



REMARKS

**Hon. Kenred M. A. Dorsett M. P.
Minister of the Environment and Housing**

**Department of Housing
Official Opening Ceremony
Sunset Close Subdivision**

**Thursday June 5th, 2014
4:00 pm**

Salutations

Ladies and Gentlemen Good Afternoon

I want to begin by personally thanking all of you for being here to share in this occasion. I am aware that this being the beginning of the long holiday weekend there are other activities that could have occupied your time. However I am of the view that celebrating the government's ability to assist Bahamians in becoming homeowners is a worth while endeavor as do all of you evidenced by your presence here.

Successive administrations of government in The Bahamas have recognized the importance of assisting our citizens in becoming homeowners. Through the Department of Housing and the Bahamas Mortgage Corporation the government constructs affordable homes for sale to Bahamian citizens and provides mortgage loans to those qualified whether their home is constructed publicly or privately. This began with

the Pindling administration which constructed such housing developments as Elizabeth Estates, Yellow Elder Gardens and Big Pond Subdivision. Administrations since then have developed housing communities such as Pride Estates, Millennium Gardens, Dignity Gardens, Jasmine Gardens, now Sunset Close.

Sunset Close. There can be no doubt that these programmes are important and that it must continue. We must do all that we can to ensure future generations of Bahamians have the same access that present and past generations have to government's assistance in home ownership.

It is for this reason that I made a commitment upon assuming the responsibility for the Environment and Housing to provide the Bahamian people with value for money by modernizing and reforming the processes within my ministry and the Department of Housing. We are making steady

progress in this regard. Our applications processing is now fully automated. If you have access to a device with an online connection you can apply for a government built home. We have engaged an in house mortgage adviser within the Department of Housing who consults with prospective home owners as to their financial qualification. We have retained private inspectors for the stage inspections of homes that are currently under construction. It is envisioned that these new homes will included many environmentally friendly devices such as photovoltaic systems and solar water heaters. We have also advanced new models utilizing modern construction methods which many people are excited about since we released photos via my ministry's social media pages. As you can see by looking around Sunset Close we have also endeavored to begin the landscaping process for homeowners with the additional of lawns to the home packages.

This Christie administration and myself as minister responsible are committed to the government's housing programme. We were delayed in the start of construction because of the lack of funding available but like the residents here in Sunset Close more Bahamians are in short order going to become home owners because of this programme. Houses are currently under construction in the Strachan's Hills Subdivision and we intend to move construction into the Fox Hill area. Recently I visited the island of Bimini on a mission to scout available land on which the government can construct units in anticipation of the housing needs of citizens who have and will migrate to that island to avail themselves of various job opportunities.

As you can see by looking around you the government is doing what it can in the face of extreme budget constraints to provide affordable housing for our citizens. However

greater than the constraints of the public purse is the inability of many to qualify for mortgages due to large consumer loans and indebtedness. There are many Bahamians whose gross salaries qualify them for a mortgage that is well above the amount needed to purchase our models however when outstanding loans are factored in some people are actually below the zero qualification mark. I most admonish those who would like to take advantage of this programme or to obtain homes through the private sector to ensure that their financial houses are in order. There is absolutely nothing wrong with acquiring a bank loan but it should not be to the tune where it hinders you from obtaining a mortgage if that is your wish.

This administration's commitment to home ownership is a replication of our leaders commitment. The Rt. Hon. Perry Christie having himself served as Minister of Housing knows

very well the ins and outs of the government housing programme and the good it has done in this country. It was under the leadership of Mr. Christie that the last Progressive Liberal Party administration was, in better economic times, able to construct over thirteen hundred affordable homes.

Ladies and Gentlemen please stand as we welcome the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, the Rt. Hon. Perry Gladstone Christie to the podium.