

**HON. KENRED M.A. DORSETT**  
**MINISTER OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING**  
**BUDGET COMMUNICATION 2016/17**  
**JUNE 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016**

**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY**

MR. SPEAKER,

I STAND IN THIS PLACE ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THE GREAT CONSTITUENCY OF SOUTHERN SHORES. OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS THAT I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO REPRESENT THEM, IN THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE, I HAVE COME TO KNOW AND GROWN TO LOVE AND APPRECIATE THE RESIDENTS OF SOUTHERN SHORES. I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL FOR THE CONFIDENCE THEY HAVE PLACED IN ME TO BE THEIR REPRESENTATIVE. IT IS A JOB THAT I TAKE VERY SERIOUSLY AND I HAVE DONE MY BEST TO BE A GOOD MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ON THEIR BEHALF.

MR. SPEAKER

OUR EFFORTS IN SOUTHERN SHORES OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS TO MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE OR DO BUSINESS HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL, HOWEVER, THERE IS STILL WORK LEFT TO BE DONE AND SOME NEW IDEAS WE WISH TO DEVELOP AND EXECUTE. SINCE 2012, I ALONG WITH MY TEAM HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH REMARKABLE THINGS. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REMOVE THE DERELICT VEHICLE SITE FROM MARSHALL ROAD. THIS BROUGHT MUCH NEEDED RELIEF TO THE PEOPLE OF THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBOURHOODS. THE LAND HAS BEEN CLEARED, WE HAVE PREPARED THE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PLANS TO CREATE A GREEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY PARK AND WORK WILL BEGIN SHORTLY. THE WORK WILL ALSO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE WATER THAT SETTLES AT THE ENTRANCE TO MISTY GARDENS AND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE THIRD STREET IN THAT NEIGHBOURHOOD.

WE HAVE INSTALLED SOLAR LIGHTS ON PERCY MUNNINGS PARK IN SUNSET PARK. THAT ENABLES

RESIDENTS TO EXERCISE WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN IN THE EVENING. WE ALSO COMPLETED TWO GAZEBOS ON THE PARK AND THE GRILL PIT. WORK HAS NOW BEGUN ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TENNIS COURT. ALL OF THE THINGS THE RESIDENTS OF SUNSET PARK SAID THEY WANTED ON THE PARK WHEN WE CONDUCTED THE DOOR-TO-DOOR SURVEY IS BEING DONE. THIS PARK MEANS A LOT TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE AREA AND WE ARE ALL HAPPY TO SEE IT BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A FAMILY ORIENTED RECREATIONAL FACILITY.

THIS YEAR WE WILL BE COMPLETING THE SEAWALL MANOR PARK, THE ROYAL PALM GARDENS PARK AND WILL BE ACQUIRING NEW PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT FOR MISTY GARDENS PARK, AND THE ALEXANDRIA BOULEVARD PARK. WE WILL ALSO BE CONSTRUCTING NEW BLEACHERS AND BENCHES FOR THE MILLER'S HEIGHTS PARK. THE GREEN SPACE FOR VANRIA'S CLOSE WILL ALSO BE CLEARED.

WE HAVE ENSURED THAT ROADS THAT WERE IN NEED OF PAVING WERE PAVED, THIS IS AN ONGOING PROJECT. THERE ARE MORE ROADS TO BE PAVED AND I ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PUBLICLY REQUEST THE MINISTRY OF WORKS TO RETURN THE SPEED BUMPS TO THOSE NEWLY PAVED ROADS. THE CHILDREN ARE HOME FOR THE SUMMER AND CAN NO LONGER RIDE THEIR BICYCLES BECAUSE IT IS TOO UNSAFE. PEACEFUL NEIGHBOURHOODS HAVE BECOME SPEEDWAYS SINCE THE SPEED BUMPS WERE REMOVED. SO I HUMBLY ASK THAT THE SPEED BUMPS BE RETURNED TO MONTGOMERY AVENUE, PALM BREEZE DRIVE, BUTLER'S WAY AND WE NEED SPEED BUMPS ON SANDRA AVENUE.

ALL OF THE UNNAMED ROADS IN SOUTHERN SHORES HAVE BEEN NAMED AND I HAVE BEEN ADVISED THAT THEY WERE GAZETTED. WE TRUST THAT THE MINISTRY OF WORKS WILL NOW EXPEDITE THE PRODUCTION OF THE STREET SIGNS. THIS WAS A MAJOR ISSUE FOR MY CONSITUENTS. THEY COMPLAINED OF NOT BEING ABLE TO PROVIDE EASY DIRECTIONS TO THE RESIDENCES. IT ALSO POSES A MAJOR ISSUE DURING THE VOTER

REGISTRATION PROCESS. SO I AM THRILLED THAT WE HAVE ALMOST COMPLETED THAT TASK. WE JUST NEED THE STREET SIGNS. SO WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE MEMBER FOR CAT ISLAND, RUM CAY AND SAN SALVADOR AND THE MEMBER FOR MOUNT MORIAH, DELIVERING FOR US IN SOUTHERN SHORES WITH ADDITIONAL ROAD PAVING, SPEED BUMPS AND STREET SIGNS.

MR. SPEAKER, WE WERE ABLE TO DONATE A BRAND NEW SCHOOL BUS TO THE ANATOL RODGERS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL, WHICH WAS MUCH NEEDED AND MUCH APPRECIATED BY THE PARENTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION, THE FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL. BEFORE THEY RECEIVED THE BUS, TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SPORTING EVENTS AND FIELD TRIPS WERE A CHALLENGE. THIS PROBLEM HAS NOW BEEN SOLVED. WE WERE ALSO ABLE TO OFFER PARTIAL SCHOLARSHIPS TO THE COLLEGE OF THE BAHAMAS TO TWO GRADUATING STUDENTS OF ANATOL RODGERS, EACH IN THE AMOUNT OF \$2,500,

WHICH WAS MUCH APPRECIATED. WE WILL DO THE SAME THIS YEAR.

MR. SPEAKER, ANATOL RODGERS HIGH SCHOOL IS ALSO A FEW FEET AWAY FROM THE BONEFISH NATIONAL POND. I PROVIDED \$6,500.00 TO THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST AND SPONSORED THE NAVIGATOR PROGRAMME IN THAT SCHOOL. I WAS SO PROUD ON SATURDAY EVENING, TO LISTEN TO THE YOUNG MEN OF ANATOL RODGERS, PRESENT THEIR RESEARCH ON THE BONEFISH NATIONAL POND AND SPEAK SO PASSIONATELY ABOUT CONSERVATION. I WANT TO COMMEND MR. ELIJAH SANDS WHO JUST GRADUATED FROM ANATOL RODGERS AND WAS A PARTICIPANT IN THE PROGRAM. MR. SANDS NOT ONLY COMPLETED THE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM, HE ALSO BECAME A CERTIFIED DIVER AND ASSISTED WITH THE RE-PLANTING OF CORAL. HE WILL NOW BE EMPLOYED BY STUART COVE AND HOPES TO CONTINUE TO WORK IN THE MARINE SCIENCES AND CONSERVATION AREAS. IT IS SO INCREDIBLY REWARDING TO SEE YOUNG PEOPLE

CONNECT THE DOTS BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL PASSION AND JOBS IN THE BLUE ECONOMY.

MR. SPEAKER

I AM ALSO PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY URBAN RENEWAL WILL BE OFFERED TO SOUTHERN SHORES AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PINWOOD URBAN RENEWAL TEAM HAVE AGREED TO PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED HUMAN RESOURCES TO CANVASS THE AREA AND CONDUCT ASSESSMENTS. I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE POLICE AND URBAN RENEWAL STAFF AS THIS SUMMER WE ALSO BEGIN PLANNING OUR BEST YARD COMPETITION AND STARTING OUR GARDENING CLUB.

WHILE WE IN THIS PLACE ARE NOT MIRACLE WORKERS, I DO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD HELP OUR PEOPLE WHENEVER WE CAN. WE HAVE ESTABLISHED APOLITICAL, SOUTHERN SHORES LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE ON CARMICHAEL ROAD. PASTOR HERVIS

BAIN III AND OTHERS HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH US TO DEVELOP EMPOWERMENT, BUSINESS TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES FOR ALL RESIDENTS OF THE COMMUNITY. WE HOPE TO LAUNCH THIS IN THE FALL.

MR. SPEAKER, SINCE COMING TO OFFICE I HAVE REGULARLY MAINTAINED CONSTITUENCY HOURS EVERY THURSDAY AT MY CONSTITUENCY OFFICE OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS, WHEN I AM IN COUNTRY. THIS WILL CONTINUE, AND WE ARE ALSO ENHANCING OUR DATABASE TO PROVIDE MORE EFFICIENT DELIVERABLES AND RESPONSIVENESS TO OUR PEOPLE.

MR. SPEAKER, I WANT TO PUBLICLY THANK MRS. SANDRA WALKER AND MY TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS AT MY CONSTITUENCY OFFICE. THEY ARE DOING AN AMAZING JOB. WE DON'T TURN ANYONE AWAY. WE TRY TO HELP EVERYONE WE CAN, WHETHER THEY ARE FROM SOUTHERN SHORES OR A NEIGHBOURING CONSTITUENCY. THAT DOES NOT MEAN WE ARE ABLE TO SATISFY THE NEEDS OF EACH PERSON WHO WALKS THROUGH OUR DOORS BUT WE DO TRY! THAT'S ALL WE



CAN DO AND THAT'S ALL WE PROMISE...WE WILL TRY AND WORK HARD FOR YOU! I THANK TEAM DORSETT AND TEAM SOUTHERN SHORES FOR THEIR COMMITMENT, LOVE AND HARD WORK.

MR. SPEAKER

I AM PROUD TO BE APART OF THIS PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MEMBER FOR CENTREVILLE THE RT. HON. PERRY GLADSTONE CHRISTIE. THOSE WHO OPPOSE US CAN SAY WHATEVER THEY WANT. THE TRUTH IS THAT THIS GOVERNMENT, FROM DAY ONE, HAS DONE THE WORK NECESSARY TO SAVE THE BAHAMAS FROM THE BRINK OF DISASTER WHERE IT WAS LEFT BY THE PREVIOUS FNM ADMINISTRATION. FROM DAY ONE MR. SPEAKER, THIS GOVERNMENT HAS TACKLED THE MAJOR ISSUES WHICH PLAGUED THIS COUNTRY FOR DECADES. FROM DAY ONE, WE UNDERSTOOD THE UPHILL BATTLE THAT WE FACED TO KEEP THE BAHAMAS AFLOAT FISCALLY WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY ADVANCING OUR PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES LAID OUT IN THE CHARTER FOR

GOVERNANCE. HOWEVER, WHILE WE KNEW IT WOULD NOT BE EASY, WHAT WE DID NOT KNOW UNTIL DAY TWO OR THEREABOUTS WAS THAT THE FNM HAD RUN UP ALMOST \$500 MILLION IN UNKNOWN, UNDISCLOSED LIABILITIES, WHICH RESULTED IN US HAVING TO BORROW THAT AMOUNT A FEW WEEKS AFTER BEING ELECTED. THEY SHACKLED US FROM ADVANCING OUR PROGRAMMES AS EARLY AS WE WOULD HAVE LIKED TO MR. SPEAKER BUT WE ARE WARRIORS. WE ARE GLADIATORS AND WE HAVE NOT FLINCHED IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULTY. WE HAVE STEPPED UP TO THE PLATE AND SWUNG AT EVERY BALL. NOT EVERY HIT HAS BEEN A HOMERUN. WE HAVE HAD SOME SINGLES, SOME DOUBLES AND TRIPLES TOO. WE ARE NOW IN THE SEVENTH INNING STRETCH, WE ARE AHEAD IN THE GAME AND WE WILL WIN WHENEVER THE BELL IS RUNG!

MR. SPEAKER

WHILE FOR SOME IT MAY BE TIRESOME AT THIS POINT FOR SOME TO HEAR OF WHERE THIS CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION HAS BROUGHT THIS COUNTRY IT MUST BE SAID. THE STATE IN WHICH THE FORMER

ADMINISTRATION LEFT THE AFFAIRS OF THIS COUNTRY WAS WORSE THAN WE THOUGHT WHILE IN OPPOSITION.

MR. SPEAKER

THOSE ON THE SIDE OPPOSITE ARE QUITE AWARE OF THE GOOD THAT THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS DONE FOR OUR COUNTRY. THEY ARE SO AWARE THAT THEY TRY AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BELITTLE OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITH NO SUCCESS. MR. SPEAKER, THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IS SO DESPERATE TO BE ON THIS SIDE OF THE AISLE THAT HE HAS GAINED A REPUTATION FOR BEING A FLIP FLOPPER ON ISSUES. HE JUMPS ON EVERY BANDWAGON THAT COMES ALONG IN SEARCH OF POLITICAL MILEAGE. THIS IS NOT THE TRAIT OF A LEADER. A LEADER STAYS THE COURSE IN GOOD AND BAD WEATHER. A LEADER GOES AHEAD OF HIS PEOPLE. A LEADER HAS THE VISION TO SEE WHAT OTHERS CANNOT AND LEAD THE PEOPLE TO THAT DESTINATION. A GOOD LEADER LEAVES THINGS IN A BETTER STATE THAN THAT WHICH HE MET IT. A LEADER DOES NOT ACCEPT FISH TWICE FROM THOSE WHO

WOULD "SET UP" HIS OWN CHAIRMAN. BUT MR. SPEAKER, AS THEY SAY, IF YOU DON'T KNOW...YA JUST DON'T KNOW. SADLY, THE CURRENT LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION JUST DOES NOT KNOW! THAT IS WHY MY FRIEND THE MEMBER FOR LONG ISLAND IS LOOKING SO "SPIFFY" NOWADAYS. SHE LOOKING GOOD MR. SPEAKER. THE PUNDITS SAY THEY CAN SMELL BLOOD IN THE WATER, THEY TELL ME. THEY COMING FOR HIM. THEY TELL ME THEY TALKING TO BRAN. THEY EVEN TRYING TO GET HUBERT INGRAHAM, OUT OF RETIREMENT! YOU COULD BELIEVE THAT, MR. SPEAKER, AFTER BTC, THE PORT DEAL AND EVERYTHING ELSE, THEY GOTTA DRAG THE FORMER PRIME MINISTER, A RETIRED MAN FROM ENJOYING FISHING TO HELP SAVE THEM! SEE THAT'S WHY THE YOUNG PEOPLE AINT ON YOU'LL RUN. WHEN PINDLING RETIRED, THE MANTLE WAS PASSED. WHEN CENTREVILLE MOVES ON, WE HAVE A DEEP BENCH TO CARRY ON THE GREAT TRADITIONS AND WORK OF THIS PARTY AND COUNTRY. WE HAVE ALL THAT IS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE SOUND AND STRONG LEADERSHIP IN THE FUTURE. WE DON'T HAVE TO LOOK BACK. THERE IS NO CHANCE OF ANY OF US TURNING

INTO A PILLAR OF SALT! FORWARD EVER.....BACKWARD NEVER! ALL THE WAY MY FRIENDS....ALL THE WAY!

MR. SPEAKER

IN THE PAST FOUR YEARS THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS INTRODUCED PROGRAMMES, ADVANCED POLICIES AND LEGISLATION THAT WILL SHAPE THE FUTURE OF OUR COUNTRY. THIS ADMINISTRATION ESTABLISHED THE BAHAMAS AGRICULTURE AND MARINE SCIENCES INSTITUTE. THIS ADMINISTRATION WAS ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY INTRODUCE VALUE ADDED TAX AS PART OF AN OVERALL TAX REFORM PROGRAMME. THIS ADMINISTRATION INTRODUCED THE NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA SYSTEM. THIS ADMINISTRATION THROUGH SOCIAL SERVICES INTRODUCED THE RISE PROGRAMME AND THE CASH CARD PROGRAMME. THIS ADMINISTRATION INTRODUCED THE BAHAMAS JUNKANOO CARNIVAL AND HAS BROUGHT THE WORLD TO THE BAHAMAS WITH THE HOSTING OF THE WORLD RELAYS. THIS ADMINISTRATION IS DETERMINED TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE. THIS ADMINISTRATION ESTABLISHED THE NATIONAL

TRAINING PROGRAMME, FREE OF CHARGE TO ALL WHO ATTEND. THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS SIGNED INDUSTRIAL AGREEMENTS WHERE THERE WERE NONE FOR YEARS. THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS SEEN RESULTS WITH THE SWIFT JUSTICE AND SHOCK TREATMENT PROGRAMMES. THIS ADMINISTRATION INTRODUCED THE BAHAMAS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION ACT. THIS ADMINISTRATION WILL ESTABLISH THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS AT WHICH OUR PEOPLE CAN CONTINUE TO PURSUE TERTIARY EDUCATION. THIS ADMINISTRATION EXPANDED THE MARINE PROTECTED AREAS NETWORK FROM 2.2 MILLION ACRES TO 7.5 MILLION ACRES FURTHER PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT. THIS ADMINISTRATION MADE RENEWABLE ENERGY LEGAL TO REDUCE OUR CARBON FOOT PRINT. THIS ADMINISTRATION CREATED THE PUBLIC PARKS & PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY CREATING NEW GREEN SPACES THROUGHOUT OUR COUNTRY AND RE-DEVELOPING EXISTING GREEN SPACES, PARKS AND BEACHES.

MR. SPEAKER, WHERE OTHERS HAVE ONLY TALKED ABOUT IT, THIS ADMINISTRATION IS IN THE PROCESS OF COMPILING A NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE BAHAMAS. WE HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR THE PAST FOUR YEARS AND CONTINUE TO DO SO ON BEHALF OF OUR COUNTRY AND OUR PEOPLE. THAT IS WHY THERE IS NO DOUBT IN MY MIND THAT WITH ALL THE HEAVY LIFTING THAT HAS BEEN DONE, WE NEED FIVE MORE YEARS! FIVE MORE YEARS TO CONTINUE THE PROGRESS! WE CANNOT CHANCE, THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER STOP, CANCEL AND REVIEW ADMINISTRATION TO THROW US OFF COURSE. IT HAS TAKEN TOO LONG AND WE HAVE SACRIFICED TOO MUCH TO ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN. WE CANNOT ALLOW THE FNM TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE VAT MONEY. THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT. THERE IS ONLY ONE KIND OF ECONOMICS THEY KNOW, BUST A BIG HOLE IN THE TREASURY..... SPEND WHAT YOU HAVE AND EVEN WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE! WE DON'T NEED THAT MR. SPEAKER. WE NEED ANOTHER FIVE YEARS OF THE FISCAL PRUDENCE OF THE PLP. WE ARE IN GOOD HANDS MR. SPEAKER. NOBODY QUESTIONS THE FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP THE MEMBER FOR

CENTREVILLE PROVIDES. BUT I ASSURE YOU, GOLDENS ISLES IS A FINANCIAL GENIUS. HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS DOING. HE HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF HIS LEADER AND HIS COLLEAGUES. WE ARE IN GOOD HANDS FOR THE FUTURE MR. SPEAKER. THE FUTURE IS NOW AND FROM THIS DAY FORTH WHEREVER I GO, I WILL BE SHOWING THE BAHAMIAN PEOPLE WHY THEY SHOULD GIVE THE PLP FIVE MORE YEARS.

MR. SPEAKER I WISH TO CONGRATULATE THE RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER AND MEMBER FOR CENTREVILLE AND THE MEMBER FOR GOLDEN ISLES FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S ACCOMPLISHMENT OF REDUCING THE NATIONAL GFS DEFICIT THIS FISCAL YEAR THROUGH TARGETED AND BALANCED SPENDING. WE HAVE CONTAINED FISCAL PRESSURES AND THEREBY KEPT THE PROJECTED GFS DEFICIT TO A LEVEL OF \$150 MILLION, BROADLY IN LINE WITH THE BUDGET TARGET OF \$141 MILLION. AND WE HAVE YIELDED CONCRETE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PUBLIC FINANCES OF OUR NATION AND THAT, IN TURN, SET A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR STRONGER GROWTH AND JOB CREATION. THIS



FEAT SHOULD NOT BE DOWNPLAYED AS IT IS A NEAR MIRACLE TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO REDUCE THE BUDGET DEFICIT BY THIS MUCH IN THIS SHORT PERIOD OF TIME WHILE STILL MEETING THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE COUNTRY.

