

**Commonwealth Parliamentary Association/CIDA  
Workshop on Freedom of Information Implementation  
in the Caribbean  
Roseau, Dominica, 27 November to 1 December 2006**

**PROGRAMME  
(30 October 2006)**

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**Monday 27<sup>th</sup> November**

PM **Arrivals & Registration**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November**

09:15 to 09:30 **Welcome**  
Hon. Alix Boyd Knights, MHA, Speaker of the House of  
Assembly  
Mr Shem Baldeosingh, CPA Secretariat

09:30 to 12:30 **Overview of Freedom of Information Principles  
and Legislation**

- Scope of the law (different aspects: public and private bodies, all branches of government)
- Exceptions to the right of access (e.g. national security, personal information of public officials, policy making and operations of public bodies, cabinet)
- FoI in relation to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), sustainable development, good governance and human rights

**Facilitator:** Mr Venkatesh Nayak, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

**Presenter:** Mr Eric L. Olson, Organization of American States  
Mr Toby Mendel, Article 19

12:30 to 14:00 Lunch

## Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November

14:00 to 17:00 **Addressing the Culture of Secrecy**

- Overcoming political and bureaucratic cultures of secrecy - Efforts by government and public bodies to address the problem of a culture of secrecy.
- Parliamentarians employing innovative strategies to address the culture of secrecy and to involve public officials in promoting openness.
- Inconsistent legislation and policies of secrecy
- Protection for whistleblowers and good faith disclosures. Protecting individuals, who disclose information pursuant to the access to information law, against sanction and victimization, including for defamation.

**Facilitator:** Mr Eric L. Olson, Organization of American States

**Presenters:** Mr Darce Fardy, President of the Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia  
Senator Trevor Munroe, Jamaica  
Mr Toby Mendel, Article 19

## **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> November**

09:30 to 12:30 **Preparing for Implementation**

FOI Implementation Issues

- Lessons from Commonwealth countries that have implemented FOI legislation
- The experience of FOI Administrators, the media and civil society in operating under existing FOI regimes
- Records management and maintenance systems
- Application Procedures
- Fees
- Appeals mechanisms
- Relationship with other laws and also with systems for classification - ensuring the law builds in appropriate implementation measures

**Facilitator:** Mr Venkatesh Nayak, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

**Presenters:** Ms Carole Excell, Carter Centre, Jamaica  
Mr Darce Fardy, President of the Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia  
Mr Toby Mendel, Article 19  
Ms Elaine Toote, Director, Department of Archives, Bahamas

12:30 to 14:00 Lunch

14:00 to 17:00 **Training officials on Freedom of Information law application**

- Comprehensive training programmes on implementation of the access to information regime, as well as the importance of openness in society.
- Training to promote an understanding among civil servants of the benefits of openness to them, including through a better two-way flow of information that can enhance policy development.

**Facilitator:** Mr Darce Fardy, President of the Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia

**Presenters:** Ms Joan Archibald, Director, The Access to Information Unit, Jamaica  
FoI Unit, Trinidad and Tobago

## Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November

09:30 to 12:30 **Monitoring and Evaluation: Role of the Independent Administrative Body**

- An effective independent administrative body which should be allocated a range of statutory functions to ensure appropriate implementation of access to information legislation. This may be either an existing body or a body specifically created to serve that function.
- The independent administrative body should have the power to hear appeals from any refusal by a public body to provide information, along with all necessary powers to effectively exercise this role. This independent administrative body power to mediate disputes, to compel evidence and to review, in camera if necessary, the information which is the subject of the request, to order the disclosure of information. and, where appropriate, to impose penalties.
- The independent administrative body playing a role in ensuring that public bodies properly implement access to information legislation. This includes an obligation to keep the performance of public bodies under effective review, as well as the power to review the performance of any particular public body.

**Facilitator:** Mr Venkatesh Nayak, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

**Presenters:** Mr Darce Fardy, President of the Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia  
Ms Joan Archibald, Director, The Access to Information Unit, Jamaica

12:30 to 14:00 Lunch

## Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November

### 14:00 to 15:30 **Publicizing Freedom of Information**

- Public education campaigns to ensure that the public are aware of their right to access information.
- Parliamentarians making sure that their constituents are aware of their rights.
- The role human rights groups, the media (and the broadcast media in particular), public library, public bodies themselves and civil society generally.
- Use of regular educational systems, including universities and schools, to promote civic understanding about the right to access information.

**Facilitator:** Mr Darce Fardy, President of the Right to Know Coalition of Nova Scotia

**Presenters:** Ms Carole Excell, Carter Centre, Jamaica  
Ms Carolyn Gomes, Jamaicans for Justice  
Professor Fay Durrant, University of the West Indies  
Ms Anne Lewis, Ministry of Education in Dominica OR  
Mrs Cornelia Williams Formerly Chief librarian, Dominica

### 16:00 to 17:30 **Review of Workshop Conclusions**

## Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December

Departures