POLICE AND CRIMINAL EVIDENCE BILL – INTRODUCTION

(No. 1 B/87) Ms R. Daureeawo (Third Member for Rivière des Anguilles & Souillac) asked the Attorney General whether, in regard to the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill, he will state if consideration will be given for the introduction thereof on a priority basis at the National Assembly and, if so, the expected date thereof.

Mr Glover: Madam Speaker, I have taken cognisance of the draft Police and Criminal Justice Bill which was prepared in 2019 under the previous government. I understand that in 2019, the draft Bill was circulated to the Commissioner of Police, the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Forensic Lab for their views and comments. It was then proposed that the final version of the Bill would be circulated and given due publicity for the views of the judiciary, law practitioners and the public at large. Unfortunately, this was not done.

Furthermore, during the last legislature, my predecessor had informed the House that the reconceptualisation of that draft Bill was being undertaken. However, I have seen nothing of the sort.

Madam Speaker, I wish to reassure the House that the introduction of a Police and Criminal Evidence Bill or a derivative thereof is indeed on the list of priorities of this

Government. You will recall, under the previous leadership of the hon. Prime Minister, the Police and Criminal Evidence Bill was introduced in the National Assembly on 16 April 2013 for First Reading. However, the National Assembly was then prorogued, and that Bill never went through.

To achieve an effective and modern reform of our criminal justice system, Madam Speaker, we shall, once again, seek the collaboration of and have meaningful consultations with all relevant stakeholders, including the all-important Law Reform Commission, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Commissioner of Police and the Forensic Lab. All stakeholders must work together in close coordination in view of preparing that important piece of legislation.

We shall not only address the needs of our society but also uphold and safeguard the rights of every citizen in the country. It is imperative that all strive to establish a robust, comprehensive legal framework for our criminal justice system. One that embraces emerging technological advancements but also ensures the harmonisation of all relevant legislations and their effective implementation.

Madam Speaker, to develop a new draft of the Bill, one that meets the highest standards and serves the nation effectively for years to come, the extensive collaboration of all relevant stakeholders is primordial. This process, by its very nature, will require careful deliberation and time. So, it would be presumptuous to give a timeline. The House will have to be indulgent and give me and my office the time needed to produce what will become one of the most significant pieces of legislation for our criminal justice system this side of the millennium.

Madam Speaker: Thank you. *Nous allons donner le temps au temps.*