MR. SPEAKER

THE PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY HAS IMPROVED THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY IN THIS TERM OF OFFICE AND WILL CONTINUE TO DEVELOP THIS NATION INTO THE GREATEST LITTLE COUNTRY IN THE WORLD IN OUR NEXT TERM OF OFFICE. I ADMONISH THE BAHAMIAN PEOPLE NOT TO MIND THE NOISE IN THE MARKET, THERE ARE MANY WHO WANT TO LEAD THIS COUNTRY, WHO WOULD LIKE TO BE ON THIS SIDE OF THE AISLE IN THIS PLACE. THEY TALK A GOOD GAME BUT FURTHER EXAMINATION REVEALS THAT MANY WHO WANT TO LEAD DO NOT KNOW WHERE THEY ARE GOING AND COULD NOT LEAD A THIRSTY HORSE TO WATER ON A HOT DAY, EVEN IF THE WELL WAS RIGHT IN FRONT OF THEM. THOSE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THIS PLACE WHO ARE SEEKING TO REPRESENT THE BAHAMIAN

PEOPLE MUST KNOW THAT THIS IS NOT A GAME. THIS IS NOT MONOPOLY OR TRIVIAL PURSUIT. HOW CAN THEY LEAD A NATION WHEN SOME OF THEM CANNOT LEAD THEMSELVES IN THEIR OWN LIVES? HOW CAN THEY MANAGE THE PEOPLE'S MONEY, WHEN THEY OWE ALL KIND OF PEOPLE? THEY ALREADY FINISH THE COOKIE JAR AND BREAK IT AFTER THEY LICKED IT CLEAN.....BUT MY FRIENDS NOW THAT WE GAT VAT, THEY WANT THAT! THAT'S THE PLAY, THAT'S THEIR PLAN. NO IDEAS. NO ALTERNATIVES. JUST GET THE VAT. WE CANNOT ALLOW THAT TO HAPPEN.

WE ARE ON TRAJECTORY TO HAVE A BUDGET SURPLUS IN A FEW YEARS. WE HAVE TO STAY ON COURSE....WE NEED ANOTHER FIVE YEARS.

MR. SPEAKER

LET'S BE REAL, SOME OF THE WANNABE LEADERS CAN'T EVEN TALK A GOOD GAME, YET THEY WOULD LIKE TO PUT THEMSELVES IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE MEMBER FOR CENTREVILLE WHO IS A PROVEN LEADER.

THEY CRITICIZE EVERY MOVE MADE BY THIS ADMINISTRATION WITHOUT ONE ALTERNATE SUGGESTION. THEY SPEAK IN CONDESCENDING TONES AS IF THEY WERE THE ONLY ONES FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO RECEIVE A BRAIN FROM THE ALMIGHTY. THEY WANT TO LEAD MASSES OF PEOPLE MR. SPEAKER, WHEN THEY THEMSELVES ARE LOST. THE BAHAMAS CAN ILL AFFORD TO PLACE OUR FUTURE IN THE HANDS OF THE LOST. WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION UNDER THIS PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY GOVERNMENT AND THIS PROGRESS MUST CONTINUE. THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO CHANGE COURSE OR TO WAIVER. WE ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK. WE NEED FIVE MORE YEARS.

MR. SPEAKER

I NOW TURN TO THE PERFORMANCE OF THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT & HOUSING OVER FISCAL YEAR 2016/17.

MR. SPEAKER

I HAVE HEARD IT SAID THAT THIS GOVERNMENT HAS NOT LIVED UP TO IT'S COMMITMENTS IN THE CHARTER FOR GOVERNANCE. THIS IS NOT THE TRUTH, MR. SPEAKER. AS MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING I HAVE USED THE CHARTER AS MY GUIDE. MOST OF THE PROGRAMMES AND CHANGES MADE IN MY MINISTRY HAVE BEEN IN FULFILLING THE COMMITMENTS MADE IN THE CHARTER FOR GOVERNANCE. TO PROVE THIS POINT, MY MINISTRY HAS PRODUCED A DOCUMENT CALLED 'FULFILLING THE CHARTER, A PROGRESS REPORT 2012-2015'. THIS REPORT POINTS TO WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO FULFILL EVERY COMMITMENT MADE IN THE CHARTER DOCUMENT AS PERTAINS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND TO HOUSING. I ADVISE COLLEAGUES TO PRODUCE SIMILAR DOCUMENTS TO SHOW BOTH NAYSAYERS AND SUPPORTERS WHAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH, DESPITE THE ODDS AND THE CHALLENGES.

**MR. SPEAKER, A FEW SHORT WEEKS AGO, I PROVIDED A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE**

**PERFORMANCE AND EXPENDITURES OF MY MINISTRY. AS THAT PRESENTATION IS STILL AVAILABLE ON MY MINISTRY'S FACEBOOK PAGE, I WILL GIVE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PORTFOLIO AND FOCUS ON SOME SPECIFIC AREAS.**

## **OUR ENVIRONMENT**

MR. SPEAKER,

HUMANITY'S WELL-BEING AND PROSPERITY – INDEED, OUR VERY EXISTENCE – DEPENDS ON HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS AND THE SERVICES THEY SUPPLY: CLEAN WATER, A LIVEABLE CLIMATE, FOOD, FUEL AND FERTILE SOILS. THE CHALLENGE OF PROVIDING EVERYONE WITH THE FOOD, WATER AND ENERGY THEY NEED IS ALREADY A DAUNTING PROSPECT, AND THE HUMAN POPULATION IS PROJECTED TO SWELL TO OVER 9 BILLION BY 2050.

AND THIS IS WHY, MR. SPEAKER, THAT THE HON. PRIME MINISTER POINTED OUT IN HIS COMMUNICATION ON 25 MAY, THAT THE THIRD KEY PILLAR OF DEVELOPMENT OF OUR NATION IS THE NATURAL AND BUILT

ENVIRONMENT. HE REMINDED THIS HONOURABLE HOUSE AND THE NATION THAT THE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ARE CRITICAL TO THE PHYSICAL WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS AND THE SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR A MODERN ECONOMY.

MR. SPEAKER,

PROTECTING NATURE AND USING ITS RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY ARE PREREQUISITES FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING, AND FOR BUILDING RESILIENT, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES. TO THIS END, MR. SPEAKER, THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION FOR CLIMATE CONTROL (UNFCCC) BROUGHT TOGETHER SOME 196 COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD IN PARIS LAST DECEMBER TO FORGE AN AGREEMENT FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PLANET.

THE UNFCCC IS ONE OF THE LAST REMAINING FORA IN THE WORLD WHERE EVERY COUNTRY, HOWEVER SMALL, IS REPRESENTED ON THE SAME BASIS AND HAS EQUAL SAY WITH THE BIGGEST ECONOMIES. ALL 196 STATES HAVE A SEAT AND A SAY AT THE UNFCCC, AND AGREEMENT CAN ONLY BE ACCEPTED BY CONSENSUS.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE POOREST COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, SO OFTEN LEFT OUT OF INTERNATIONAL CONSIDERATION, ARE THOSE WHICH HAVE DONE LEAST TO CREATE CLIMATE CHANGE, BUT WILL SUFFER THE MOST FROM IT. ONLY AT THE UNITED NATIONS ARE THEY HEARD.

IN PARIS, THE WORLD'S GOVERNMENTS FINALIZED A GLOBAL AGREEMENT ON 12 DECEMBER 2015 THAT LAID THE FOUNDATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM EFFORTS TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE. THE AGREEMENT IS THE FIRST EVER TO COMMIT ALL COUNTRIES TO CUT EMISSIONS OF GREENHOUSE GASES SUCH AS CARBON DIOXIDE. PARTICULARLY SIGNIFICANT ARE THE

FOLLOWING COMMITMENTS: TO KEEP GLOBAL TEMPERATURE INCREASES WELL BELOW 2°C AND ENDEAVOUR TO LIMIT THEM TO 1.5°C; TO REVIEW EACH COUNTRY'S CONTRIBUTION TO EMISSION CUTS EVERY FIVE YEARS – WITH A GLOBAL STOCK-TAKING IN 2018 – TO HELP SCALE UP EFFORTS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS; AND TO SEEK A BALANCE BETWEEN EMISSIONS AND ABSORPTION BY FORESTS AND OCEANS BY THE SECOND HALF OF THE CENTURY.

FOR FINANCING THE COSTS OF FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND THOSE MOST VULNERABLE TO ITS IMPACTS, COUNTRIES AFFIRMED THE TARGET OF LEVERAGING US\$100 BILLION ANNUALLY BY 2020, WITH INCREASED FUNDING IN FUTURE YEARS.

## **PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH SUSTAINABLE USE**

DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS, TARGETS AND OTHER OBJECTIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WITHOUT



ADDITIONAL INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT. IN THIS REGARD, IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE BAHAMAS, DUE TO ITS HIGH GDP, OFTEN TIMES FINDS ITSELF NOT BEING ABLE TO ACCESS GRANT OR CONCESSIONARY FUNDING, IN RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA CHANGED THE USA'S POSITION ON THE MATTER AND WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THAT. WE TRUST THAT THE EUROPEAN UNION AND OTHER COUNTRIES WILL DO THE SAME.

MR. SPEAKER, IN THE 2015/2016 FISCAL YEAR, MY MINISTRY AND THE BEST COMMISSION SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY (GEF) PROJECT TO BUILD A SUSTAINABLE MARINE PROTECTED AREA (MPA) NETWORK IN THE BAHAMAS. THE COUNTRY PROVIDED CO-FINANCING \$6,676,000 AND THE GEF \$2.2 MILLION DOLLARS TO UNDERTAKE A PROJECT THAT NOT ONLY MET, BUT EXCEEDED, ITS GOALS OF PROTECTING 10% OF THE NEARSHORE MARINE ENVIRONMENT. A LARGE PORTION OF THE

FUNDING CONTRIBUTED TO THE FORMATION OF THE **BAHAMAS PROTECTED AREA FUND. THIS FUND WILL PROVIDE A** SUSTAINABLE FINANCE MECHANISM WHICH WILL ENABLE THE COUNTRY TO CONTINUOUSLY MANAGE PROTECTED AREAS, AS WELL AS EMBARK ON OTHER CONSERVATION EFFORTS. THE BOARD OF THE FUND IS FUNCTIONAL AND IT SHOULD BE APPOINTING AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IN SHORT ORDER.

## **UNFCCC**

AT THE 21ST SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP21) ON DECEMBER 2015, MY MINISTRY SUBMITTED THE BAHAMAS' INTENDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION (INDC) AND NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE SECOND NATIONAL COMMUNICATION REPORTS TO THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC) HELD DECEMBER 2015 IN PARIS. THE SECOND NATIONAL COMMUNICATION IS A DOCUMENT THAT OUTLINES THE BAHAMAS VULNERABILITIES, ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION EFFORTS AS REGARDS TO CLIMATE

CHANGE. THE DOCUMENT ALSO DETAILS WHAT IS NEEDED IN ORDER TO FURTHER ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS IN THE BAHAMAS. THE DOCUMENTS ARE AVAILABLE ON THE UNFCCC WEBSITE. IN THIS VEIN, WE ARE ADVANCING VARIOUS PROJECTS AND LEGISLATIVE INSTRUMENTS TO SET THE COUNTRY ON A PATH TO BALANCING THE AMOUNT OF CARBON EMISSIONS FROM VEHICLES AND INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES BY THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY.

### **ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING**

MR. SPEAKER,

AS AN ARCHIPELAGIC NATION THAT IS A HOT SPOT FOR BIODIVERSITY, THIS MEANS WE ARE ALSO A HOT SPOT FOR GENETIC RESOURCES UNIQUE ONLY TO THESE ISLANDS. COGNIZANT OF THE NEED FOR PROTECTING THESE VALUABLE RESOURCES, THE COUNTRY IS PREPARING ITSELF TO SIGN ON TO THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED THE NAGOYA PROTOCOL ON ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES AND THE FAIR AND EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS ARISING FROM THEIR

UTILIZATION BY IMPLEMENTING A **CAPACITY BUILDING PROJECT ON ACCESS AND BENEFIT SHARING**. THIS \$1.9 MILLION DOLLAR PROJECT'S MAIN FOCUS IS TO DEVELOP LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS AS WELL AS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES THAT ENABLE ACCESS TO GENETIC RESOURCES. MR. SPEAKER, FOR DECADES, PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES AND COSMETIC COMPANIES HAVE EXPLOITED OUR WATERS FOR GENETIC RESOURCES. THESE RESOURCES ARE USED TO MAKE MEDICINE AND COSMETICS AND ARE A PART OF BILLION DOLLAR INDUSTRIES. THE BAHAMAS RECEIVES NO ROYALTIES AND NO BENEFIT. SO MY MINISTRY AND THIS GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO CHANGE THAT. IT IS ANOTHER REASON WHY RESEARCH PERMITS WILL HAVE TO COORDINATED THROUGH ONE SINGLE GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN THE FUTURE. CURRENTLY RESEARCH PERMITS CAN BE OBTAINED FROM THE COLLEGE OF THE BAHAMAS, BAMSI, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES AND MY MINISTRY. RESEARCH MUST BE COORDINATED AND AS THE PRIME MINISTER HAS INDICATED THE SOON TO BE

UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS AND BAMSI SHOULD BECOME THE DEPOSITORY FOR SUCH RESEARCH IN THE BAHAMAS. WE MUST BUILD NATIONAL CAPACITY AND BECOME A CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH. THE UNIVERSITY OF THE BAHAMAS WILL PUT US ON THE PATH TO ACHIEVE THAT.

MR. SPEAKER – I DARE SAY, THIS IS ANOTHER REASON WE SHOULD BE GIVEN FIVE MORE YEARS.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE BAHAMAS IS ALSO THE RECIPIENT OF \$863,242 GRANT FOR A **PROJECT ON IMPLEMENTING LAND, WATER AND ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT (IWEKO)**. THIS PROJECT HELPS TO DEVELOP A MODEL FOR INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT FOR THE BAHAMAS AND OTHER SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES.

**MR. SPEAKER,**

**THE INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT (ICZM)** PROGRAM UNDER INTER-AMERICAN BANK (IDB) – PROVIDES A TECHNICAL COOPERATION GRANT IN THE AMOUNT US\$650,000.. THE GENERAL OBJECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT IS TO STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR THE PHASED ESTABLISHMENT OF A CLIMATE RISK-RESILIENT INTEGRATED COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT (ICZM) PROGRAM IN THE BAHAMAS. IT AIMS AT OPTIMIZING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE COASTAL ZONE TO NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING RESILIENCE TO COASTAL HAZARDS INCLUDING THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A RISK-BASED ICZM APPROACH WILL ALSO ASSIST THE COUNTRY IN MEETING THE DEVELOPMENT TARGET OF 20% CONSERVATION OF THE NEAR SHORE ENVIRONMENT BY 2020 UNDER THE CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE INITIATIVE.

MR. SPEAKER,

I HAVE ALSO BEEN ELECTED CO-CHAIR OF THE CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE INITIATIVE COUNCIL. GERMANY

IS MY CO-CHAIR AND THIS YEAR WE ARE ADVANCING AN AGGRESSIVE PROGRAM TO ADVANCE THE CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE, WHICH INCLUDES THE EXPANSION OF MARINE PROTECTED AREAS, SHARK, MANTARAY AND TURTLE SANCTUARIES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY.

### **THE GREEN CLIAMTE FUND**

MR. SPEAKER,

AS ONE OF THE NATIONS IN THE WORLD MOST VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE, UNDER THE NEW PARIS CLIMATE AGREEMENT, WE COMMITTED OURSELVES TO IMPLEMENTING BOTH THE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION ACTIONS THAT WE CAN. THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING IS COOPERATING WITH THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND, A FUND WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE FOUNDED AS A MECHANISM TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION PRACTICES TO COUNTER CLIMATE CHANGE.

MR. SPEAKER,

EARLIER THIS YEAR, MY MINISTRY SUBMITTED A READINESS PROPOSAL TO THE GREEN CLIMATE FUND FOR APPROVAL. THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT REQUESTED IN THE PROPOSAL IS EXPECTED TO SIGNIFICANTLY STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITIES OF THE STAFF OF THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING, THE NATIONAL DESIGNATED AUTHORITY (NDA) TO FULFILL ITS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FUND, AND TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES (NIES) TO ACCESS FUNDS FROM THE GCF BY WAY OF QUALIFYING PROJECTS. THIS PROCESS IS WELL UNDERWAY AND WE ARE EXPECTING FUNDING TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE BAHAMAS DURING THE UPCOMING BUDGET YEAR.

MR. SPEAKER,

I WANT TO THANK THE BEST COMMISSION FOR ITS CONTINUED HARD WORK AND ASSISTANCE IN THE AREAS JUST MENTIONED AS WELL AS IN RELATION TO



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS,  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLANS AND  
MONITORING.

## **FORESTS**

MR. SPEAKER,  
COVERING ONE THIRD OF THE WORLD'S LAND MASS,  
FORESTS CONSTITUTE THE LARGEST TERRESTRIAL  
ECOSYSTEMS AND THE RICHEST SOURCE OF  
BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. FORESTS PROVIDE A WIDE  
RANGE OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, INCLUDING WOOD AND  
NON-WOOD FOREST PRODUCTS, PROTECTION OF OTHER  
NATURAL RESOURCES, AND CONTRIBUTION TO LOCAL  
AND GLOBAL CLIMATE CONTROL. FOREST PRODUCTS  
ARE USED IN OUR DAILY LIVES. TODAY, IF YOU HAVE  
READ A NEWSPAPER, SIGNED A CHEQUE, MADE A

SHOPPING LIST, OR BLOWN YOUR NOSE INTO A TISSUE, YOU HAVE BEEN IMPACTED BY FORESTS. LESS OBVIOUS FOREST BY-PRODUCTS GO INTO THE MANUFACTURE OF OTHER EVERYDAY ITEMS LIKE MEDICINES, COSMETICS AND DETERGENTS.

MR. SPEAKER,

LOOKING BEYOND OUR HUMAN PERSPECTIVE, FORESTS PROVIDE HABITATS FOR DIVERSE ANIMAL SPECIES, AND THEY ALSO FORM THE SOURCE OF LIVELIHOOD FOR MANY DIFFERENT HUMAN SETTLEMENTS AS WELL AS FOR GOVERNMENTS. THEY OFFER WATERSHED PROTECTION, TIMBER AND NON-TIMBER PRODUCTS, AND VARIOUS RECREATIONAL OPTIONS. THEY PREVENT SOIL EROSION, HELP IN MAINTAINING THE WATER CYCLE, AND CHECK GLOBAL WARMING BY USING CARBON DIOXIDE IN PHOTOSYNTHESIS.

UNSUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS AND COMPETING LAND USES, SUCH AS LARGE SCALE AGRICULTURE, AND AGGRAVATION BY FIRES AND AIRBORNE POLLUTION, HAVE RESULTED IN EXTENSIVE

AND RAPID RATES OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION, CONTRIBUTING FURTHER TO LOCAL AND TRANS-BOUNDARY ENVIRONMENTAL DETERIORATION. IN MOVING TOWARDS THE SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS, OUR FORESTRY UNIT IS MANDATED TO DEVELOP THE NATIONAL FOREST RESOURCES OF THE BAHAMAS TO THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL BY APPLYING SOUND, SCIENTIFIC, AND SUSTAINED YIELD FOREST MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS. THE NATIONAL FOREST ESTATE HAS BEEN FINALISED AND IS SOON TO BE DECLARED AND GAZETTED. ALL OF THE PLANS ARE BEING COMPLETED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF LANDS & SURVEYS AS WE SPEAK. A NATIONAL FOREST PLAN WILL BE PREPARED WITH GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING BAHAMIAN FORESTS.

AS WE STAND ON THE CUSP OF DECLARING THE NATIONAL FOREST ESTATE, I URGE HUNTERS TO MEET WITH THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST AND MY MINISTRY BEFORE THE UPCOMING HUNTING SEASON BEGINS. WE MUST CONTINUE TO ADVANCE OUR DISCUSSIONS IN RELATION TO THE POTENTIAL FOR THE

DEVELOPMENT OF SAFE, SUSTAINABLE AND PROPER HUNTING RESERVES IN OUR ISLANDS. THIS WILL ENABLE US TO FURTHER DIVERSIFY OUR TOURISTIC OFFERINGS AND PROVIDE MUCH NEEDED INVESTMENT, JOBS AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SETTLEMENTS IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH ANDROS, ABACO, INAGUA AND GRAND BAHAMA.

MR. SPEAKER, THE COUNCIL OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY ALSO PROVIDED GRANT FUNDING FOR **THE GEF-PINE ISLAND PROJECT**. OVER THE PROJECT'S LIFE, THE GEF WILL PROVIDE \$2.8 MILLION IN CASH WHILE THE BAHAMAS' CONTRIBUTION IS \$5.6 MILLION (FROM BOTH THE PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR), MOSTLY IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS, BUT WITH SOME CASH CONTRIBUTION AS WELL. THIS PROJECT AIMS TO BUILD ON RECENT ADVANCEMENTS IN THE FORESTRY SECTOR BY INTEGRATING BIODIVERSITY VALUES, ECOSYSTEM SERVICES VALUES AND PRECEPTS OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT AND LAND-USE INTO ENHANCED LAND-USE PLANNING IN THE BAHAMAS. THE PROJECT WAS OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED IN

FEBRUARY 2016 AND SHOULD TAKE FOUR YEARS TO COMPLETE. MR. SPEAKER, THAT IS WHY WE NEED FIVE MORE YEARS TO COMPLETE THESE PROJECTS WHICH WILL DIVERSIFY OUR ECONOMY AND CREATE NEW GREEN AND BLUE JOBS.

### **YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CORP.**

MR. SPEAKER,

I SHARE THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY THE RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH LEVEL RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR THE YOUTH OF OUR NATION, AGED 15 TO 24 YEARS, WHICH STANDS AT 30 PER CENT. THIS IS AN ISSUE THAT WE ARE COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING AGGRESSIVELY. CONSEQUENTLY, AS MENTIONED IN THE BUDGET STATEMENT OF THE RIGHT HON. MEMBER FOR CENTREVILLE, THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING INTENDS TO CREATE **A YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CORP** TO PROVIDE APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING FOR YOUNG BAHAMIANS IN THE DEVELOPING GREEN AND BLUE ECONOMIES IN THE BAHAMAS. THE PROGRAMME IS

ENVISAGED TO CATER TO HUNDREDS OF BAHAMIAN WORKERS BETWEEN THE AGES OF SEVENTEEN AND FORTY (17-40), OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. IT IS ENVISAGED THAT 1,200 JOBS WILL BE CREATED OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS. THE YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CORP., WILL WORK WITH THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST, THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY AND THE FORESTRY UNIT. THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST HAS A SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL GAP AND IS UNABLE TO PAY FOR THE HUMAN RESOURCES NEEDED TO MANAGE OUR MARINE PROTECTED AREAS AND NATIONAL PARKS. THE YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CORP. WILL HAVE TO REDUCE THE ECONOMIC GAP AND ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO PROTECT AND MANAGE THESE RESOURCES. THE FORESTRY UNIT IS EXPECTED TO RECEIVE 200 PERSONS OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS & PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY IS EXPECTED TO ENGAGE 100-300 PERSONS AS WE BEGIN ORIENTATION AND TRAINING FOR THE WARDENS AND STAFF REQUIRED TO BEGIN WORK ON THE PROPOSED LAKE KILLARNEY NATIONAL PARK AND THE NATIONAL HERO'S

GARDEN, WHICH WILL RESIDE IN THE BOTANICAL GARDENS. THE LAKE KILLARNEY NATIONAL PARK WILL BE DEVELOPED OVER A FIVE YEAR PERIOD AND WILL PROVIDE OVER 19.5 MILES OF WALKING TRAILS AND BOARDWALKS. IT WILL PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR BIRD WATCHING, KAYAKING, SNORKELLING AND RELAXATION. DURING THE DEVELOPMENT PHASES, HUNDREDS OF GREEN AND BLUE JOBS WILL BE CREATED.

MR. SPEAKER,

MR. PERICLES MAILLIS, THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST AND CURRENT DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS & PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY WAS SO DELIGHTED WHEN I PITCHED HIM THE CONCEPT OF THE CREATION OF THE YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CORP. OVER A YEAR AGO. HE WAS SO EXCITED. HE SPOKE OF HOW THIS WAS A DREAM THAT HE AND OTHERS HAVE HAD FOR OVER 30 YEARS. I WAS NOT AWARE OF THEIR VISION, BUT I AM HAPPY THAT WE ALL SHARE THE SAME VIEW ON THE

IMPORTANCE OF CREATING JOBS FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE AREA OF CONSERVATION.

MR. SPEAKER, THE YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL CORP., IS A WORK PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG ADULTS TO LEARN VALUABLE JOB SKILLS IN CONSTRUCTION, PAINTING, LANDSCAPE, MAINTENANCE, FORESTRY AND PARK WARDEN SERVICES. SOME OF THE PROJECTS THEY WILL BE INVOLVED WITH INCLUDE MAINTAINING TRAILS, CONSTRUCTING PATHWAYS, PLANTING TREES AND SHRUBS, PROPOGATIONS, REPLANTING MANGROVES, DIVING AND CORAL RESTORATION, LEARNING AND LABELLING PROTECTED TREES, BASIC FOREST MANAGEMENT SKILLS, INSTALLING IRRIGATION SYSTEMS, BUILDING AND REPAIRING FENCING, PARK BENCHES AND GAZEBOS,

THIS IS WHY WE NEED FIVE MORE YEARS MR. SPEAKER.

THE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES WILL RECEIVE CUSTOMIZED ACADEMIC TRAINING AT AS WELL AS PRACTICAL TRAINING PROVIDED BY THE BAHAMAS



NATIONAL TRUST AND THE FORESTRY UNIT IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE UNITED STATES PARK SERVICE, THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE, BAHAMAS HOST, BTVI AND THE NATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY.

MR. SPEAKER, UPON GRADUATION FROM THE PROGRAM, THESE APPRENTICES WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO APPLY FOR JOBS IN THE TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF THE FORESTRY UNIT, THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY AND THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST. I HAVE MET WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE US NATIONAL PARK SERVICE WHILE I WAS IN WASHINGTON AND I AM HAPPY THAT THE UNITED STATES IS GIVING US TREMENDOUS SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT IN THIS ENDEAVOUR.

MR. SPEAKER,

I CONCLUDE THIS SECTION ON THE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT BY OFFERING OUR CONGRATULATIONS TO

**MS. INGERIA MILLER** WHO IS THE FIRST BAHAMIAN TO GRADUATE FROM COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY WITH AN MPA IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND POLICY FROM THE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK. SHE WILL BE RETURNING TO THE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT AND WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FOR THE FORESTRY DEPARTMENT THE EXCELLENCE SHE EXHIBITED AT COLUMBIA AS SHE GRADUATED WITH ALL As IN HER FINAL EXAMS. SHE IS CERTAINLY DESTINED TO B A FUTURE DIRECTOR OF FORESTRY.

WELL DONE MS. MILLER.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

### **ARAGONITE MINING**

MR. SPEAKER,

THE ENVIRONMENT, WITH ITS DIVERSITY OF NATURAL RESOURCES, HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE

ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF COMMUNITIES AND HUMAN WELL-BEING. NATURAL RESOURCES AND RELATED INCOME OPPORTUNITIES HAVE INCREASED THE IMPORTANCE OF BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES TO ENHANCE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION WHILE AVOIDING THE DEGRADATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

THERE IS CURRENTLY NO LEGAL, FISCAL OR REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN PLACE FOR THE GOVERNANCE OF OPERATIONS IN THE MINING SECTOR IN THE BAHAMAS, INCLUDING THE MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, ALTHOUGH ARAGONITE MINING HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT IN THE BAHAMAS SINCE THE 1960S. THERE IS A LACK OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS TO MANAGE THE RESOURCE AND IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE EXTRACTION THEREOF. THIS IS EXACERBATED BY FRAGMENTED INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE LICENSING AND THE MANAGEMENT OF MINING ACTIVITIES. IN ADDITION, THERE IS CURRENTLY NO LEGAL AND FISCAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE MONETISATION OF ARAGONITE IN THE BAHAMAS AND IN THE PAST, INVESTORS HAVE

ENGAGED THE GOVERNMENT ON THE BASIS OF CONTRACTS THAT WERE SOMETIMES LEGISLATED INTO LAW.

MR. SPEAKER

A DRAFT OFFSHORE ARAGONITE MINING POLICY WAS PREPARED IN 2008 FOR THE GOVERNANCE AND REGULATION OF OFFSHORE ARAGONITE MINING IN THE BAHAMAS. THE DRAFT POLICY WAS NEVER ADVANCED, NOR COMPLETED.

OUR ADMINISTRATION ENGAGED THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT, THROUGH ITS OCEANS AND NATURAL RESOURCES (ONR) ADVISORY DIVISION, TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS CONCERNING THE REFORM OF THE LEGAL AND FISCAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE REGULATION OF THE BAHAMIAN MINING SECTOR. IN ITS EFFORTS TO FACILITATE THE REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT, THE OCEAN AND NATURAL RESOURCES (ONR) DIVISION OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT CONDUCTED ITS FIRST IN COUNTRY

SCOPING MISSION DURING DECEMBER 2015. THE MISSION WAS CROSS-CUTTING IN ITS DISCUSSIONS AND ALLOWED FOR MULTI-AGENCY INPUT.

THE COMMONWEALTH TEAM ADVISED THAT THE BAHAMAS NEEDED AN OVERARCHING POLICY DOCUMENT FOR THE ENTIRE MINING SECTOR THAT WILL INCLUDE THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE INDUSTRY AND PUT FORWARD THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS NATURAL RESOURCES. THE NEED FOR DESIGNING AND DRAFTING AN APPROPRIATE LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK WITH STRICT ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESOURCES WAS COMMUNICATED TOO.

A SECOND COMMONWEALTH MISSION IN APRIL OF 2016 DISCUSSED WHAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE REQUISITE MINING LEGISLATION FOR APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE IN VIEW OF THE EXPECTED IMPACT OF MINING ACTIVITIES ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOW APPROPRIATE INSTITUTIONAL

FRAMEWORK SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED FOR THE REGULATION OF THE MINING SECTOR. THE GOVERNMENT WAS GIVEN AN ADVISORY REPORT WHICH INCLUDED A DETAILED REVIEW OF THE LEGISLATIVE, FISCAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK CURRENTLY OPERATIONAL FOR THE MINING SECTOR IN THE BAHAMAS; ONR'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REFORM OF THE LEGISLATIVE, FISCAL; AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS; AND A DRAFT MODEL MINING AGREEMENT TO BE USED FOR THE CURRENT OPERATORS IN THE INDUSTRY.

ONR HAS ALREADY PROVIDED A DRAFT MINING SECTOR POLICY FOR DISCUSSION THAT OUTLINES THE POLICY CONTEXT, VISION, IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES, CORE PRINCIPLES, RATIONALE AND POLICY OBJECTIVES THAT WILL GUIDE THE PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE BAHAMAS.

MR. SPEAKER

THE POLICY WILL COVER THE REGULATION AND MANAGEMENT OF MINING ACTIVITY IN THE BAHAMAS FOR BOTH ONSHORE AND OFFSHORE MINING. THE POLICY WILL ALSO PROVIDE SCOPE FOR THE ROLE OF THE BAHAMAS AS A POTENTIAL SPONSORING STATE FOR DEEP SEABED MINING ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTINENTAL SHELF AND IN AREAS OF THE SEABED BEYOND THE CONTINENTAL SHELF (REFERRED TO UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE LAW OF THE SEA AS "THE AREA").

