



OFFICE OF THE
PREMIER
CAYMAN ISLANDS GOVERNMENT

**Statement on 39th regular meeting of Heads of Government of the Caribbean
Community**

By Premier Hon. Alden McLaughlin, MBE, JP, MLA

Mr. Speaker, I rise to inform you and members of this Honourable House that I, along with the Honourable Attorney General, will attend the 39th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which will be held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, next week.

On the 21st of June I wrote to His Excellency Erwin LaRocque, Secretary General of CARICOM, to advise that as the President of the United Kingdom Overseas Territories Association's Political Council, I wished to bring to the attention of CARICOM members a most serious matter that is impacting all British Overseas Territories that are associate members of CARICOM. The matter that I am referring to is that of the constitutional overreach by the United Kingdom Parliament of which everyone in this House is aware.

I can confirm that all Overseas Territories view the actions of the UK Parliament to legislate for the Territories in areas of domestic policy, which have been devolved to the Territories, as a gross affront to the constitutional relationship we have with the

United Kingdom. Every single Overseas Territories leader during the recent Pre-JMC meeting in London expressed a concern not only with the potential of further overreach but some others gave past examples where this had occurred in their own territories. We were all of one voice that we each need to seek our own individual constitutional safeguards to prevent any future possibilities of constitutional overreach.

Mr. Speaker, we have received confirmation that the matter has been placed on the agenda for discussion and that my letter to the Secretary General outlining the issue will be circulated to the Heads of Government and delegates and used as the paper to facilitate that discussion.

I believe that a discussion at the Caucus level with regards to this issue and the need for clarity in the constitutions of the Caribbean Overseas Territories will have the dual benefit of deepening the understanding of CARICOM leaders regarding our unique circumstances while increasing our level of engagement as associate members of CARICOM. I am grateful to Secretary General LaRocque for agreeing that this matter be added to their Caucus agenda at such a late stage and believe that this is an indication that CARICOM also views the matter as important.

Mr. Speaker, as you and members of this Honourable House are aware, there is strength in numbers. Just as members of this House are united in assuring that the rights of Overseas Territories' citizens are respected and protected, so too can we benefit from the support of CARICOM.