

The Anguilla House of Assembly

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PRESS RELEASE

Memorandum of Understanding to further the parliamentary reform agenda in Anguilla signed.

The Anguilla House of Assembly and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to further the Parliamentary Reform Agenda in Anguilla. The Understanding, which was initially agreed to in April 2020, was reaffirmed by the parties on the 3rd August, 2020. The signatories to the agreement are the Hon Speaker of the Anguilla House of Assembly, Mrs. Barbara Webster-Bourne; the Hon Premier, Dr. Ellis Lorenzo Webster; the Hon Leader of the Opposition, Mrs. Cora Richardson-Hodge; and the Secretary General of the CPA, Mr. Stephen Twigg.

The agreement which is for an initial one-year period beginning July, 2020 will specifically focus on supporting Anguilla in five key areas. These areas are, procedure, administration, independence, education and outreach and Member induction. The programme focus was determined after stakeholder consultations and an analysis of the Assembly's policy priorities; the findings of the February 2020 **"CPA Recommended Benchmarks for Democratic Legislatures Assessment"** also played a critical role in determining the programme focus.

The following outcomes are expected from the programme:

1. The House of Assembly will have an induction for newly elected Parliamentarians. This is to ultimately ensure Members of the House of Assembly are well equipped to fulfil their legislative, scrutiny, oversight and representative roles for the betterment of democracy and good governance in Anguilla.
2. The House of Assembly will be more independent from the Executive and will have the necessary powers and privileges to set their own finances and administrative requirements.
3. The House of Assembly will have a plan to implement reforms related to the organisation, function and administration of the Legislature to better support the institution and its Members.
4. The House of Assembly will have a set of draft standing orders which better reflect the procedures and functions of the Legislature.

5. The House of Assembly of Anguilla will have a draft set of Codes of Conduct and Register of Interests for its Members to follow and apply to ensure enhanced public trust, integrity and transparency in the Parliament.
6. The House of Assembly will have tools and skills to better educate their citizens on the function and importance of the Legislature to the governance and democracy of Anguilla.

Activities included within the scope of the Technical Assistance include: a technical review of the House Standing Orders/Rules of Procedure with development of draft Standing Orders; technical review of the Parliament's Organisation and Administration with concluding implementation plan; Development of Parliamentary Code of Conduct and Register of Interests; Development of an education and outreach pack for Members of the House of Assembly.

At the recently concluded Post-Election Seminar; the Hon Speaker, Mrs. Barbara Webster-Bourne, speaking on the need for parliamentary reform in Anguilla noted that:

The majority in the Assembly campaigned on a platform that advocated the urgency of "change". The Anguilla House of Assembly must be "ground zero" in that movement. Change cannot and will not occur in Anguilla unless we have robust institutions of governance, among them being an efficient and effective Legislature. The Anguilla House of Assembly as a primary agent of the desired change must also be a beneficiary of transformative action.

End

Enclosures: