



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE
APPOINTED TO CONSIDER AND REPORT ON A BILL SHORTLY ENTITLED,
“THE CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) (REPUBLIC) ACT, 2024,”
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025, AT 2:06 P.M.**

ATTENDANCE

Present were:

Hon. Marlene Malahoo Forte, KC, MP - Chairperson
Miss Tamika Davis, MP
Mr Duane Smith, MP
Senator Charles Sinclair, CD
Senator Sherene Golding Campbell

Absent were:

Miss Kerensia Morrison, MP
Senator Donna Scott Mottley
Mr Mark Golding, MP
Mr Anthony Hylton, MP
Senator Ransford Braham, CD, KC
Senator Peter Bunting

Also present were:

Ministry of Legal and Constitutional Affairs

Mr Wayne O. Robertson, Permanent Secretary
Mr Philip Cross, Senior Constitutional Reform Officer
Mr Christopher Harper, Senior Director, Constitution Reform
Ms Shereika Mills, Constitutional Reform Officer
Ms Yaniek Douglas, Legal Education Officer
Ms Shawna-Kaye Taylor Reid, Administrative Assistant

Legal Reform Department

Ms Nadine Wilkins, Director
Mr Makene Brown, Legal Officer

Office of the Parliamentary Counsel

Ms Judith Grant, Chief Parliamentary Counsel
Ms Christal Parris-Campbell, Assistant Parliamentary Counsel

Houses of Parliament

Ms Ashleigh Ximines, Senior Legislative Counsel (Acting)
Ms Tracy Cohen, Committee Coordinator

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 2:06 p.m.

PRAYER

The opening prayer was said by Member Charles Sinclair.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Having called the meeting to order, the Chairperson expressed dissatisfaction with the poor editing and late delivery of the Minutes. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that the minutes of meetings, which constituted the historical record of the Committee's proceedings, were delivered in time to enable Members to review them thoroughly before confirming them.

The Chairperson further commented that it seemed clear that, even beyond the question of which body should serve as Jamaica's final appellate court, the Government and the Opposition had very different policy approaches on matters relating to constitutional reform, notwithstanding that both sides had expressed commitment to the goals that were being pursued. She added that the Administration of which she was a part had a clear picture of how the reforms should culminate for the purpose of improving the machinery of government in service to the people of Jamaica. She stated further that that Administration considered it critically important for information presented to the public to be accurate and truthful. The reform Bill passed by the Parliament would have to be approved by the people.

Member Sinclair noted that resolutions had been passed in the Senate and the House of Representatives appointing Members to sit on this Joint Select Committee; that members would probably have been consulted about their willingness to serve on the Committee before being so appointed; that the Bill which the Committee had been appointed to review had been laid on the Table of both Houses; that there had been no objection concerning the membership of the Committee at the time of its appointment; that certain members of the Committee had since indicated that they would not participate in the Committee's proceedings unless certain conditions were met; that he was not aware of any rule stipulating that select committees must include members from both sides of the aisle; and that he had not seen where any indication had been given to the Senate that the Senators who had been appointed to the Committee were no longer willing to serve in keeping with the terms of the resolution by which they had been appointed. He then sought the Chairperson's guidance as to the procedural steps that would be appropriate in the circumstances described.

The Chairperson reminded everyone that the Standing Orders were regulations of the Constitution and that Standing Order 75(1) required that, as far as possible, select committees should be so constituted as to ensure that the balance of parties in the House is reflected in the committee's composition. She went on to speak to the issue of providing answers to the questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition. She noted that she had said in a previous meeting and elsewhere that the questions could have been posed in another way to the Prime Minister, be it on the floor of the Parliament or by letter, but to the best of her knowledge, neither had been done. She informed the Committee that a former Prime Minister had written to the present Prime Minister to urge him to proceed with the reform in respect of the abolition of the Monarchy because there was no dispute on that matter. She added that, in an effort to advance the work, a policy decision had been taken to begin by focussing on those matters that require the approval of the people and other matters on which there was consensus and which could conveniently be included.

The Chairperson also informed the Committee that the Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee had been agreed and it had been made abundantly clear that the work would be approached in phases. She expressed the view that the emerging disagreements were probably related to a feeling that some persons would come out of the process as winners and others as losers, as against the perspective that national goals were being pursued. She

noted that the stage reached in the life of the Parliament and the resulting focus on engaging the people for leadership of government in the next term could be affecting the process.

The Chairperson emphasised that while the context in which the reform goals were being pursued and the stage reached in the life of the Parliament had to be taken into account, the Administration was of the view that the business of the nation, including execution of the national goals, must continue. She added that some of the objectives had already been fulfilled, including economic reforms and changes affecting the public sector wage bill.

The Chairperson asserted that the Government's approach to implementing the national goals being pursued in the Bill had been made clear from the start. She believed that the present disagreement had more to do with how the process was being led, but the question of the leadership of government was one that was decided at elections. She stated further than in his statement, the Leader of the Opposition had given the impression that only members of the Advisory Committee whom he had nominated were legitimate contributors to the process, but it was important for the record to reflect that the other members of the Committee who had given of their time were not to be viewed as making an illegitimate contribution because they had not been selected through an Opposition-led process.

The Chairman indicated that an examination of the signature page of the Constitutional Committee's Report showed that the members nominated by the Leader of the Opposition had not signed the Report. It was said that they were instructed by the Leader of the Opposition not to sign it because the Report contained matters that had not been agreed. However, the decision-making modality of the Committee was one of consensus. Only matters on which consensus was reached were included in the Report. Furthermore, on the day when the Report was signed, some matters were revised out of the Report to ensure that only matters on which consensus was reached were included. She further stated that she was not surprised by the present situation, though she had hoped for something different in an election year when persons would be eager to demonstrate to the people that they could be entrusted with the reins of leadership. She continued that the Terms of Reference for the Constitutional Reform Committee were set out and agreed to. Therefore, the phased approach and the treatment of the final court in a subsequent phase had not come as a surprise because the focus had been on the deeply entrenched provisions, which required a referendum, and any other matter on which there was consensus that could conveniently be achieved. She added that the claim that the Government was trying to force acceptance of the reform process and the related recommendations could not be farther from the truth and if anything was being pushed, it was accession to the appellate jurisdiction of the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) without a process that would enable Jamaicans to own their final court. She commented that procedure was as important as outcome and the impression that was being created was unfortunate.

The Chairperson advised the Committee that she was presenting this information because of the issues that had been raised by the Leader of the Opposition. She then explained that before the Report had been submitted to the Cabinet, it had been shared for the attention of the Leader of the Opposition and a request had been made through the members for his presence before the Committee. She stated further that the country was in the process of implementing recommendations made long ago, as the present Cabinet had decided to honour the work of those who had gone before, though some of the recommendations had been updated. She added that a Joint Select Committee had been established to deliberate on the Bill so as to ensure that there could be agreement across the aisle because the process set out in the Constitution required that it be passed in the Parliament before being placed before the people. She noted that it was understood that the desired outcome could not be accomplished by only one side of the aisle, but the present Administration was serious about getting the work done in the interest of the people and were demonstrating that they could be

trusted to do so, and where mistakes were made, they would keep trying because failure only occurred when effort ceased.

The Chairperson sought to ascertain from Member Sinclair whether the information above had answered his question and he responded that she had not addressed the procedural steps to be taken when persons who had been appointed to a Committee by resolution did not attend meetings of the Committee on account of a withdrawal, a pause, a boycott or other circumstance that did not reflect temporary absence due to an unforeseen and unavoidable event. He asked whether the respective Houses were to be informed of the situation and new persons appointed to the Committee, bearing in mind that the Standing Order that the Chairperson had cited earlier had indicated that the balance of parties in the House should be reflected in the Committee as far as possible, and it might not be possible in the present case. The Chairperson replied that it was necessary to distinguish between the constituting of the Committee, which should reflect the balance in the House, and by which standard the Committee had been properly constituted, and the question of having a quorum to ensure that its decisions could be properly taken. In respect of the latter, she stated that the Standing Orders stipulated that the quorum of the Committee should be agreed and, in keeping with that stipulation, the meeting was quorate and would be valid. Nevertheless, she noted that because the approval of the voting public was required and they tended to take their cue from the leaders of the parties that they supported, they would like to ensure that those leaders were part of the process. She reiterated that the issue of which final court was best for Jamaica was not about which final court was best for either party leader, as Jamaica was a representative democracy and the decisions of the representatives should be made in the interest of the people. She went on to inform the Committee that the phased approach had been recognised recently as an intriguing possibility for constitutional reform processes globally, and the experts who had visited Jamaica had indicated that less than 10% of constitutional reform efforts succeeded globally and their observations of Jamaica's method suggested that something positive was taking place.

