and is expected to open in January 2011.

Lastly, the Ministry will review and update the laws governing traffic, roads, and environmental health.

Ministry of Education, Training and Employment

The Ministry of Education, Training and Employment's primary goals include working to achieve a world-class education system; supporting the development of a national culture of lifelong learning, with opportunities for retraining and retooling; enhancing the labour regulatory regime; and developing a better prepared workforce, with increasing employment opportunities.

Key strategic objectives include:

- Implementing a new governance model for the education system and the Education Stabilisation Plan.
- Introducing a restructured secondary education system, with two all-through high schools and enhanced graduation criteria.

- Launching an innovative Year 12 programme, to provide a bridge between high school and employment, and/or higher education.
- The recommencement of phased construction of the new high school campuses, and critical improvements to the physical plant at the primary level.
- Enhancing interventions for at-risk students, in partnership with other ministries and agencies.
- Supporting persons with additional educational needs and disabilities through better legislation, facilities and programmes, including the redevelopment of the Sunrise Centre.
- Enhancing careers assessment, guidance and counselling services, both for schools and job seekers.

- Restructuring the Department of Employment Relations and National Pensions Office, to create two new agencies: a Human Capital Development Agency, and a one-stop Inspectorate dealing with pensions, labour and health compliance issues.
- And continuing the implementation of the National Employment Passport Programme, with the expansion of Passport2Success for unemployed youth, and the development of employment initiatives for other target groups.

Ministry of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing

The Ministry of Community Affairs, Gender and Housing will protect and empower vulnerable persons, by helping them to improve their living conditions and reduce substance abuse.

Programmes and services will be strengthened and enhanced, in order to support the well-being of youth, families and communities. Key legislative initiatives are:

- commencing the implementation of the Children Law and Regulations; and
- approving amendments to the Children Law and Regulations (2003 Revision).

The Ministry's broad strategic goal is to develop a holistic approach to addressing human needs. It will achieve this by:

- promoting the development of supportive and collaborative community action groups;
- developing a national plan for the elderly and programmes and services to meet their unique needs;
- development of a national housing policy;

- enhancing youth rehabilitation by developing a therapeutic community facility, with appropriate programmes and services so that youth who are experiencing difficulties can have their needs met on-island; and
- developing a comprehensive community-based, preventative approach that is tailored to address the identified needs of our youth.

In its new area of responsibility for gender affairs, the Ministry will improve gender-mainstreaming efforts by:

- providing gender awareness training in the civil service;
- putting forward the Prevention of Gender Discrimination Bill (2010); and
- requesting the extension of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, to the Cayman Islands.

Ministry of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture

The five top objectives in the Ministry of Health, Environment, Youth, Sports and Culture, include:

- formulating a national strategic plan for health. The goal is to ensure that our healthcare system meets the needs of residents, and that there is equitable, affordable access for all.
- The Ministry also will continue working on relevant legislation – in particular, putting forward and implementing a National Conservation Law in recognition of the critical importance of a legislative and policy framework that responds to today's natural environment challenges, ensuring that it complements the country's growth plan.

- It will prepare and implement action plans for the updated National Youth Policy, including a comprehensive approach to the delivery and evaluation of youth programmes.
- It will review all strata of sports programmes – from community to elite levels – in order to ensure they are receiving appropriate support, and are being delivered effectively.
- And finally, the Ministry will establish a National Cultural Council. The council will advise on a policy that will encourage both residents and visitors to take advantage of the many opportunities to explore and embrace our Caymanian history and culture.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker, Members of the Legislative Assembly, in conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the public service who have helped to draw up these plans and who will be charged with implementing them. I am particularly grateful to them for their continued hard work and commitment at this difficult time for public servants, who face a rollback in pay of 3.2% from next month. The Premier has informed me that Members of the Legislative Assembly salaries will be affected by the same 3.2% rollback, but that his salary and that of the Leader of the Opposition will be cut by 10%. I would also like to thank those who are contributing and will contribute through their work on the Boards of Statutory Authorities and Government Companies, on the Commissions, Committees and Councils set up under the Constitution and all those many volunteers who selflessly give so much of their time to support church and community groups.

I pray that God will provide wisdom and guidance to the Members of this Assembly; and that He will continue to bless and protect the Cayman Islands.

- end -