

Opening Remarks

By Honorable Marco Archer

Minister for Finance and Economic Development

At the Opening Ceremony of the
Cayman Islands Statistics Fair 2013

9:30 AM, 24th October 2013; UCCI Auditorium, George Town

UCCI President Mr. Roy Bodden, Members of the NSCC, Fair Coordinators and Participants, Teachers, High-Schoolers and Years 5 and 6 Students: Good morning.

It is a pleasure to open this remarkable event, the first ever statistics fair in the Cayman Islands.

We have come a long way indeed. I note from the *History of the Economics and Statistics Office* that more than 200 years ago, statistics was introduced to Cayman by way of the very first census. The 1802 census was conducted by Mr. Edward Corbet, a staff aide to the Governor of Jamaica, Lieutenant General George Nugent. At that time, Mr. Corbet recorded 933 residents on Grand Cayman and reported that the sister islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman were uninhabited, visited only by turtlers during the summer season.

In succeeding periods, experts were brought from Kingston to conduct statistical and economic surveys. With the launch of the West Indian Federation in 1959, Cayman ceased to be a dependency of Jamaica and gained its own constitution. During the intervening years, assistance came mainly from the British Development Division in the Caribbean, based in Barbados.

Today, we have a local statistical system, albeit still in the development stage but now able to produce a set of statistics beyond the head count of persons, covering a wide range of areas of "life in Cayman" – from education to sports!

Today, we have arrived at a stage where we can now join the global community in celebrating the ***International Year of Statistics 2013***.

This is appropriate for at least three reasons.

One, I have stated earlier that the birth of statistics in the Cayman Islands has international roots and is ingrained in our nation's "history-telling." This is why I cannot over-emphasize enough the importance of good statistics not only for the sake of informing decision-making in government and the business sector. We need statistics to record and confirm our journey as a

people and to help us examine the paths we have chosen. Of all the reasons for promoting statistics, I submit that this is the most crucial; unfortunately, it is often forgotten and neglected.

Two, Cayman's economy and peoples are closely intertwined with the global community. This interdependent relationship is facilitated by and measured through statistics, as evidenced by a fair amount of economic and immigration statistics on display in this fair. Cayman's standing or so-called competitive advantage relative to the rest of the world cannot be accurately conveyed or affirmed without statistics.

Finally, the development of local statistics now significantly depends on international standards. Truly, the production of statistics has become global – our surveys, concepts and definitions must conform to those set by international statistical bodies in order for these to be acceptable.

I now wish to speak specifically to our young students. My hope is that the fair will be a fun activity and an educational experience for you. More importantly, my earnest vision is that three or four or maybe more among you will be motivated to have a formal education and career in statistics or economics. You can have a good future in these professional areas, especially because

statistics has truly become a global profession. You may also wish to note that the Director of ESO has an ambition of having a Caymanian take her place as soon as possible! But more importantly, consider a statistics career as a meaningful way in contributing to Cayman's development.

To the NSCC members and fair coordinators, I believe that you have set a very strong start in demonstrating the feasibility of coming together through this fair for the common cause of educating our young people in the practical use of the statistics that you provide. This is truly laudable. However, may this fair challenge you to go further and develop together as one official statistical system. I envision an NSCC where all members are dedicated in assisting each other in producing and disseminating quality statistics that are sensitive to the needs of the community and in compliance with accepted international standards. I look forward to supporting you in this endeavor, by the grace of God.

With these remarks, I have the pleasure of opening the ***Cayman Islands Statistics Fair 2013!***