Member Sinclair stated that he had gleaned from the Chairperson's response that persons who had been sent to Parliament to represent the people must be responsible.

Member Davis commented that on hearing Member Sinclair's query she, too, had wondered whether the deliberations of the Committee, as presently composed, would be affected by the absence of some members, but the Chairperson's explanation regarding the constitution of the Committee vis-à-vis its quorum had clearly underscored that what was being done was in conformity with the Standing Orders and, as such, the work would continue.

The Chairperson took the opportunity to point out that persons did not interact with the highest Appellate Court unless they had to appeal against a prior decision and therefore the courts that were of critical importance were the nation's trial courts. She went on to say that she was not saying this to the exclusion of the final appeals court but to emphasise the need to address the administration of justice for the benefit of those who used the Courts to settle their disputes.

The Chairperson welcomed three teachers and thirty-six students from the Kingston Technical High School.

DEFERRAL OF AGENDA ITEMS 5, 6 & 7

Item 5, "Reading and Confirmation of the Minutes of the Meeting held on January 22, 2025"; Item 6, "Matters Arising from the Minutes"; and Item 7, "Consideration of questions raised by the Leader of the Opposition at the Committee's Meeting on January 15, 2025," were deferred.

PRESENTATION ON SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY BY THE MINISTRY OF LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Ms Shereika Mills, Constitutional Reform Officer, indicated that the focus of the presentation would be clause 11 of the Bill, which contained the proposed sections 24 to 30 of the Constitution. Key differences between systems of governance that had an executive president and the parliamentary system, as outlined by the Constitutional Reform Committee, would be highlighted and additional explanations would be provided to assist listeners in understanding the material. She mentioned that clause 11 made provision for the subheading, "The Governor-General" in Chapter IV of the Constitution to be deleted and replaced with the words, "The President". It also made provision for the establishment of that office and for appointment, tenure and immunity in respect of the President.

The Presidential System

Ms Mills stated that in the presidential system of governance, the Executive Branch was separate from the Legislative Branch, and the President served as both the Head of State and the Head of the Executive Government. Typically, that person was not a member of the Legislature. She pointed out that this information could be found in paragraph 5.1.2 of the Constitutional Reform Committee's Report. She stated further that the presidential system of government had originated in the United States Constitution of 1787. In such a system, executive power was vested in the office of President and daily administration of the Federal Government was carried out by the President's appointed Cabinet. The US Constitution in particular gave the President what was known as a "pocket veto" whereby he or she could prevent the passing of a Bill by not signing it before it was out of time. She noted that withholding ascent in this manner could cause gridlocks and legislative stalemates; however, the President could only withhold ascent for ten days, after which the Bill was considered passed, which limited the President's power to unilaterally obstruct legislation. The President also had the power to return Bills to Congress with objections for their consideration.

Miss Mills also indicated that it was common in presidential systems for the President to be empowered to appoint federal judges and various other officers. Also, provision was made for public participation in the election of the President so as to underscore his or her role as a unifying figure. She asserted that this was a perceived strength of presidential systems, as it afforded democratic legitimacy to the Office of President and positioned him or her as a figure who represented the values of the state and personified the country's political stature beyond the partisan fray, but in reality this outcome would depend heavily on the person who occupied the office, and in some cases the President had actually become a socially divisive figure.

Miss Mills informed the Committee that the primary strength of presidential systems lay in the clear separation of roles and powers between the Executive and the Legislature. However, the separation might be less clear than it appeared to be, depending on the constitutional arrangements of the particular country. She gave the example of the practice in the United States, where the President had the power to issue executive giving instructions to executive authorities and often clarifying or furthering existing laws. She noted that, given the President's power in respect of appointments and executive orders, significant executive overreach could occur, resulting in presidential decisions that were made in the absence of effective accountability measures.

Miss Mills also stated that the presidential system was perceived to provide an opportunity for additional checks and balances on the Legislature in the form of the presidential veto, but this was a double-edge sword, for while it could provide a check for the Legislature when excessive measures were to be taken or draw attention to issues of national concern, it could also cause gridlocks and legislative stalemates.

The Parliamentary Cabinet System

Ms Mills stated that the Westminster model, from which the parliamentary systems used in the Caribbean had originated, was one of several types of parliamentary cabinet systems. Ms Mills stated that the Westminster model, from which the parliamentary systems used in the Caribbean had originated, was one of several types of parliamentary cabinet systems. She defined it as a constitutional system in which the head of state is not the effective head of government; the effective head of government was usually a Prime Minister presiding over a Cabinet composed of Ministers over whose appointment and removal he or she had a substantial measure of control; the effective Executive Branch of government was parliamentary inasmuch as Ministers must be members of the Legislature; and Ministers were collectively and individually responsible to a freely elected and representative legislature.

The Chairperson emphasised the parliamentary nature of the executive branch and their collective and individual responsibility to the elected Legislature.

Ms Mills went on to explain that in a parliamentary cabinet system of government the Executive Branch derived its legitimacy from and was accountable to the Legislature or the Parliament and the roles and functions of the Head of State and the Head of Government were separate. The Head of State, who was usually a president, performed limited functions, most of which were carried out under the advice of the Cabinet, the Prime Minister, or the Leader of the Opposition. In parliamentary republics, most of which had a non-executive president, that person rarely acted on his or her own discretion. On the other hand, the Head of Government, which is to say the Prime Minister, was responsible for administering government, making policy decisions, appointing ministers and leading the Legislature. The non-executive president served as the symbolic leader of the state, performing primarily ceremonial and civic roles without exercising executive or policymaking power.

Ms Mills noted that the key strength of a non-executive presidency in a parliamentary republic was its ability to act as a stabilising force, for the President was not involved in day-to-day governance and could therefore serve as an impartial mediator in times of national or political crisis. The President exercised certain duties in circumstances where representation from the State, and not the Government as such, was necessary, allowing for a symbolic separation between enduring State institutions, as embodied by the President, and the more temporary features of the Government. Parliamentary republics were therefore able to project continuity and stability even as governments changed because the President would remain in place and continue to engage in nonpartisan State activities.

Reiterating that context was important, the Chairperson stated that Jamaica was undergoing economic reforms and these and other measures that were being implemented should be understood within the broader context of what was best for Jamaica, and it would do no good to tinker with things in a manner that could be detrimental to the nation's stability. She added that it had been observed that during public consultations, the same set of voices could be heard in different settings asking for the executive presidential system, creating the impression that this demand was more widespread among the populace than it really was. Furthermore, when the issues raised by members of the public had been examined closely with a view to understanding their essence, it had been found that the call for an executive presidential system was a proxy for other issues related to accountability and responsible government.

Ms Mills continued by stating that in the parliamentary cabinet system of government, the Prime Minister was the Head of Government and this person was typically a member of the Parliament who was chosen on the basis of leadership or support of the party which had gained a majority in parliamentary elections. The President, as Head of State, derived legitimacy from and would be accountable to the people through the Parliament. Consequently, a parliamentary process for the appointment and removal of the President had

been outlined in the Bill, demonstrating that the source of accountability was the Parliament, which in turn derived its legitimacy from the people in a system of representative democracy.

The Chairperson highlighted the connection between the proposed system described by Miss Mills and other changes that were being pursued by the Administration. She reminded everyone that a joint select committee had been established to examine and engage the public around the role of the parliamentarian and a suitable job description for that role, and the Committee's work was still in progress. She said that the exercise was related to the particular strengths of Jamaica's system of governance. She remarked that the economic decline that the country had experienced for decades had negatively affected the system, but it was being repaired and the foundations of the nation re-established in the interest of the people. She added that it would take time for everyone to recognise the connection, to grasp what a parliament was supposed to be, and to understand that the freely periodically elected Legislature is the foundation of democracy. She remarked that people everywhere were asking for greater accountability and it was the Committee's responsibility to help them to understand the issues and to explain how the system was supposed to function in the interest of the people.

Ms Mills provided additional information on the role of elected representatives in a democracy. She said that citizens voted for government representatives to handle legislation and otherwise govern on their behalf and so the legitimate acts of the representatives could be said to be the legitimate acts of the people themselves, who had consented to their leadership in free and fair elections. She asserted that representation was best characterised as a mechanism that organised the political directorate at the level of the Legislature so that the will of the people could be determined. The citizenry obtained political equality through the distribution of voting power based on constituencies rather than corporate interest or cultural identity and this equal distribution gave the system its legitimacy and its authoritative power. The legislators or decision makers were thereby authorised to enact public policies and to carry out legitimate acts on behalf of citizens and were subject to public control at free and fair elections.

