

Welcome Message from the Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Orrett Connor
FOI Retreat
17th June, 2009

Good morning everyone and thank you all for coming.

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Freedom of Information Retreat. We are here today to determine the effectiveness of the Cayman Islands Government's implementation of the FOI Law and to identify the future directions to ensure the law meets its objectives of accountability, transparency and public participation as a long term commitment.

We would like to ensure we are capturing key performance indicators for our work and the lessons learnt in Cayman. We would also like to consult with you about our plans for the future and get your suggestions for the reform and review of the FOI Law.

We must remember that a new law always is a learning process and each day brings us new challenges and new achievements. The FOI Unit has accomplished significant milestones in increasing the transparency and accountability within Government and we would like to ensure their work is sustainable in the years to come.

Now that the FOI Law has come into force, the FOI Unit's work has just begun. As we have seen in other jurisdictions, enacting a comprehensive law is essential but insufficient as there needs to be other provisions put in place to ensure the law is used. Some of these provisions include appropriate institutional frameworks, administrative capacity to manage and provide information and to raise public awareness of the right of access to information. We should all be looking forward and assisting the FOI Unit to see that these goals are accomplished over the next years.

On that note, I would like to welcome our visitors from the Bermuda Cabinet Office. Kimberly McKeown is the Policy Analyst and the lead for the new Access to Information regime soon to be introduced in Bermuda and her deputy Marisa Sharpe. Welcome ladies. It is a pleasure to have you here and I hope you will learn much from all the activities planned this week with the FOI Unit. They have a wealth of experience and we are more than happy to share this information with you.

We also have our Information Commissioner, Mrs. Jennifer Dilbert. She was appointed by the Governor and opened her office in January 2009. She will be providing us with an update from the Information Commissioner's Office.

Thank you.