

The Hon. Minister Isaac Rankine

Report on Ministry of Youth, Sports & Heritage for Second Meeting of the House of Parliament 2024-2025

December 2024

Mister Speaker, I rise today to provide an overview of the Ministry of Youth, Sports, and Heritage, achievements, ongoing activities, and our upcoming plans.

However, Mister Speaker, before I go into my remarks, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and acknowledge our many athletic accomplishments including our showing at the CARIFTA Games, the Paris Olympics Great Britain Summer Championships and so many other athletic platforms this year. To our young people from our representation with the first Caymanian as Dean of CARICOM and the most recently selected Proud of Them Awardees, these young people not only represent the Cayman Islands in local and international forums but they unite

the people of our country. This has become evident as we hear more from our young people and their aspirations but also their desire to learn more about their cultural heritage, promoting, engaging and , sharing their excitement, love, support, and bringing about national pride.

Mister Speaker, I am extremely proud of the people and our beautiful Cayman Islands..

Mister Speaker, now to the works of the core Ministry, it's Government departments and SAGCs (statutory authorities and government companies).

From the beginning of this year to present, my Ministry has accomplished numerous achievements, ranging from:

- policy review and development,
- programming and community initiatives and events;
- to development and enhancement of facilities.

These initiatives have consistently supported and advanced the Ministry's key priorities, which are:

- (1) Talent Identification and Development;
- (2) Enhancement and Empowerment of Youth;
- (3) Awareness and Preservation of Culture & Heritage;
and a new priority introduced just this year;
- (4) Promoting an Active and Healthy Lifestyle for All.

The Ministry and its entities are deeply involved in:

- the review of various National and organizational policies,
- developing new initiatives,
- organizing numerous community events,
- focusing on preserving our heritage,
- supporting intergeneration programmes,
- enhancing sports,
- promoting a healthy lifestyle, and
- fostering youth development and empowerment, just to name a few.

Recognizing the need for promoting active and healthy living in the community, the Ministry, and its entities have already begun work and restructuring, under this new priority and look forward to enhancing these efforts throughout the remainder of 2024 and into 2025.

Having provided a broad overview, Mister Speaker, I would now like to share some specific accomplishments with this Honourable House. Each of these achievements not only aligns with the Ministry's four priorities but also supports the Cayman Islands Government's Broad Outcomes.

At a **Ministry** level, noteworthy achievements for 2024 includes:

- The provision of over 100 grants being awarded in the areas of Youth, Sports, and Heritage totaling over \$600,000 to date. It is grants of this nature that provides support, and assistance to individuals, association and programmes in our community, benefiting our Caymanians by empowering and developing them in various ways.
- Mister Speaker, in addition to the grants indicated above the Ministry is also pleased to continue to offer funding to each of our eight focus sports in the sum of \$150,000 each annually.

- We have also commenced the revision of the National Youth and the National Sports Policies, involving broad stakeholder engagement which included individuals from across all relevant sectors, focus groups, a national survey and a comprehensive 3-day workshop. I am pleased to report that the Ministry is in the process of now reviewing each of the drafted policies, which will be open for public consultation before being finalized and presented to Cabinet. We recognize that it seems that this is taking some time but these policies are important to our country and must be done with our current circumstances in mind but provide a long-term vision and plan for both the Youth and Sports sector.
- In May of this year, Mister Speaker, the Ministry successfully reintroduced and celebrated Emancipation events for the first time in over 62 years both in Grand Cayman and in Cayman Brac.
- It is also important to note that five new national symbols were approved by Cabinet as we continued to preserve our

heritage and build national pride. With this, the Ministry launched the "Weh We From" campaign to raise awareness and appreciation to the national dish, drink, dessert, dress, and dance.

