

THE OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY COUNSEL

1. Introduction

The Office of the Parliamentary Counsel is the Law Office of the Government charged with the responsibility for the preparation of draft legislation. It consists of a cadre of attorneys-at-law headed by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and supported by administrative and secretarial staff.

2. Role and Mission

The role and mission of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel is:

- a. to facilitate the Government in the task of governing by preparing draft legislation in fulfilment of its Legislative Programme and in pursuance of policy decisions at the Ministry level; and
- b. to give counsel to Parliament in the exercise of its law-making powers by advising on draft Bills which it seeks to enact.

3. Duties

In carrying out these functions Parliamentary Counsel draft Bills and subsidiary legislation on instructions from client Ministries, advise Ministries on points of law relevant to proposed legislation, examine and comment on all Cabinet Submissions related to legislation, attend Legislation Committee (a Sub-Committee of Cabinet) and, when necessary, sittings of Parliament or Committees thereof when Bills are being taken.

Parliamentary Counsel are often included in Government delegations in relation to bilateral, regional and international treaty negotiations and frequently participate in legal and other workshops and seminars locally and overseas.

The activities of the Office of Parliamentary Counsel require close collaboration with other agencies and departments, and principal

among these, besides client Ministries are the Attorney General's Chambers, the Legal Reform Department and the Houses of Parliament.

4. Who We Are

The work of Parliamentary Counsel, to be satisfactorily done, must be undertaken by competent attorneys-at-law with an aptitude for this type of work and, who, among other things, are well-grounded in the principles of constitutional and administrative law, have a good command of the English language, highly developed analytical skills and a keen eye for detail. Specialist post-graduate training in the craft of legislative drafting must be undertaken and a period of apprenticeship satisfactorily served before permanent appointment to the establishment.

Parliamentary Counsel also maintain professional linkages via membership of the Jamaica Bar Association, the Legal Officers Staff Association and the Commonwealth Association of Legislative Counsel.

**Contact Information:
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