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**PRESS RELEASE**

***12th Annual General Meeting of the CFPWA Opens in SVG: Strengthening Caribbean  
Law Enforcement through Unity and Empowerment***

**Kingstown - May 9, 2024:** The Police Welfare Association of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines proudly hosted the official opening of the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Caribbean Federation of Police Welfare Associations (CFPWA) on May 8, 2024, at the Methodist Church Hall. Representatives from 14 member states convened under the theme "Unity, Resilience, and Empowerment: Navigating Challenges, Shaping Tomorrow for Law Enforcement Officers Across the Region." This pivotal event focused on enhancing resilience and operational effectiveness through collaborative efforts and shared insights, setting the stage for meaningful discussions and strategic planning over the subsequent days of the conference.

Acting President of the CFPWA, Mr. Ricardo Walkes inaugurated the meeting, emphasizing the CFPWA's mission to enhance the productivity of law enforcement across the Caribbean. He highlighted the shared challenges despite geographical separations and stressed the importance of developing unified guidelines to address these issues effectively. Mr. Walkes also expressed his appreciation to the SVG Police Welfare Association for their exceptional role in organizing the event and noted the significant transformations within the organization driven by the executive's dedicated efforts.

Commissioner of Police (Ag) Mr. Enville Williams delivered remarks, articulating the relentless challenges that police officers face daily. He specifically addressed the pervasive issues of drug and firearms trafficking, which pose significant threats across the Caribbean. With conviction, Commissioner Williams underscored the critical need for regional police forces to forge stronger ties and enhance their collaborative efforts. He emphasized that only through a united front could they effectively infiltrate and dismantle the sophisticated networks of organized crime that plague the region. Furthermore, he advocated for the adoption of community-oriented policing strategies, stressing that understanding and addressing the root

causes of crime are essential for building safer communities and fostering trust between the police and the public they serve.

Deputy Chairman of the RSVGPF Police Welfare Association, Cpl Germano Douglas, provided a comprehensive historical overview and celebrated the significant milestones of the CFPWA. Speaking on behalf of the Chairman of the PWA, Sgt. Daniel Prescott, who was unavoidably absent, Cpl Douglas highlighted the crucial role played by the Police Welfare Association in championing the rights and welfare of police officers in SVG. He emphasized how these efforts have extended to influence the broader agenda of the CFPWA, enhancing advocacy and support for police officers across the Caribbean. Cpl Douglas underscored the importance of strong leadership and unwavering professionalism within the ranks, which are fundamental in driving the mission of both the national and regional associations forward. "This dedication has resulted in substantial advancements in officer welfare and operational standards, reinforcing the collective strength and resilience of law enforcement in the region," said Cpl. Douglas.

In a compelling keynote address, Mr. Kevan Glasgow, a medical Social-Worker, employed at the Employees Assistance Program (EAP), who frequently collaborates with police officers, extended his gratitude to those present for their unwavering commitment and dedication to law enforcement. Mr. Glasgow challenged the audience with thought-provoking questions: "Could things be the way they are because you are the way you are?" and "What one thing can you change that could transform your entire life or even the future of law enforcement?" He advocated for a shift in mindset, emphasizing that positive change is achievable through critical thinking, meaningful interaction, and self-evaluation. This approach, he argued, is essential for building capacity within the force. Highlighting the numerous stresses that police officers endure, Mr. Glasgow offered practical coping mechanisms to support those who may be struggling. He stressed the importance of advocacy and encouraged officers to remain open and realistic in their endeavors to improve both personal well-being and the effectiveness of law enforcement practices. This message resonated deeply, aligning seamlessly with the conference's theme.

The ceremony also included a heartfelt tribute to fallen officers throughout the CFPWA member states, with a special remembrance dedicated to our own PC Robbinjah Spencer, who tragically passed away on March 17, 2024, due to an accidental drowning at Brighton Salt Pond Beach. A video presentation honored his life and service, as well as those of other officers who have passed away under various circumstances. During this moving tribute, a gift was presented to his son, Raphael Spencer, as a testament to the ongoing support and solidarity from the Police Welfare Association, affirming their commitment to supporting the families of officers who have passed away.

The significance of the conference was underscored by the presence of several distinguished figures on the opening day. The Honourable Dr. Godwin Friday, Leader of the Opposition, His Worship Mr. Colin John, Senior Magistrate, and Ms. Sejilla McDowall, Director of Public Prosecutions, were all in attendance and delivered brief remarks, reflecting broad support and

engagement from various sectors. Their presence highlighted the critical importance of the discussions set to unfold over the course of the conference.

This 12th Annual Meeting of the CFPWA represents a pivotal moment in enhancing the welfare and operational capabilities of police forces throughout the Caribbean. Over the course of the conference, from May 8th to 10th, participants are expected to engage in vital discussions and develop collaborative strategies aimed at creating a safer and more effective law enforcement environment. These efforts will ensure that officers are better equipped to face both current and future challenges. The Police Welfare Association of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is at the forefront of this transformative initiative, demonstrating a resolute commitment to improving the welfare of police officers across the region.

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