



Cabinet Office

Ministerial Statement

By

The Hon. Michael H. Dunkley, JP, MP.
Premier and Minister of National Security

Public Access to Information Legislation

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members may recall that in my National Address 2014 on 9th June, I announced that *"regulations will be tabled in the House of Assembly this session to advance Public Access to Information. The plan is to have a PATI Commissioner in place by the Fall and PATI fully operational by April 2015, enabling people finally to shine new light on the work of government – asking questions, getting answers, bringing new levels of transparency and accountability to the public sector"*.

Consequently **Mr. Speaker**, I am pleased that the Public Access to Information Amendment Bill 2014 and Public Access to Information Regulations 2014 were tabled in this Honourable House today.

Mr. Speaker, the draft Regulations are made in exercise of the power conferred by section 59 of the Act and are intended give effect to the principles of P ATI by detailing and clarifying the practical implementation of the access regime. In

particular, the Regulations make specific provision for administrative matters including timelines for delivery of information and the fees to be charged for the production of records. In addition to the draft Regulations, the Bill proposing amendments to the Public Access to Information Act 2010 is intended to bring further clarity to the existing provisions pertaining to notice periods, penalties and exemptions from disclosure. The draft Bill and Regulations are significant in that they signal the fact that Bermuda is ready to honour the commitment to transparency and accountability made in 2010 with the passage of the Public Access to Information Act.

Mr. Speaker, both the Act and the Regulations will come into operation on 1st April 2015. From that date, members of the public will be able to make requests for information under PATI. For a relatively modest cost, they can obtain copies of that information. However, in accordance with the legislation, not everything is accessible, as there are certain kinds of information outlined in the legislation which are exempted from release.

Mr. Speaker, during the PATI implementation stage that will take place before the legislation becomes operational, there will be many opportunities for public servants to receive training and for both members of the public and public servants to seek clarification of procedural or other matters relating to P ATI. I encourage people to take advantage of these invaluable opportunities.

Mr. Speaker, with the tabling of the Bill and the Regulations, I am pleased that I have met the first of my commitments to the people of Bermuda and have fulfilled my Government's pledge to progress our goals of operating with transparency and

accountability. Honourable Members and members of the public can be assured that I intend to meet the promise of P A TI being fully operational by April 2015.

Thank you Mr. Speaker.