OFFICE OF THE
PREMIER
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

Statement by Premier and Hon. Minister for Finance, Tourism and Development
to Acknowledge Bill of Rights Implementation Day
(6th November 2012)

Madam Speaker, as this honourable Assembly was not sitting yesterday, I take this opportunity today, the day after Implementation Day for the Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities, to acknowledge its coming into force.

Madam Speaker, yesterday began a new era; but I am happy to say it began quietly. I am happy that we live as a free people, and that there is no burden of denial of the rights of persons, such that yesterday would inspire any great public outburst of celebration. As I see it, Madam speaker, the Bill of rights is more of a codification, and consolidation, of rights we already enjoy; and it provides greater clarity as to the means by which persons whose rights may be denied or trampled upon, may seek redress.

This is a bold step, Madam Speaker, and one which we embrace, but not without caution; caution, I say, because for those of a litigious leaning, this Bill of Rights may appear to be an invitation to sue. I say caution, because the Bill itself is balanced between Rights and Freedoms on one side, and Responsibilities on the other. I say caution, because as a nation, we are on a steep learning curve when it comes to optimal functioning in our civic lives.

Free and responsible citizens become so by practicing both modes of behavior, by learning to carefully weigh and balance their speech and their behavior – in ways that express their opinions, beliefs, and aspirations; but also make room for the opinions, beliefs, and aspirations of others. We become free and responsible citizens by practicing and pursuing the attainment of our own happiness and fulfillment, whilst respecting the equal rights of others to do likewise.

It is in this sense that Implementation Day of the Bill of rights is also a day signaling new hope – hope that that level of maturity as free and responsible citizens, if not already enjoyed amongst us, is within our reach; hope that we can

be that kind of people, and together build that kind of community, in common pursuit of the common good.

Madam Speaker, I call on all members to give three cheers for Implementation Day:

Hip! Hip!

Hip! Hip!

Hip! Hip!

Thank you, Madam Speaker.