

2013 Constitution Day Message
Cayman Islands Constitutional Commission

On 4 July, 1959 the concept of constitutional development began in the Cayman Islands after Caymanian Assemblymen petitioned the United Kingdom resulting in the issuance of a Royal Order-in-Council. After several revisions, the major one in 1972, the Cayman Islands Constitution Order 2009 came into force on 6 November, 2009 following Cayman's first national referendum.

Often referred to as the highest law in the land, the impact of the Constitution on our daily lives cannot be understated. The concept of the document is that democracy is the cornerstone of our country. As a country which has a rich heritage of friendliness, generosity and resilience the Constitution only reaffirms our desire as a nation to live and work in an environment which respects each other's values and rights.

Providing a foundation for our people and a framework for our government, the 2009 Constitution has brought positive changes to how the country is run by creating a more balanced style of governance through increased consultation and accountability at a local level. It provides the people with greater protection for our rights and freedoms and greater authority to defend those rights and freedoms. It envisages that all of us have a responsibility to embrace and defend our differences.

The Constitutional Commission is a three-person body which seeks to advise the Government on questions concerning constitutional status and development in the Cayman Islands; to publish reports, discussion papers, information papers and other documents on constitutional matters affecting the Cayman Islands; and to promote understanding and awareness of the Constitution and its values.

As we continue to work towards fulfilling our constitutional mandate the Commission will, in the near future, be commencing a round of public consultation to solicit input and comment from the people on areas of the Constitution in respect of which persons have questions, thoughts, concerns or require clarification. While a wholesale constitutional review is unwarranted and undesirable so

soon after its coming into force, there can be little doubt that there are several sections of the Constitution that do need review and amendment particularly in the context of issues surrounding our recent general elections, many of which have been the subject matter of spirited public debate. Our Constitution can only serve us well if it is clear and concise and as free of ambiguity and uncertainty as one can reasonably make it to be.

On 1 July, 2013 let us not only celebrate the day as a public holiday, but let us instead each take this opportunity to tell another what this day really means for the Cayman Islands. Let us all take a moment to remind ourselves that today is the day in which we celebrate our heritage and the freedoms we have been blessed with because of the work of our forefathers to create this democratic nation underpinned by a Constitution that truly reflects the needs, aspirations and desires of our people..

You may contact the Constitutional Commission by e-mailing info@knowyourconstitution.ky or calling 244-3685.

Remember it's YOUR Constitution! Embrace it!