



Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

promoting, protecting and preserving human rights

Statement on Earth Day 2017 – 22 April 2017

The Commission joins organisations in Cayman and globally in celebrating Earth Day 2017. Earth Day is celebrated annually on 22 April. This year's theme, *Environmental and Climate Literacy*, is a three-year campaign coordinated by the Earth Day Network ("EDN") which "is focused on promoting mandatory environmental and climate literacy along with civic engagement and sustainable economic development."

First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day activities are now held in more than 193 countries which are globally coordinated by the EDN. Earth Day 2016 marked a significant achievement as it was the day that the Paris Agreement on Climate Change was signed by the United States, China and approximately 120 other countries. The signing of this Agreement committed signatories to work toward restricting the increase of global temperatures to less than 2 degrees Celsius by the year 2100¹.

Dan Abrams, Director of Earth Day for the EDN, said, "As we face the realities of climate change – unpredictable temperatures, endangered species, and an increasing number of severe weather events – ensuring that our children are prepared to become environmentally literate citizens is more essential than ever". The Commission agrees that environmental awareness and climate change education, beginning at school age, is crucial to fostering a community that supports environmental protection and sustainability which is the intention of section 18 of our Constitution – protection of the environment.

"Every one of us has a duty to protect the Earth and its natural resources. Our Constitution mandates the government to 'adopt reasonable legislative and other measures to protect the heritage and wildlife and the land and sea biodiversity of the Cayman Islands'. To that extent, the Commission proudly supports and commends local organisations and government agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Department of Environment and the National Trust for the Cayman Islands on their efforts to raise awareness for Earth Day," said Commission Chairman, James Austin-Smith.

Events such as an Earth Day clean-up, a walk of the Mastic Trail followed by a brief presentation on the importance of Cayman's protected areas, and a dress down day during the week of 24th to 28th April are some of the activities that people can participate in to show their support for Earth Day and appreciation of the environment.

To learn more about the work of the Commission, or the Constitution and its resources on environmental protection, please visit the Commission's website at: <http://www.humanrightscommission.ky>. Details on how Earth Day is celebrated by the EDN and around the world can be found at <http://www.earthday.org>.

Ends.

¹ United Nations Framework on Climate Change – Paris Agreement website: http://unfccc.int/paris_agreement/items/9485.php