



Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, Transport & Development

Cayman Islands Government

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Transport & Development

Parliamentary Statement

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Mister Speaker, Honourable Members of this Parliament,

From revitalizing agriculture for food security to building a brighter tomorrow through affordable housing and safe roads, the past months have been a period of significant progress for the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, Housing, Infrastructure, Transport, AND Development – Now known as PAHI-TD!

Today, I stand before you not just to report achievements, but to celebrate the tangible impact our work is having on the lives of each and every Caymanian.

Mr. Speaker, We are Cultivating a Secure Future: Agriculture is in Bloom!

Mr. Speaker, our dedication to revitalising agriculture as a cornerstone of our food security and economic diversification has borne fruit, spearheaded by the LEADS action plan under the Cayman Islands Food and Nutrition Security Policy.

We've rekindled the allure of agriculture, making it an attractive and viable profession for the modern Caymanian. Initiatives like the East End Agro Park, offering two-year lease options for agriculture, and the successful launch of the "Grown in Cayman" brand, have not only supported local farmers but also showcased Caymanian agriculture on the global stage.

Through the Cayman Cookout, Mr. Speaker, we created invaluable connections for our farmers within the hospitality industry, both locally and internationally. This exposure highlighted the quality and diversity of our agricultural produce, 'Farm to Table' from meats and herbs to jellies and sauces, underscoring the success of our agro-processing courses and the vibrancy of the sector at the 55th Agricultural Show.

The Show, with over 7,000 attendees, including visiting ministers from Montserrat, Jamaica, and the Bahamas, further highlighted our local agriculture, farming, and culture, strengthening Caribbean partnerships towards food security.

Mr. Speaker, our Jamaica Red Poll cattle display and thriving nucleus herd, with two calves born recently, exemplify the potential of our livestock development program, set to be enhanced by the national vaccine programme for cattle and goats. All these are next steps in securing the development of our livestock.

Mr. Speaker, continuing our ambitious strides in agriculture, Her Excellency Governor Jane Owen and the Honourable Premier Juliana O'Connor-Connelly, joined in the official opening of the Poultry Innovation and Education Centre marking a monumental achievement. Integral to our Nest-Layer Initiative, this centre emerges as an example of innovation and knowledge in poultry farming, symbolizing our commitment to enhancing

poultry production with advanced technologies and educational programs. It positions the Cayman Islands at the forefront of sustainable practices, bolstering food security and supporting farmers with cutting-edge resources and training.

Advancing Public and Affordable Housing

We have made substantial progress in addressing the critical need for affordable housing, **Mr. Speaker**. Our Public and Affordable Housing Policy and the 10-Year Strategic Plan, informed by comprehensive consultations, are on the cusp of the survey phase. This initiative reflects our dedication to ensuring that every Caymanian has access to safe, affordable, and dignified housing, aligning with a broader vision of social equity and community well-being. It lays the groundwork for a policy that will guide affordable housing development over the next decade.

Mr. Speaker, on the topic of affordable housing, brings me to NHDT, Over the recent months, the National Housing Development Trust (NHDT) has experienced pivotal changes, signalling a new phase in our journey towards addressing housing needs. It brings me great pleasure to announce that on February 5th, the board of directors unanimously elected a new interim general manager, Mr. Robert David Johnson.

During my meetings with Mr. Johnson and the Board, I emphasized the critical need for affordable housing solutions. We must prioritize both streamlining processes and maximizing efficiency to get people into homes quickly and cost-effectively. Good governance is paramount, ensuring transparency and accountability as we deliver on our mandates. Only through this combined focus can we truly address the housing challenges facing our community and build a brighter future for all.

National Development Plan (NDP)

Mr. Speaker, our strides in national development, spearheaded by the Central Planning Authority, have been both strategic and forward-looking. The NDP's Planning Statement now in its final stages, will set a new direction for sustainable growth and development. This planning statement, incorporating extensive public consultations and strategic insights, serves as a blueprint for our islands' future, balancing growth with environmental stewardship and community values.

Road Safety Strategy

The National Road Safety Strategy, exemplified by the "Pledge No More in 2024" campaign, marks a significant step forward towards zero road fatalities, **Mr. Speaker**. This cross-government initiative embodies our holistic approach, from infrastructure enhancements to public awareness campaigns. **Mr Speaker**, It is **Witness** to our resolve

to protect residents and visitors, ensuring the Cayman Islands remain a safe haven for all.

Mr. Speaker, Enhanced Urban and Infrastructure Development, Phase 2 of the George Town Revitalisation Initiative (GTRI) is underway and is not just transforming spaces; it's reimagining the heart of our capital.

GTRI's efforts have revitalized key areas, making George Town more accessible, vibrant, and conducive to business and community activities. This initiative emphasizes our commitment to sustainable urban development and improving the quality of life for our citizens.

Facilities Management and Public Works: Pillars of Progress

Mr. Speaker, the emergency evacuation plan for GAB building is progressing steadily. Our Facilities Management Department ensures our public spaces and government buildings are maintained to the highest standards, focusing on sustainability, efficiency, and resilience. Similarly, the Public Works Department consistently oversees infrastructure development projects that improve daily lives, from road improvements to critical public facilities. They were among first responders after the recent Nor wester, engaging with businesses, assessing damages and taking swift action.

Advancements in Transportation and Vehicle Services

The exploration into integrating the Department of Vehicle and Drivers' Licenses (DVDL), National Roads Authority (NRA), and Public Transport Unit (PTU) continues, aiming to streamline transportation services and enhance efficiency and safety on our roads, **Mr. Speaker.**

In speaking of DVDL, I am delighted to acknowledge Director David Dixon, for his exemplary work and the recipient of the Deputy Governors Employee of the Month award for December 2023. Mr. Dixon's hard work and dedication have turned DVDL into a benchmark for customer service excellence, among the best in civil service.

The Subsea Cable Project: Securing Our Digital Future

Mr. Speaker, The Subsea Cable Project represents a significant leap forward in our telecommunications infrastructure. This critical investment ensures the Cayman Islands remain competitive in the global digital economy.

By enhancing our connectivity, reliability, and resilience, it safeguards our future as a leading financial and tourist destination. The project is progressing very well and truly is

an investment in our digital future, one that will benefit all Caymanians for generations to come.

Mr. Speaker in Conclusion

We've accomplished a lot, but our journey continues.

Each milestone, each initiative, is evidence of the dedication and determination of countless individuals – from farmers tilling the soil to engineers paving our roads, from policymakers crafting the vision to citizens lending their voices in consultations.

Mr Speaker, This progress is not merely a reflection of the Ministry's work, but a collective triumph of the Caymanian spirit. Yet, our journey is far from over. The seeds we've sown today must blossom into a brighter tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, We **must** continue to nurture agriculture, ensuring food security for generations to come.

We **must** build affordable homes, fostering a society where every Caymanian can dream a dream with a roof over their head.

We **must** weave a tapestry of sustainable development, where progress and environmental stewardship intertwine.

Mr. Speaker, this is a call to action for each and every one of us. Join us in shaping the future you envision – a future where our children inherit a land not only prosperous, but also sustainable, equitable, and brimming with opportunity.

Let us work hand-in-hand, shoulder-to-shoulder, to build a Cayman Islands that not only thrives, but inspires.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not just reporting progress, I'm asking for a promise. Together, let's create a future where everyone thrives, and where our islands shine as a symbol of hope and strength. Let's build a Cayman that truly lives up to our Christian heritage, "He hath founded it upon the seas," just as it has been for generations.

I offer this progress, and our ongoing journey, to this Honourable House.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.