

Media Release

SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT HONOURS 134TH WORLD PARLIAMENT DAY, PAYS TRIBUTE TO CAPT. ELDON KIRKCONNELL

GEORGE TOWN, 30th June 2023

The Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Katherine Ebanks-Wilks, recognised the United Nations' World Parliament Day and its theme of climate change, through identifying the power of parliamentary governance on the same day that the Parliament paid tribute to the passing of former MLA Capt. Eldon Kirkconnell.

The United Nations celebrates the International Day of Parliamentarism each year on 30th June, the date on which the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was founded in 1889. The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, of which the Cayman Islands is a member, also celebrates the date though refers to it as the World Parliament Day.

This year's theme as set by the IPU is *Parliaments for the Planet*, which focuses on the role of parliamentary legislatures in taking action to mitigate the dangers of climate change.

"I was pleased to see that the World Parliament Day included parliament's role in reviewing, debating, and improving policies around climate change," noted the Speaker. "Having recently returned from a Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference on disaster risk management, I feel uniquely primed to lead Parliament into these important discussions on how to best support our country as we prepare for the challenges and changes of the future."

During the recent Meeting of the Parliament in April, the Government presented the Strategic Policy Statement for 2024-2026, which included a specific outcome of supporting climate change resiliency and sustainable development. Parliament serves as the arena within which policies can be debated, refined, and improved.

The Cayman Islands' legislature was formed on 2nd January 1832, just three days after the first assembly of elected officials met at Pedro St. James. Over nearly two centuries, the legislature has had a long history of Members who have served in public office to strengthen parliamentary democracy, pass and debate laws, and establish the constitution.

On this particular World Parliament Day, the Parliament honoured the passing of former MLA, Capt. Eldon Kirkconnell, OBE, JP, through hosting a formal Lying-in-State. Attended by Her Excellency the Governor Mrs. Jane Owen, the Honourable Premier Wayne Panton, and several other current and former Members, the Speaker noted the significance of parliamentary democracy through the service Capt. Kirkconnell provided to the Cayman Islands.

“Even as we mourn the loss today of an outstanding former Member of the Legislative Assembly, Capt. Eldon Kirkconnell,” said the Speaker, “we also recognise with enormous gratitude his tremendous service to this country, especially today on World Parliament Day, when we pay tribute to the tremendous role of parliamentary democracy as a whole in maintaining public trust and engagement.”

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