



# Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission

*promoting, protecting and preserving human rights*

## Statement on Honouring Women's History Month

The Cayman Islands Human Rights Commission (“the Commission”) joins other organisations in Cayman and countries around the world in celebrating women and women’s history during the month of March. The history of women and their roles in society, and the issues encountered by women today, are important to acknowledge. Equally, examination of the issues previously and currently faced by women helps ensure that systemic injustices or prejudices are not perpetuated. The right to non-discrimination on the basis of gender is protected in the Cayman Islands’ Bill of Rights, Freedoms and Responsibilities section 16.

International Women’s Day was celebrated on 8 March as a day dedicated to recognising and supporting women. It has been celebrated since the early 1900s, and International Women’s Day was first officially recognised by the United Nations in 1975. The theme for 2016 was *Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality*. Set by the United Nations, the theme encourages governments to make practical national commitments (through laws and policies) to close the gender equality gap, including:

- ensuring complete free and equitable primary and secondary education for boys and girls,
- ensuring access to early childhood development and care for all children,
- eliminating all forms of violence that may be institutional or take place in our homes and communities such as domestic violence and sexual abuse, and
- eliminating exploitative practices such as human trafficking, and early or forced marriage.

Significantly, this year the Cayman Islands celebrated with the announcement that the Cayman Islands Government’s long-standing request to have the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) extended to the Cayman Islands had been granted by the United Kingdom.

A screening of the documentary film *He Named Me Malala* was facilitated on 8 March. The film is about Malala Yousafzai, the 18 year-old Pakistani female activist, who survived horrific injuries sustained in an assassination attempt by the Taliban, to continue her fight for equality in children’s education.

The Commission applauds the work of the Ministry of Gender Affairs, along with the members of the Gender Equality Commission and other persons who work tirelessly to eradicate the discrimination against women in our community. Throughout the month a range of activities on the theme *Step It Up for Gender Equality* will take place coordinated by the Family Resource Centre in partnership with other organisations. The Commission encourages the public to join in these activities, take a stand against discrimination and celebrate the vital contributions of women in all areas of our society.

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