- Mister Speaker, we commenced the publication of Caymanian heritage books aimed at educating and bringing awareness to Caymanian heritage. The first book in the series, titled "Our National Heroes," highlights information of Cayman's national heroes and we were pleased to provide copies to all schools (public and private) and libraries; and I am happy to share that we are in the process of collaborating with local artist for the creation of another book on Emancipation.
- The Intergenerational Hub has been utilized as a multifunctional space for various community and organisational activities and programmes. These include youth programmes, intergenerational programmes, exercise and wellness classes for seniors and women, art and craft classes, hosting of events, staff training and conference,

meetings. In addition, this location is the home for the Youth Service Unit and some Ministry staff.

- As a key participant in Cayman Day UK, the Ministry contributed valuable input and time to ensuring that the cultural aspect of our Caymanian cultural heritage was well displayed and engaging to its participants.
- Mister Speaker, as I speak of Heritage, I would like to thank the Cayman Islands Folk Singers on their efforts through, community engagement and concerts in helping us to preserve our heritage through Folk Songs. The stories that they tell through songs takes us back in time and brings about fond memories of our past.
- Since purchasing the 50m and a 25m pools for the new Cayman Islands Aquatic Centre in December 2023, materials and supplies began arriving on island in July 2024, a final shipment is due in January 2025 and ground and installation works will begin in earnest early 2025. The materials which have arrived thus far were a part of the 2024 USA Olympic

swimming trials held in Indianapolis, ensuring that the Cayman Islands benefits from state-of-the-art pools in the new aquatic centre;

- Lastly, Mister Speaker, the Ministry continues to participate in cross-governmental and international collaborations, with recent contributions that includes providing valuable feedback on the UNESCO Knowledge Product on Youth Peace and Security, the Sexual Harassment Bill, and aligning Ministry initiatives with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, to name a few.

Mister Speaker, these are just some of the works of the core Ministry, led by a very passionate, creative and visionary leader and Chief Officer.

In addition to the core Ministry's accomplishments, I would also like to briefly highlight our entities, which is the Department of Sports and the Youth Services Unit for their continued efforts in providing important services in our community.

The **Department of Sports** has continued to:

- Expand school sports programmes through collaboration with the Department of Education Services.
- Offer community programmes, inclusive of a senior sports day, basketball leagues and clinics, youth camps, fitness activities for our ageing population and women; to enhance participation and player development at all levels.

In addition to these achievements, I wish to highlight the restructuring of the department that is now underway to take a more holistic and inclusive approach including a focus on community prevention and wellness services through sports. The Department of Sports recognize the important role they play to support, a healthy and active lifestyle for all ages, mental and physical wellbeing; and prevention of certain medical issues, all through sports.

This new direction and initiative will benefit all persons, at all ages in our community as we move towards a “fitness for life” plan.

Mister Speaker, the **Youth Services Unit** has also continued to grow and develop as a small unit of only 8 Caymanians who in the past year:

- Successfully hosted a "Youth Empowerment Symposium" on economic and social empowerment, featuring a prominent young .
- Provided leadership opportunities through the CARICOM Youth Ambassadors programme, with representatives attending regional summits. The young persons and National Youth Commission representatives also participated in a virtual summit covering topics like politics, leadership, and mental health.
- Recognised outstanding youth through the "Proud of Them" initiative.
- Provided an Intergenerational summer camp and ongoing intergenerational services, encouraging the interaction and experience for all ages.

Mister Speaker, our SAGCs in the past year has also been busy and have made many strides and I wish to make mention of some of their outstanding work.

The National Gallery Cayman Islands (NGCI), and their renowned Art Education Programming continues to thrive with established programmes and initiatives such as Art on The Road, Walkers Art Club, Art Haven, school-based tours, and multiple unique exhibitions.

The National Gallery has:

- Led over 305 educational sessions, reaching a staggering 3,745 students across all three islands in the first three quarters of this year alone.
- Conducted free, school-based tours, connecting over 1,000 students with Caymanian culture through art; and
- Displayed 12 unique exhibitions across five locations on Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman, attracting over 15,000 visitors.
- I would invite the public to visit the National Gallery and participate in the various programmes that they offer.

The Cayman Islands National Museum, also successfully curated captivating exhibits including: honouring National Hero and song writer, Leila Ross-Shier, another commemorating the return of

Emancipation Day and an exhibit reflecting Hurricane Ivan and the importance of Hurricane preparedness. I would also invite the public to stop by the Museum learn more about the important facets of our heritage.