MR. SPEAKER,

DURING THE UPCOMING FISCAL PERIOD, IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFTED ADVISORY REPORT AND INFORMATION RECEIVED DURING THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT'S PREVIOUS MISSIONS WILL BE UTILIZED TO INFORM THE PREPARATION OF A DISCUSSION PAPER ON AN OVERARCHING NATIONAL MINING POLICY WHICH WILL SET OUT THE GOVERNMENT'S ASPIRATIONS, STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MINING OF ARAGONITE, SAND, SALT, AGGREGATES AND OTHER

MINERAL RESOURCES. TO THIS END, A NATIONAL MINING POLICY WILL BE DRAFTED. FURTHER, THE DRAFTED MINING AGREEMENT PRESENTED TO THE MINISTRY HAS BEEN FORWARDED TO THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR COMMENTS.

THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT WILL ALSO ASSIST THE BAHAMAS WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECTOR SPECIFIC LEGISLATION WHICH WILL GOVERN THE MINING INDUSTRY. THIS PROPOSED "MINING ACT" WILL INCLUDE OPERATIONAL, HEALTH, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS WHICH COMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL MINING POLICY. ADDITIONALLY, THE ONR TEAM WILL ASSIST THE BAHAMAS WITH THE DELIVERY OF A FOUNDATION-STAGE TRAINING PROGRAMME ON THE FUNDAMENTALS OF THE EXTRACTIVES INDUSTRY TO A CROSS SECTION OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS VESTED WITH OVERSIGHT FOR THE EXTRACTIVES SECTORS IN THE COUNTRY. THIS TRAINING WILL ASSIST IN ENSURING THAT THE TARGETED OFFICIALS GAIN THE NECESSARY TRAINING WHICH SUPPORTS THE MANAGEMENT OF THE RESOURCES AND THE SECTOR, INCLUDING



VERIFICATION, MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REPORTING SKILLS.

## **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

MR. SPEAKER,

I NOW TURN TO ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE BAHAMAS - RENEWABLE ENERGY.

SAMANTHA SMITH, LEADER OF "WORLD WILDLIFE FUND"(WWF)'S CLIMATE AND ENERGY TEAM, SAID: "WE ARE SEEING THE START OF A GLOBAL TRANSITION TOWARDS RENEWABLE ENERGY". SHE ADDED: "THE TALKS AND SURROUNDING COMMITMENTS SEND A STRONG SIGNAL TO EVERYONE - THE FOSSIL FUEL ERA IS COMING TO AN END. AS CLIMATE IMPACTS WORSEN AROUND THE WORLD, WE NEED TO SEIZE ON THE CURRENT MOMENTUM AND USHER IN A NEW ERA OF COOPERATIVE ACTION FROM ALL COUNTRIES AND ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY."

ACCESS TO MODERN, AFFORDABLE, ECONOMICALLY VIABLE, SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ENERGY SERVICES IS ESSENTIAL FOR ACHIEVING THE GOALS OF OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. ELECTRICITY GENERATION IN THE BAHAMAS IS BASED ALMOST ENTIRELY ON THERMAL PLANTS POWERED BY PETROLEUM PRODUCTS. THE DECREASE OF THE PRICE OF FOSSIL FUELS INTERNATIONALLY HAS HAD A GOOD EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY AND HOUSEHOLDS IN THE FORM OF LOWER ELECTRICITY BILLS, LOWER FUEL COST AT THE PUMP, RESULTING IN ADDITIONAL MONIES IN CONSUMERS POCKETS.

WITH THE REDUCTION IN THE COST OF FOSSIL FUELS THE FEASIBILITY OF RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES REDUCES DRAMATICALLY. THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING BELIEVES THAT COST SHOULD NOT ONLY BE THE REASON FOR THE DRIVE BEHIND THE USE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE BAHAMAS. FURTHER, THE TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATED WITH CERTAIN RENEWABLES

CONTINUES TO IMPROVE AND THE PRICE CONTINUES TO DROP.

MR. SPEAKER A MAJOR FACTOR THAT MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR THE DRIVE TO RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES IS CLIMATE CHANGE, WHICH IS THE RESULT OF THE USE OF FOSSIL FUELS. THUS THE MINISTRY'S DRIVE IS TO INCORPORATE RENEWABLE ENERGY (RE) AS WELL AS ENERGY EFFICIENCY (EE) PROGRAMS INTO THE ENERGY MIX. THIS WOULD LEAD TO SIGNIFICANT BENEFITS INCLUDING A DROP IN THE IMPORT OF FOSSIL FUELS, GENERATING IMPORTANT SAVINGS, ENERGY SECURITY FOR THE BAHAMAS, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY IT WOULD ALSO LEAD TO A DECREASE IN CARBON EMISSIONS.

### **THE CARBON WAR ROOM**

MR. SPEAKER,

I REMIND THAT ONE OF THE MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF THE NATURAL RESOURCES UNIT OF MY MINISTRY WAS TO BRING INTO FOCUS THE IN-COUNTRY WORK ON

RENEWABLE ENERGY DEPLOYMENT. WE ARE CONTINUING OUR WORK WITH THE CARBON WAR ROOM, A NOT FOR PROFIT THAT WORKS WITH PARTIES TO ACCELERATE THE ADOPTION OF BUSINESS SOLUTIONS THAT REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS AND ADVANCE THE LOW-CARBON ECONOMY.

IN THE UPCOMING BUDGET CYCLE, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING TOGETHER WITH BPL SEEKS TO IMPLEMENT A PAY-AS-YOU-GO ELECTRICITY METERING SERVICE WITHIN SEVERAL OF THE GOVERNMENT OWNED RENTAL UNITS. PAY-AS-YOU-GO METERING ALLOWS CUSTOMERS TO PAY FOR ELECTRICITY AS THEY USE IT. IT WILL HELP FAMILIES TO BUDGET FOR ENERGY USE AND MONITOR THEIR ENERGY USE ON A DAILY BASIS. IT HAS BEEN PROVEN AS A GREAT ENERGY CONSERVATION TOOL. OF NOTE, IT HAS ALSO BEEN ADVANCED IN SPANISH WELLS THROUGH BTC. I COMMEND MR. LEON WILLIAMS AND THE OTHER STAKEHOLDERS FOR THEIR VISION AND HOPE THAT IT WILL PROVE TO BE SUCCESSFUL AND EXPANDED.

MR. SPEAKER,

THIS ADMINISTRATION HAS DONE ITS PART TO SECURE A RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE FOR OUR COUNTRY. THE WORK WE HAVE DONE, FROM 2013 TO DATE HAS BEEN HAILED BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. WE WERE NOT OVER ZEALOUS. WE WERE METHODICAL AND ADDRESSED THE LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY DEFICIENCIES AND WE ARE NOW WELL ON OUR WAY.

MR. SPEAKER, THE WORK WE HAVE DONE HAS RESULTED IN THE BAHAMAS BEING ELECTED TO REPRESENT CARICOM ON THE COUNCIL OF THE INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY AGENCY BASED IN ABU DHABI. OUR ENGAGEMENT INTERNATIONALLY ON RENEWABLE ENERGY RESULTED IN MY BEING ELECTED THE CHAIRMAN OF IRENA'S COUNCIL. I CHAIRED THE

COUNCIL MEETING A FEW WEEKS AGO IN ABU DHABI AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN DEMITTING OFFICE AT THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING. BUT MR. SPEAKER, THE MEMBERS OF COUNCIL SAID I DID SUCH A WONDERFUL JOB, THAT THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES ADVANCED A RESOLUTION ON THE FLOOR WHICH WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED BY COUNCIL FOR THE BAHAMAS TO CONTINUE TO SERVE AS THE CHAIRMAN THROUGH THE NEXT SITTING OF THE COUNCIL LATER ON IN THE YEAR. SO THE BAHAMAS WILL HOLD THE CHAIR UNTIL 2017 AND WE WILL USE THE POSITION TO FURTHER ASSIST THE BAHAMAS IN ACCESSING FUNDING TO ASSIST IN THE DEPLOYMENT OF RENEWABLES.

MR. SPEAKER, I ALSO SERVE AS VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SIDS-DOCK. IT IS AN INITIATIVE AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ALLIANCE OF SMALL ISLAND STATES (AOSIS) TO PROVIDE SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES WITH A COLLECTIVE INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISM TO ASSIST THEM TRANSFORM THEIR NATIONAL ENERGY SECTORS TO ADDRESS ADAPTATION

TO CLIMATE CHANGE. THE SIDS DOCK IS CONSIDERING PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE BAHAMAS TO COMPLETE ITS GRID INTEGRATION STUDIES.

MR. SPEAKER, THE GRID INTEGRATION STUDIES ARE VERY IMPORTANT. IT HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND THE EXTENT TO WHICH RENEWABLES CAN BE INTEGRATED INTO OUR TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE. IT ALSO HELPS POLICY MAKERS, WITH HAVING THE SCIENCE, WHICH WILL ENABLE THEM TO DEAL WITH UTILITIES THAT MAY NOT BE INCLINED TO SUPPORT RENEWABLE ENERGY DEPLOYMENT.

FOR EXAMPLE, MOST UTILITIES TAKE A CONSERVATIVE APPROACH AND WOULD RESTRICT RENEWABLE ENERGY PENETRATION TO 10%. HOWEVER, IRENA HAS NOW CONDUCTED RESEARCH THAT SHOWS HOW THAT 10% PENETRATION CAN EASILY BE INCREASED TO 30-37%. ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE BEGUN THE PROCESS OF PREPARING OUR GRID INTEGRATION STUDIES. THE FIRST STUDY WE COMMISSIONED WAS FOR THE ISLAND OF LONG ISLAND. WE NOW KNOW THAT IT WILL COST

THE GOVERNMENT APPROXIMATELY \$800,000.00 TO COMPLETE THE GRID ASSESSMENTS ON OUR OTHER ISLANDS AND WE ARE CURRENTLY SOURCING THE FUNDING FOR THE SAME THROUGH INTERNATIONAL BODIES.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY OF THE BAHAMAS SPEAKS TO A MINIMUM OF 30% OF OUR ENERGY MATRIX BEING BY WAY OF RENEWABLE ENERGY BY THE YEAR 2033. THE BAHAMAS HAS COMMITTED TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. A NET BILLING PROGRAMME WHICH WILL ENABLE 25-30 MEGA WATTS OF POWER BEING GENERATED BY RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS WITH GRID CONNECTION.
2. THE INSTALLATION OF SOLAR PV SYSTEMS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND ASSETS; AND



3. BPL HAS AGREED TO THE DEPLOYMENT OF SOLAR PLANTS ON 20 ISLANDS IN OUR CHAIN OF ISLANDS.

MR. SPEAKER

ALL THE CABINET HAS APPROVED THUS FAR, ONCE EXECUTED WILL PROVIDE US WITH OVER 20% RENEWABLE ENERGY DEPLOYMENT. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR TO EVERYONE THAT WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO A RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE.

**THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (BNGIS) CENTRE**

MR. SPEAKER,

ALL GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND THE BAHAMAS AT LARGE ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE WORK OF THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

SYSTEMS CENTRE. AS THE GOVERNMENT'S TECHNICAL FOCAL POINT FOR MATTERS RELATED TO GEOSPATIAL TECHNOLOGIES, THE CENTRE REMAINS RESOLUTE IN ACHIEVING ITS VISION WHICH IS TO ADVANCE A ROBUST SPATIAL DATA INFRASTRUCTURE SYSTEM AND PROGRAM THAT DELIVERS A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR SYSTEMATIC ACCESS, MAINTENANCE AND EXCHANGE OF ACCURATE, RELIABLE AND CONSISTENT GEOSPATIAL DATA TO ENABLE ANALYSIS AND UNDERSTANDING OF OUR ENVIRONMENT. THIS WILL FACILITATE AND HELP SUSTAINABLE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN OUR COUNTRY.

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

MR. SPEAKER,

THER HAVE BEEN SEVERAL SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS BY THE DEHS IN THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW LINKED TO THE FUNDING PROVIDED IN THE 2015/16 BUDGET.

**THE BULK WASTE COLLECTION PROGRAMME** WHICH COVERS ALL CONSTITUENCIES IN NEW PROVIDENCE HAS SUCCESSFULLY REMOVED TONS OF WASTE FROM VARIOUS COMMUNITIES. THE DERELICT VEHICLE REMOVAL PROGRAM- HAS REMOVED IN EXCESS OF 2,107 VEHICLES.

**THE SHANTY TOWN PROJECT** REMOVED ILLEGAL STRUCTURES THAT WERE A HEALTH HAZARD AS WELL AS AN EYESORE IN THE COMMUNITY. REMOVAL AND DEMOLITION WORKS WERE COMPLETED IN GAMBLE HEIGHTS. I NOTE THAT THE MEMBER OF BAMBOO TOWN SAID THAT HE HAD PROMISED HIS CONSTITUENTS HE WOULD REMOVE THAT SHANTY TOWN COMMUNITY. I WAS NOT AWARE OF THE COMMITMENT HE MADE, BUT I AM HAPPY TO KNOW THAT MY MINISTRY IN FULFILLING ITS MANDATE HAS HELPED HIM!

UNDER **THE VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAMME**, RODENT CONTROL WAS UNDERTAKEN IN DOWNTOWN, CABLE BEACH AND MONTAGUE BEACH. TO ENHANCE EFFORTS

IN THE CONTROL OF RODENTS IN THE DOWNTOWN ENVIRONS, THE TASK FORCE CONTINUED TO AGGRESSIVELY ADDRESS COMPLAINTS AND CONDUCT TREATMENT. THESE FOCUSED ACTIVITIES HAVE RESULTED IN A DECREASE IN THE RODENT POPULATION IN THE SPECIFIED AREAS. HOWEVER, THERE IS MORE WORK TO BE DONE.

MR. SPEAKER,

INADEQUATE AND INSUFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION CONTINUES TO HINDER THE WORK OF THE UNIT. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT THIS DEFICIENCY WILL BE ADDRESSED PARTIALLY WITHIN THE CURRENT BUDGET AND CONCLUDED IN THE 2016-2017 FISCAL YEAR.

LIKE MOST COUTRIES IN THIS HEMISOHERE, THE BAHAMAS IS THREATENED BY DENGUE AND CHIKUNGUNYA. IN LIGHT OF THE NOTIFICATION OF AN EMERGING MOSQUITO BORNE DISEASE (ZIKA VIRUS) WITHIN THE CARIBBEAN WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON FETUSES, THE MOSQUITO CONTROL PROGRAM MUST BE INTENSIFIED.

THE INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT APPROACH TO THE CONTROL OF MOSQUITOES, WHICH INCLUDED THE LARVICIDE AND ADULTICIDE REGIME, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT, SUCCESSFULLY LIMITED THE NUMBER OF CASES OF ZIKA, CHIKUNGUNYA AND DENGUE CASES IN THE BAHAMAS, IN SPITE OF THE EPIDEMICS IN THE WIDER CARIBBEAN.

## **OCEAN POLLUTION**

MR. SPEAKER-

YESTERDAY I SPOKE AT NEW DESTINY BAPTIST CHURCH. I LAUNCHED THE NATIONAL DISCUSSION ON BANNING PLASTIC BAGS.

AS AN OCEAN NATION, WE MUST ADDRESS THE MAJOR THREATS TO OUR OCEANS. EVERY SECOND BREATH WE TAKE IS GENERATED BY THE OCEANS. THAT SHOULD SIGNIFY HOW IMPORTANT OUR OCEAN IS TO OUR SURVIVAL.

OUR OCEAN IS BEING IMPACTED BY THE FAST GROWING AND GLOBAL THREAT OF OCEAN PLASTIC.

A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF PLASTIC TRASH ENDS UP IN OUR OCEANS EVERY YEAR. THE OCEAN CURRENTS HAVE FORMED FIVE GIGANTIC SLOW MOVING WHIRLPOOLS WHERE THE PLASTIC COLLECTS. THESE WHIRLPOOLS ARE NICKNAMED "VORTEX".

RESEARCH INDICATED APPROXIMATELY 40 MILLION POUNDS IS FLOATING IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN ALONE. WE ARE IMPACTED BY THE VORTEX IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC. WHILE THE MAJORITY OF THE PLASTIC DEBRIS REMAINS IN THE VORTEXES A SIGNIFICANT PERCENTAGE OF IT WASHES TO OUR COASTLINES DAILY.

AFTER SUNLIGHT PHOTODEGRADES THE PLASTIC INTO SMALL PIECES, MARINE LIFE AND SEABIRDS MISTAKE THESE FRAGMENTS FOR FOOD AND INGEST IT. THIS

RAISES THE QUESTION ABOUT THE SAFETY OF OUR SEAFOOD.

THE PLASTIC WE SEND TO THE LANDFILL OR DUMP EVERYDAY, PARTICULARLY PLASTIC BAGS ARE BURIED AND REMAINS IN THE GROUND FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS ACCORDING TO THE SCIENTISTS. THIS IS A MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN.

THEREFORE, IF WE FAIL TO CLEAN UP PLASTIC AND STOP OCEAN POLLUTION WE ARE FACING THE POTENTIAL EXTINCTION OF MANY MARINE SPECIES. WE ALSO RISK THE HEALTH OF ANYONE WHO EAT SEAFOOD.

SO WE MUST REDUCE AND REPLACE PLASTIC THUS AVOIDING USING IT AND WHERE IT IS USED, IT MUST BE INTERCEPTED, RETRIEVED AND RECYCLED BEFORE IT ENDS UP IN OUR LANDFILL OR OCEAN.

THAT IS WHY I HAVE BEGUN THE NATIONAL CONVERSATION ABOUT BANNING PLASTIC BAGS AND

PROMOTING ALTERNATIVES. IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE WILL BAN SUCH BAGS NEXT YEAR. IN THE INTERIM, IN THIS BUDGET THE GOVERNMENT HAS SLASHED CUSTOM TARIFFS ON BIO-DEGRADABLE BAGS TO MAKE IT MORE COST EFFECTIVE FOR US TO BEGIN USING ALTERNATIVES. THAT IS A GREAT FIRST STEP BUT ULTIMATELY WE NEED TO GET RID OF PLASTIC BAGS. I ALSO WANT TO ENCOURAGE FOODS STORES TO FOLLOW THE LEADERSHIP OF AML FOODS AND SOLOMONS AND INTRODUCE BIO-DEGRADABLE SHOPPING BAGS AND RECYCLED SHOPPING BAGS. I ALSO WANT TO COMMEND NEW DESTINY BAPTIST CHURCH FOR THEIR ROLE IN DISTRIBUTING HUNDREDS OF BIO-DEGRADABLE RE-USABLE SHOPPING BAGS. WE MUST DISCONTINUE THE USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS.

## **LANDFILL MANAGEMENT**

MR. SPEAKER

THE DEHS IS STILL RESPONSIBLE FOR LANDFILL MANAGEMENT ON THE FAMILY ISLANDS. THE DEHS WILL IMPLEMENT A TRANSFER STATION TO EFFECTIVELY



REMOVE WASTE FROM SPANISH WELLS TO THE NORTH ELEUTHERA LANDFILL. MR. SPEAKER, IN 2013/14 WE BUDGETED TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE IN SPANISH WELLS. ONE FIRE AT THE NEW PROVIDENCE LANDFILL SENT THAT INTENTION UP IN SMOKE. CABINET AGREED TO ADVANCE THE PROJECT AND WE THE DEHS WILL MOVE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE IN THE UPCOMING BUDGET YEAR. OTHER ISLANDS WILL ALSO BE ADDRESSED BUT CLOSURE OF THE DUMPSITES AND INTRODUCTION OF TRANSFER STATIONS WILL BE INCREMENTAL. A NATIONAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY WILL BE COMPLETED IN THE UPCOMING BUDGET CYCLE AND WILL ADDRESS THE PHASED AND INCREMENTAL APPROACHES TO BE ADVANCED.

### **RENEW BAHAMAS**

ON THE ISLAND OF NEW PROVIDENCE, THE MANAGEMENT OF THE LANDFILL IS BEING RUN BY RENEW BAHAMAS LIMITED UNDER A PILOT PROGRAM WITH THE GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE INSTALLED NEW

WEIGHBRIDGES, REDUCED THE FOOTPRINT OF THE TIPPING AREA AND INSTALLED A MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY.

THE FIRE A FEW WEEKS AGO, AT THE LANDFILL WHICH DESTROYED THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS OF RECYCLATES, ALSO DAMAGED THE RECYCLING EQUIPMENT ON THAT SITE. IT HAS NOT BEEN FULLY OPERATIONAL SINCE THAT FIRE. I WILL GET A BRIEFING FROM MY DIRECTOR WHO RETURNS TO THE COUNTRY TO CONCLUDE MEETINGS WITH RENEW TO DETERMINE WHEN THAT FACILITY WILL BE FULLY OPERATIONAL AND REPORT TO THE HOUSE THEREAFTER.

