



Cayman Islands

## OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL

### PRESS RELEASE

**26 March 2010**

The Office of the Auditor General made public today a Special Report entitled *Review of the Legal Aid Program*.

Auditor General Dan Duguay explained that the objectives of the audit were to assess how legal aid funding was distributed and whether the Members of the Legislative Assembly have been getting good information about the Program.

In his report, he concluded that legal aid has been granted to those who were entitled to receive it according to the current *Legal Aid Law*, but that more guidelines are needed to ensure consistency and fairness for the legal aid application process. He also found that the Legislative Assembly has not been getting good information about the Program and therefore would not be able to understand how well it is being managed, challenge results or assess program delivery options.

*“The Members of the Legislative Assembly cannot do their job of reviewing government programs such as legal aid when the information they are provided is incomplete or misleading”,* said Mr. Duguay.

The report discusses the Auditor General’s concerns about the initial budgets for the Legal Aid Program that he found were understated by \$1.5 million in the 2009/10 government budget and by approximately \$1.0 million in the two previous years. *“These problems impact the credibility of the overall government budgeting process,”* he said.

*“The Legal Aid Program is not being managed effectively because of these serious budgeting issues and poor financial management practices,”* said Mr. Duguay. *“For example, managers do not have information about know how much is being spent or if they are exceeding authorized spending limits.”*

This document, which has been distributed to all members of the Legislative Assembly, is available to the public. Copies can be obtained at the Office of the Auditor General, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Anderson Square or accessed through the Cayman Islands Government website at [www.gov.ky](http://www.gov.ky).