

PROTECT GRAND CAYMAN - 2013 THRONE SPEECH [DIPTTEL 1308937]

Diptel GRAND CAYMAN (Restricted)

Foreign & Commonwealth Office Diplomatic Telegram

Summary

I deliver the budget speech, prepared by the Cayman Islands Government, to the Legislative Assembly (LA). Covering the period to Jun 2014, the speech puts in place budgetary and legislative ambitions of the Government that was elected in May. It presents a budget that was collaboratively and swiftly agreed with London. Now it is time to move from ambition to implementation.

1. Earlier today, in a hot LA Chamber, I delivered the 25 page budget (or Throne) speech that had been prepared by CIG and hastily cleared through Cabinet on Friday. The speech sets out an ambitious programme of legislative and other reforms that, encouragingly, focus on:
 - **Good Governance.** The speech promoted the need for Cayman to spend its 'limited resources thriftily, to maintain a world-class reputation as a centre for financial services and tourism'. It noted the Government's aim to deliver public services in the context of the Framework for Fiscal Responsibility. The speech also touched on the Standards in Public Life Bill, the governance of statutory authorities and Cabinet Guidelines and Code of Conduct. It was pleasing to highlight commitments on the 40 Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and the proposal to establish an Anti-Money Laundering Unit under the Attorney General's Chambers;
 - **Prosperity.** Ahead of the JMC, several of the proposals seek to enhance employment opportunities for Caymanians. At the same time, the measures I announced aim to make doing business in Cayman, either as an existing enterprise or as a potential new one, easier or more effective. Tourism should benefit from commitments on airport and port infrastructure and these, in turn, will benefit from following proper procurement processes;
 - **People and Environment.** The speech noted the ongoing work to extend the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to the Cayman Islands. It confirmed the Department of Environment plans to table the National Conservation Bill, and, significantly, open it to public consultation;
 - **Security.** The Government recognised the importance of tackling serious crime and of securing the facilities, in line with HM Inspector of Prison recommendations, to house those convicted of crimes. I welcomed the commitment to convert the hurricane shelter on Cayman Brac into a secondary school.

2. A theme that ran through the speech was the aim to enhance the delivery of government services through greater use of e-Government. Nearly all of the departmental briefs included reference to how they plan to make their services available electronically. The Deputy Governor will lead on this.

SUMMARY:

3. It is encouraging that the throne speech drafted by CIG reflected many of the issues that I outlined as objectives in my first impressions diptel (1308195). The programme that has been laid before the LA is ambitious but, as I noted in September, the true test will be whether these best laid plans can or will be implemented.

KILPATRICK