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## ANGUILLA SEAT OF REGIONAL LAW REVISION CENTRE Anguillians Should Be Proud, Says Attorney General

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Anguilla is the seat of the just opened Regional Law Revision Centre Inc which initially is to serve this island and two other British Overseas Territories – Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands.



Chief Minister, Osbourne Fleming, cutting one of the ribbons

The grand opening on September 28 was on the third floor at Hannah-Waver House in the Caribbean Commercial Complex in the Valley. The Centre is a joint effort by the Governments of the three territories in cooperation with the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). DFID has joined the Governments of the territories in funding the facility by undertaking to provide the biggest sum of 300,000 pounds sterling over a three-year period.



Officials from Anguilla, Montserrat, TCI and UK

Anguilla’s Chief Minister, Osbourne Fleming, who later participated in cutting the ribbon, said he was proud that the island had been selected for the Centre to serve the three territories and hoped it would be used to its fullest extent. “I want to commend all those who were responsible for this venture and to wish this Centre every success,” he said.



Mr. Fleming was preceded by his Permanent Secretary, Foster Rogers, who said that in small territories there was always a need to ensure that their legal systems were keeping up with the changing times. He was of the view that the Law Revision Centre would go a long way in addressing various deficiencies particularly in the area of revising and updating the laws. “It must be recognised that we cannot allow our legal systems to lag behind in this modern age. Our systems must be able to respond to the needs of our country,” he stated.

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Mr. Foster Rogers



Anguilla's Attorney General, Wilhelm Bourne, who chaired the opening ceremony, said the Centre was the culmination of four years of planning and work involving various persons. "The close of one chapter is the beginning of another," he went on. "The real work, the law revision process, will begin in earnest soon under the supervision and advice of the experienced drafting consultant, Gordon Carnegie."

AG Wilhelm Bourne



He saw law revision as very important for the functioning of society and to make the laws more user-friendly. "The laws of Anguilla are up to date as of the 15th of December 2006 having been revised earlier this year," he told the gathering. "The people of Anguilla should be proud to know that Anguilla is leading in the area of law revision and also that Anguilla has been chosen as the host country for the Centre which will serve the Overseas Territories of Anguilla, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands initially and other countries in due course. This is a positive development and for Anguilla in particular.

AG Eugene Otuonye



"The role of the Attorneys General of Anguilla, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands will be to manage and guide the Centre from its embryonic stage to a level of maturity, efficiency and respect within the Caribbean region and beyond. As Attorney General of Anguilla, I will be responsible for the day to day oversight and decisions and the Directors will confer by teleconference and in face to face meetings as required."

AG Kurt de Freitas



Montserrat's Attorney General, Eugene Otuonye, described the Centre as the beginning of a model of collaborative initiatives among the UK Overseas Territories in the critical area of law revision, consolidation and related matters. "I think the Law Revision Centre is a trail blazer in the new and ongoing endeavours of the territories which, in recent times, have recognised the need to work together, pool their resources, jointly tackle issues and proactively provide solutions for common problems facing them," he said.

Susan Dickson, FCO

He noted that the territories were making much progress in the area of witness protection and the possibility of a common forensic laboratory. "What you are seeing today, is one of



Catarina Alari, DFID

those collaborative efforts,” he added.



CM Fleming

Attorney General for the Turks and Caicos Islands, Kurt de Freitas, emphasised that the real purpose of law reform was to keep the laws under constant review with the aim of changing those which were outmoded or had outlived their usefulness having regard to the prevailing circumstances in the territories. He was referring to the rapid and significant development taking place in all of the Overseas Territories.

“If the Centre achieves its goals, I have no doubt that it will serve as a model for other countries in the region and extra-regionally as well,” Mr. de Freitas, a former Attorney General in Anguilla, predicted. “I would therefore like to congratulate the Governments of Anguilla, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands for supporting this initiative. I would also like to congratulate the Government of Anguilla for being the host country for this Centre.”

Susan Dickson, Legal Counsellor at the FCO, recalled that the Centre had taken a long time and a lot of hard work by many people to get to the opening stage. She said that the UK Government had recognised the importance of having the laws of the Overseas Territories kept up to date and in a suitable user-friendly form; and available to everyone and not only the judges and lawyers. Among the persons she commended was Yolande Dash of the Attorney’s General Chambers in Anguilla, for being a strong force behind the establishment of the Law Revision Centre.

“This is a wonderful opportunity for the Overseas Territories to be model countries in the region with the most up to date and organised laws, accessible to all and contributing to a more effective administration of justice and the rule of law,” she said.

DFID’s Governance Adviser, Caterina Alari, stated that the main objectives of the Centre were to ensure that the laws of the three territories were regularly revised, updated and published; to build the capacity in the Attorneys General Chambers to consolidate the laws in a formal, suitable and accessible manner for practitioners and lay people; to achieve recognition by the Governments of the territories of the importance of keeping law revision up to date by using their own financial resources and to enable the Centre to become self-sustaining, and possibly so, by providing law revision services to other territories and independent states.

Following the addresses, Chief Minister Fleming, Ms. Alari, Ms. Dickson and the Attorneys General of Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands joined in cutting the ribbons at both doors of entrance.

Among those in attendance were Acting Governor, Stanley Reid, Speaker of the House Assembly, David Carty, Minister of Infrastructure, Kenneth Harrigan, President of the Anguilla Bar Association, Joyce Kentish-Egan and other lawyers including former Attorney General, Ronald Scipio, who was intimately associated with the early plans for the Centre.

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