In addition to these exhibits, Emancipation Day activities included a drum circle and a poetry competition, engaging the community in celebrating the festivities with this reintroduced holiday. They also offer regular “Looky Ya” events during the week, allowing artisans to display their magnificent work and for persons to stop by to buy a delicious plate of local food.

Lastly, demonstrating their commitment to preserving Caymanian heritage, with the support from the Board members, the museum was able to secure 100 valuable books before disposal by the Cayman Islands Law School. This ensures the preservation of these important resources for future generations, and I would like to thank them for these efforts Mister Speaker.

Lastly on the Museum, Mister Speaker, I am pleased to inform and welcome the recently appointed Director, who brings a wealth of

knowledge, qualification and experience to guide the Museum forward.

Finally, I want to also bring to the attention of this Honourable House several key capital projects by the Ministry. These include capital works such as:

- Installation of NCCTV Cameras at our sporting facilities;
- Financial support for a new West Bay 5-a-side court;
- Procurement and upcoming installation of Ball Catch Nets at five facilities: Ed Bush, Annex, Haig Bodden, Ronald Forbes, and East End which was completed very recently;
- The Cayman Islands Aquatic Centre, previously mentioned,
- Upgrades to the Basketball court EE, which has now been refenced, provided with new hoops and resurfaced to not only accommodate Basketball but also pickle ball.

- Completion of hydraulic lifts to new lighting system at the Truman Bodden Sports Complex.
- Ongoing upgrades, development and maintenance at all of the Ministry's facilities;
- Restoration of the Pink House, a historical site on Goring Ave.;
- Plans for the expansion and development of Donovan Rankin Playing Field in East End to include change rooms/restrooms & grandstands;
- Plans for the renovation and expansion of Dixon Park in East End; and the
- Reopening of the former senior home in East End, which will be used as a intergenerational cottage, This grand opening will be held on 14th December 2024 @ 3:30 and all is invited.

Mister Speaker our endeavors are not achievable without the support from other Ministries. It is through this partnerships and collaboration that we are able to achieve more in our communities. One such example is the works being undertaken for the rebuild of

the dock at the East End Heritage Field with the Ministry of Planning, Agriculture, housing, Infrastructure, Transport & Development. Also, I wish to thank PWD for their ongoing support and expertise on a number of projects that we are working on.

Mister Speaker, while we have accomplished much, the Ministry is mindful that there is still much work to be done in these subject areas. For the remainder of the year and for 2025, the Ministry is committed to ensuring:

- It continues its efforts by increasing district sports and youth activities, alongside intergenerational programming.
- Continued restructuring and enhancement of Dept of Sports.
- Review of the management of aspects of our heritage as it relates to the Ministry and the Cayman Islands, to ensure that this subject area has the support and attention that is necessary.
- Speaking of partnership, the Ministry will also be embarking on more private sector partnerships to return historical items

pertinent to Cayman's heritage, collaborating for increased visibility in Ministry's and its entities initiatives, improve sporting facilities and competition, as well as create new opportunities for our artisans through academic and exhibit experiences.

I must acknowledge our new entities, recently transferred to us:

- The Gender Affairs Unit; and
- The National Drug Council

We are very early in the transition of these two entities but I am eager to work with them to ensure the achievement of their goals for the Cayman Islands.

Mister Speaker, as this Honourable House has heard, the team in the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Heritage has been very busy, continuously working to achieve the broad outcomes and the Ministry's priorities. Their efforts and work can be seen in the community and I would like to acknowledge and extend my heartfelt appreciation to Chief Officer Teresa Echenique, the

Ministerial team, entities and SAGCs under my Ministry for their hard work, dedication and passion.

The Ministry will continue to work for the people of these islands and we look forward to seeing what's to come in the coming months.

Thank you, Mister Speaker, and to everyone for your valuable time and attention but more importantly for your support to our programmes and services.

God Bless.