



**Date: 15 September 2017**

## **Constitutional Commission Recognises International Day of Democracy**

The Constitutional Commission recognizes 15 September each year as the International Day of Democracy. The theme for this year is *Democracy and Conflict Prevention*, which focuses on “the critical need to strengthen democratic institutions to promote peace and stability” and “calls for effective and inclusive democratic governance with respect for human rights and the rule of law”.<sup>1</sup> The constitutional importance of democracy in the Cayman Islands is recognised in Part VIII of the Cayman Islands Constitution Order, 2009 (“the Constitution”), which enshrines a range of institutions, including the Constitutional Commission, expressly designated as “Institutions Supporting Democracy”.

The 2017 theme for the International Day of Democracy is particularly apt. The underlying notion that we should seek to strengthen our civil society is not only reflected in the Constitutional Commission’s own mandate to promote understanding and awareness of the Constitution and its values; it can also be seen elsewhere in Part VIII, where the Constitution provides for the establishment of Advisory District Councils. Section 119 of the Constitution refers to the establishment of Advisory District Councils “for each electoral district to operate as advisory bodies to the elected members of the Legislative Assembly” and thereby signals an intention to create additional bodies by which the people of the Cayman Islands can engage and influence the democratic process.

Section 119 of the Constitution does, however, require that a law first be enacted in order to “provide for the establishment, functions and jurisdiction of [Advisory District] Councils” and while such a law was enacted in 2011, this legislation was never brought into force and may now benefit from fresh review and evaluation in light of subsequent constitutional developments, including the establishment of single-member constituencies. The Constitutional Commission stands ready to assist with any and all efforts to strengthen our civil society and, in particular, the establishment of Advisory District Councils for this purpose, as foreshadowed by the Constitution.

The Constitutional Commission would therefore welcome your views on the establishment of Advisory District Councils and may be contacted at [info@constitutionalcommission.ky](mailto:info@constitutionalcommission.ky) or 244-3685 if you have any contributions on this topic or indeed any input as to how we can help engender a wider appreciation of our constitutional history and of the contemporary issues relating to the operation of our current Constitution. Should you wish to find out more about the Cayman Islands Constitution, please visit the Constitutional Commission’s new website – [www.constitutionalcommission.ky](http://www.constitutionalcommission.ky) – which we hope will prove a good source of information and inspiration for further enquiries.

Ends.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/en/events/democracyday/index.shtml>.