

Remarks by the Speaker, Dr. the Hon. W. McKeeva Bush
At the first sitting of the first meeting of the 2020-2021 Session
Of the Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 14 October 2020

Hon. Members, as you are all aware this is my first time in the Chair since we as a nation have been dealing with our response to COVID-19.

While I was not in the Chair in this Honourably House I still had responsibilities that I had to respond to from all quarters of this country, but in particular the District of West Bay and including my CPA responsibilities (Internationally) .

First of all, I want to give Thanks to the Almighty God for his unrelenting mercies on these beloved Cayman Islands, and not to forget, our enduring gratitude to our praying population, who have prayed and sought God's Blessing without ceasing during this time of concern, particularly for the welfare of all in these Islands and beyond.

Personally, I believe in Prayers. Further, the word of God says ***prayer without works are empty and futile***. And so today I want to take this time to give thanks to all those who worked diligently during the Pandemic, giving their best and selfless efforts and time, often at a cost to themselves and their families, to keep these Islands and those who live here safe.

I want to particularly commend all our first responders, essential and frontline workers for their hard work and selfless endeavours.

My attention now focuses on the exemplary works of the Premier and his staff, other Members of Cabinet, the Councillors, the Minister of Health and his staff, and all the staff of the Health Services Authority who bore the brunt of protecting and caring for the people of these Islands.

My thanks also go to the members of the community who heeded all the government-provided advice, regulations and protocols put in place to ensure that COVID-19 is neutralised in these Islands. It is their actions and cooperation with required protocol that ultimately ensured that COVID is kept at bay within the Islands.

Hon. Members, I have always said that the Government could not repay the generosity given by the Private Sector. I personally witnessed the many organisations and individuals who were and are still on the ground, providing much assistance to those in need.

It would also be remiss of me not to mention the work of the churches as they too played a pivotal role in assisting many in need.

It is with outmost appreciation I express heartfelt thanks to the Civil Service personnel who played a major role in providing the necessary services required for the survival of these Islands.

In this group, special thanks should be recorded to:

Mrs. Gloria McField-Nixon and her staff, all other Chief Officers, Radio Cayman staff, Miss Suzette Ebanks and the staff of GIS, Mrs. Jewel Evan-Lindsey and the staff of the Public Service Pension Board. I want to take this opportunity to recognise the efforts of Mrs. Gloria as I often had to call on her during the late hours of the night for assistance, while she was out on the road assisting individuals. I would like to extend a special thanks to Mr. Strand Bodden, Chief Office in the Ministry of Tourism and the Director of Tourism Mrs. Rosa Harris and their staff. For those that doubted the valuable contribution of the Tourism Industry, Hotels, Cruise, and other aspects of Tourism they ought to acknowledge the valuable contribution that is derived from this Pillar of our Economy.

While I have mention some names I also want to include Mrs. Paulinda Medoza Williams and Miss Tamara Hurlston and their staff.

I do not know how many members had the opportunity to see what took place in the early stages of our lock down, but I can only say that the staff of the NAU unit have the patience of Job – as they endured cussing, and verbal abuse coming from the lines of people waiting on the system for assistance.

Hon. Members, we must never forget the role played thus far by our hard-working conscientious Teachers and those other educational personnel who attended to the wellness of the minds of our children. At the Sir John A Cumber Primary School the Principal and her Deputy Mrs. Mendoza Hydes worked during the shut down and their contribution cannot be gloss over merely by my simple Thanks mention here this morning.

Also, we ought not forget that as Elected Officials, we have staff; some of whom are here in this Legislative Assembly, and those in our district offices who played their role in assisting the general public in so many ways.

I must put on record my appreciation for my staff who made themselves available during our COVID-19 response, putting themselves at risk while assisting many in the public with completing the required forms for Pension withdrawal and NAU assistance and delivering food and other assistance to the public in need. This task took many of them well into the late hours of the night – and my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to them for this tremendous service.

So far, we have been spared by Almighty God from the severity of impact that so many around the world are facing and have had to deal with almost continually.

Let us continue to pray that the effect of COVID on our beloved Islands will continue to remain mild until a cure or a vaccine becomes viable.

Thank you and God Bless the Cayman Islands.