Accountability Mechanisms

Mr Philip Cross, Senior Constitutional Reform Officer, explained some of the accountability mechanisms of the parliamentary cabinet system, as set out in Jamaica's Constitution, noting that no significant amendments to the existing safeguards were contemplated in the Bill. He stated that the Constitution was the foundation of accountability and the Standing Orders were the regulations that governed how Parliament conducted its affairs.

Mr Cross reiterated that the Head of State, which is to say, the Governor-General, or, pursuant to the proposed amendment, the President, was not the effective Head of Government. This role belonged to the Prime Minister presiding over a Cabinet composed of Ministers over whose appointment and removal he or she had substantial control. In such a context, one had to be a member of the Legislature to be Prime Minister or a member of the Cabinet, which was responsible to a freely elected and representative Legislature. The Chairman added that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance must be members of the elected House and not the appointed House.

Mr Cross then revealed that the parliamentary cabinet system in which the Cabinet is accountable to the Parliament was enshrined in the Jamaica Constitution at section 69(2):

69.— (2) The Cabinet shall be the principal instrument of policy and shall be charged with the general direction and control of the Government of Jamaica and shall be collectively responsible therefor to Parliament.

Additionally, section 70 empowered the Governor-General to appoint as Prime Minister the member of the House of Representatives who, in his judgement, was best able to command the confidence of a majority of the members of that House. Mr Cross said that this meant that, in an indirect way, the Prime Minister was accountable to the Cabinet in that he had to be able to command the confidence of that Cabinet, and the Cabinet was in turn accountable to the Parliament. He noted that under section 71, the Prime Minister was accountable in other ways because he or she was required to be a Member of the House of Representatives and therefore if he or she ceased to be a Member of Parliament for whatever reason, he or she would lose the position of Prime Minister. This was also applicable to Ministers, who must be members of either the House of Representatives or the Senate to serve in that position. Furthermore, if the House approved a resolution calling for the revocation of the Prime Minister's appointment, this could result in the Prime Minister losing his or her position. In such circumstances, he or she had the option of resigning or having the Governor-General dissolve Parliament, which would require the holding of new parliamentary elections.

Mr Cross further stated that Ministers, who were appointed by the Governor-General at the direction of the Prime Minister, could be removed at will. Once the Prime Minister gave a directive to the Governor-General for a Minister to be removed, the Governor-General would comply with that directive. In addition, he noted that section 64(5) of the Constitution allowed the dissolution of Parliament by Proclamation from the Governor-General if a majority of all the Members of the House supported a resolution of no confidence in the Government.

The Chairperson stated that this part of the presentation provided context for the provisions of the Bill. She informed the Committee that interactions with members of the public had made it clear that they did not fully understand the system of accountability in the Constitution and therefore they believed that having a directly elected president would be an improvement in this regard. She went on to say that the reform was intended to refocus and redirect government so as to ensure that the things that had worked well and contributed to the nation's stability were not disturbed. She opined that sometimes there were very good systems, but the system drivers were not effective.

Mr Cross stated that the issue of absence from Parliament was topical. He indicated that the Constitution prescribed that Parliament could regulate its proceedings through Standing Orders, and the Senate and the House of Representatives each had such orders. He revealed that in both cases, there was a longstanding accountability mechanism in respect of excessive absence from Parliament without the approved leave. For members of the House of Representatives, the limit established in the Standing Orders was six consecutive sittings within 21 days, while in the Senate, it was five consecutive sittings within 40 days. However, there was a time period after that extended absence within which a parliamentarian could put forward a justification for his or her absence and if the Speaker or the President, as the case might be, was satisfied with the justification, the person could be excused for the period.

The Chairperson pointed out that at present, the Standing Orders of the House made provision for sittings to be held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, but generally, meetings took place on Tuesdays. She added that it was hoped that with the reforms, the work of government would be characterised by greater regularity. She went on to say that Members of Parliament had been asked to perform functions assigned to other parts of government which had teams of competent professionals who implemented the actions on which parliamentarians made representation. She noted that the leaders of government were not always directly responsible for the outcomes that persons experienced when they interacted with the systems of government, which were sometimes dictated by the actions of the persons in government entities who served the public directly. She commented that Jamaicans had moved away from correcting the fault where it occurred to casting aspersions over a whole system that was otherwise good and able to function well.

Member Sinclair noted that the accountability mechanism in the Standing Orders did not make provision for absence from Committees. The Chairperson stated that the matter could be addressed through amendments to the Standing Orders and Member Sinclair, in his capacity as Deputy President of the Senate, could assist in advancing such amendments.

Mr Cross spoke on the role of Ministers, noting that each of them had a portfolio for which they were responsible and they would brief the Prime Minister on matters under their management. This concept was recognised in the Standing Orders of both Houses, which made provision for a key mechanism of accountability in the form of the questioning system. The Standing Orders of the House included a reserved period for questions to the Prime Minister during the second sitting in each month and for questions to Ministers on the first sitting day during any week, and there were similar provisions in the Standing Orders of the Senate. The Chairperson noted that these Orders had not been honoured over many years, but their purpose was important.

Mr Cross stated that the questioning system required Ministers to account for the performance and activities of the ministries, departments and agencies within their portfolios and enabled Parliament to hold them responsible for such performance. When this was done in the parliamentary setting, it highlighted the relevant issues in the public domain and allowed the electorate to decide whether they were satisfied with the governance that they were experiencing.

Mr Cross also noted that the Standing Orders made provision for parliamentary select committees to enquire into issues, thereby enhancing transparency and accountability.

Next, Mr Cross discussed the role of the Political Ombudsman. He said that the office had been created in 2002 or 2003 and the office holder was accountable to Parliament. Their mandate was to investigate the actions of a party or its members in order to ascertain whether they were in breach of an agreement, a code or an arrangement between political parties, or prejudiced good relations between party supporters. He emphasised that many of the rules on the interactions of parliamentarians were to be found in codes or similar documents that were not legislative in nature, and the function of the Political Ombudsman provided a mechanism for their enforcement. The related investigation reports were tabled in the Parliament, potentially enhancing accountability and encouraging more positive interactions between political parties and their supporters. He reminded the Committee of a legislative amendment made in 2024 under which the Electoral Commission of Jamaica had become the political ombudsman. Further, he noted that with the amendments proposed in the present Bill, the Electoral Commission, and therefore the Political Ombudsman, would be entrenched in the Constitution.

Regarding the Auditor General, Mr Cross said that the office was established in section 120 of the Constitution and was responsible for the annual auditing of all departments and offices of government, including the Office of the Cabinet. The Auditor General's reports were submitted to the Speaker, who would then cause them to be laid in the House of Representatives. Member Golding Campbell indicated that she had a particular interest in this area, as the year before, she had made some interventions regarding accountability and she had not heard anyone counter them in the public domain.

Mr Cross said that the Integrity Commission was a Commission of Parliament and was accountable to Parliament. It reported to Parliament and had a mandate for the investigation, prosecution, and prevention of corruption. There were special provisions relating to the Prime Minister, the Opposition Leader, and other parliamentarians. Also, the Commission had broad powers of investigation, and the completed reports of the Director of Investigations were submitted to Parliament for tabling. He highlighted the fact that, unlike other similar legislation, the Integrity Commission Act included powers of prosecution. Consequently, where an

investigation report revealed action that the Director of Investigations believed constituted a criminal offence, it could be referred to the Director of Corruption Prosecution, who would examine it with the same level of scrutiny and the same standards as would the Director of Public Prosecutions. He was careful to indicate that the Director of Public Prosecutions always retained supremacy in relation to the prosecution or non-prosecution of any offence.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairperson stated that the Committee would begin to consider submissions from the public on February 19, 2025. She confirmed that four papers had been received to date and submissions were still being accepted, but persons were urged to send them as soon as possible. She added that there were likely to be similarities in the papers and this would inform decisions relating to the appearance of persons before the Committee.

Member Golding Campbell commented that concerns had been raised publicly regarding the fact that a direct request for submissions had not been sent to a particular entity. She stated, and the Chairman concurred, that persons and organisations need not await a special invitation to send their papers to the Committee, as the general advertisements, several of which had been published in the newspapers, were applicable to everyone.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Committee agreed to meet on Wednesday, February 6, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. The Committee would also meet on the 19th, 20th, 26th and 27th of February, 2025.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Houses of Parliament
February 2025