MR. SPEAKER

IN THE MEANTIME A COMPREHENSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT OF THE LANDFILL IS BEING COMPLETED. THE DRAFT WAS JUST PRESENTED TO MY MINISTRY AND IS BEING FINALISED. I HOPE TO GET THE FINAL DOUMENT IN SHORT ORDER, WHICH WILL THEN BE PRESENTED TO CABINET. ITS REMEDIATION RECOMMENDATIONS WILL GUIDE US ON

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE AND LONG-TERM.

WE KNOW THE NEED FOR RECYCLING IN THE BAHAMAS HAS TO BE ENHANCED. IN ADDITION TO THE RECYCLING FACILITY AT THE LANDFILL, THE PUBLIC PARKS & PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY, WILL ESTABLISH A FACILITY AT ITS BUILDING AND PREMISES NEXT TO THE LANDFILL FOR PROCESSING AND COMPOSTING AND CONVERTING GREEN WASTE INTO MULCH.

THE PUBLIC PARKS & PUBLIC BEACHES AUHTORITY HAS ALSO CONSTRUCTED NEW SECURITY BOOTHS TO BE PLACED ALONG THE ACCESS ROAD TO THE LANDFILL, WHICH WILL ADDRESS ILLEGAL DUMPING ON THAT ROAD AND THE AUTHORITY HAS ALSO ADVANCED PLANS TO LANDSCAPE THE ENTRANCE OF THE LANDFILL AND ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY RECYCLING DEPOT AND DROP OFF. THIS WILL ENABLE BAHAMIANS TO DROP OFF SMALL QUANTITIES OF RESIDENTIAL WASTE, GREEN WASTE, ELECTRONIC DEVICES; PLASTICS; BOTTLES;

PAINT CANS AND OTHER HAZARDOUS MATERIALS; CARDBOARD AND BULK WASTE AT THE DEPOT IF THEY ARE WITHIN THE EXEMPTED TIPPING FEE WEIGHT. THIS WILL ENABLE THE GENERAL PUBLIC NOT HAVING TO DRIVE THEIR VEHICLES ONTO THE LANDFILL. IT WILL ALSO HELP US IN ENSURING THAT WASTE THAT SHOULD NOT GO INTO THE LANDFILL IS SORTED AND DISPOSED OF PROPERLY.

THE MINISTRY WILL ADVANCE A ROBUST EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS PROGRAMME. THIS WILL HELP BAHAMIANS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW WHAT THEY PLACE IN THEIR GARBAGE BINS CONTRIBUTE TO LANDFILL FIRES.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE DEHS CONTINUES IT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM- THE EDUCATION PROGRAM WILL BE EXPANDED TO THE FAMILY ISLANDS SO THAT ALL COMMUNITIES RECEIVE RELEVANT INFORMATION REGARDING WASTE MANAGEMENT, PEST MANAGEMENT,

WATER SAFETY, CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. THE FUNDS ALLOCATED IN THE BUDGET WILL FACILITATE THE EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM TO ALL MAJOR ISLANDS.

MR. SPEAKER,

### **IMPROVING PROTECTING AIR QUALITY**

MR. SPEAKER

AMBIENT AIR POLLUTION IS ONE OF THE LEADING AVOIDABLE CAUSES OF DISEASE AND DEATH GLOBALLY. THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), RECOGNIZING THE IMPORTANCE OF AIR POLLUTION, HAS CALLED FOR NATIONAL GROUND MEASUREMENT DATA OF AMBIENT AIR POLLUTION. ONE OF THE INTENDED PROJECTS FOR THE DEHS IN THE UPCOMING YEAR IS THE EXPANSION OF INDOOR AIR QUALITY MONITORING AND EVALUATION. THE EXPANSION OF THIS PROGRAM IS IN RESPONSE TO THE INCREASED REQUESTS FOR EVALUATION AND COMPLAINTS BEING RECEIVED BY THE MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND

HOUSING. THE SUCCESSFUL EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM IS DEPENDENT UPON THE AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY, TRANSPORTATION AND CERTIFICATION TRAINING.

WITH REGARD TO OUTDOOR AIR QUALITY, THE DEHS HAS EMBARKED ON AN ENOSE MONITORING SYSTEM THAT WILL BE INSTALLED AT THE NEW PROVIDENCE LANDFILL TO ASSIST IN THE DETECTION AND MONITORING OF EMISSIONS. A SIMILAR SYSTEM IS BEING INSTALLED IN THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR OF GRAND BAHAMA. ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT FOR MONITORING OF THE AMBIENT AIR WIL ALSO BE PROVIDED.

THE VEHICLE EMISSIONS LEGISLATION IS IN ITS FINAL DRAFTING STAGE AND WILL FORM AN INTEGRAL PART OF A SYSTEM FOR IMPLEMENTING GOVERNMENT POLICY ON CLIMATE CHANGE AS OUTLINED IN ITS NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. THE PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION IS TO REDUCE AIR POLLUTION LEVELS IN THE BAHAMAS BY REQUIRING EMISSION INSPECTIONS

OF ON-ROAD MOTOR VEHICLES AND BY REQUIRING EMISSION RELATED REPAIRS AND/OR ADJUSTMENTS FOR THOSE VEHICLES THAT FAIL TO MEET THE PRESCRIBED STANDARDS SO AS TO (a) PROTECT AND PROMOTE THE PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE; (b) IMPROVE AIR QUALITY; AND (c) COMPLY WITH SECTION 17 OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACT

THE BAHAMAS COMMITTED TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS (GHG) EMISSIONS BY A MINIMUM OF 30 PER CENT BY 2030 AS WELL AS ADAPTATION MEASURES , AS OUTLINED IN ITS INTENDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION SUBMITTED TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

EFFICIENCY IN DERELICT VEHICLE REMOVAL

MR. SPEAKER

THE DERELICT VEHICLES ACT ALLOWS FOR MORE IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF ABANDONED AND DERELICT VEHICLES AND INCREASES THE PENALTY FOR IMPROPER

DISPOSAL OF VEHICLES AND ABANDONMENT. THE PROVISIONS IN THE ACT CREATES GREATER EFFICIENCY, PROVIDES DISINCENTIVES TO DRIVE BEHAVIORIAL CHANGE. THIS YEAR WE WILL SPLIT NASSAU INTO ZONES AND PUT OUT TO BID TO PRIVATE CONTRACTORS THE RIGHT TO REMOVE DERELICTS ON BEHALF OF THE DEHS. IT IS HOPED THAT THIS WOULD PROVIDE GREATER EFFICIENCY TO THE REMOVAL OF DERELICT VEHICLES.

## **NGO PARTNERS – THE BAHAMAS NATINAL TRUST**

MR. SPEAKER,

THE MINISTRY CONTINUES TO BE SUPPORTED BY ITS NGO PARTNERS THROUGH LEADERSHIP, INSIGHTS, BEST-PRACTICE SHARING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT IN THE VARIOUS PROJECTS LINKED TO THIS GLOBAL CHALLENGE.

## **THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST**



IN APRIL OF 2015, FIVE NEW NATIONAL PARKS WERE ANNOUNCED FOR THE ISLAND OF SAN SALVADOR. THE ANNOUNCEMENT MARKED THE END OF OVER A DECADE OF WORK BY DEDICATED SCIENTIFIC RESEARCHERS, SAN SALVADOR LIVING JEWELS, TNC, BREEF AND THE BNT. THE FIVE NEW NATIONAL PARKS ON SAN SALVADOR PROTECT 21, 032 ACRES OF LAND AND NEARSHORE ENVIRONMENT. THE PARKS PROTECT ENDANGERED ROCK IGUANAS, HABITAT FOR NESTING SEABIRDS, CORAL REEFS, SEA GRASS BEDS AND MANGROVE ECOSYSTEMS.

AT THE END OF AUGUST I ANNOUNCED OVER 7 MILLION ACRES OF NEW PROTECTED AREAS. THE BAHAMAS EXCEEDED THE TARGET OF 2.5 MILLION HECTARES AS IT RESERVED 3 MILLION HECTARES AS PROTECTED AREAS. .

MR. SPEAKER

THIS YEAR OVER 14,000 PEOPLE BENEFITED FROM BNT PRESENTATIONS OR FIELD TRIPS. THE NEWLY IMPLEMENTED FAITH BASED OUTREACH PROGRAMME

WHICH VISITED RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS TOUCHED OVER 2,000 PEOPLE IN 2015. BNT FIELD TRIPS, THE PARKS PAL PROGRAMME AND DISCOVERY CLUB SEEK TO CONNECT PEOPLE WITH OUR NATIONAL PARKS AND THE SPECIAL BAHAMIAN RESOURCES THEY PROTECT.

MR. SPEAKER

THE BNT DISCOVERY CLUB CONTINUES TO BE THE BNT'S PREMIER YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAM WITH 60 CLUBS ON NINE ISLANDS THROUGHOUT THE BAHAMAS. THE NAVIGATORS PROGRAMME FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS HAS GREATLY EXPANDED WITH 14 CLUBS ON 5 ISLANDS.

THE DISCOVERY CLUB IS CELEBRATING ITS 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY AND IN HONOUR OF THIS LANDMARK ANNIVERSARY, THE BNT LAUNCHED A NATIONAL POSTER COMPETITION THEMED "CELEBRATE BAHAMIAN BIODIVERSITY" WHICH WAS OPEN TO STUDENTS THROUGHOUT THE BAHAMAS. OVER 150 ENTRIES WERE RECEIVED. THE RAND NATURE CENTER LAUNCHED A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES IN 2015. THE PRESENTATIONS COVERED A VARIETY OF TOPICS

FROM LUCAYAN CIVILIZATION TO BONEFISH POPULATIONS IN THE BAHAMAS AND WERE WELL SUPPORTED BY THE GRAND BAHAMA MEMBERSHIP.

## SCIENCE

THE BNT CONTINUES TO WORK WITH PARTNERS TO BUILD CAPACITY TO SUPPORT SCIENTIFIC INITIATIVES IN THE BAHAMAS. 100 SEA TURTLES (MAINLY GREEN TURTLES) IN THE INAGUA NATIONAL PARK WERE TAGGED AND MEASURED THIS SEASON. A DOCUMENTARY ON THE BAHAMAS NEWEST ENDEMIC, THE INAGUA WOODSTAR, WAS MADE AND WILL BE AIRED ON PBS NATURE.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE DISCOVERY THAT THE BAHAMAS IS THE WINTER HOME OF OVER 20% OF PIPING PLOVERS FROM THE EASTERN SEABOARD HAS LED AUDUBON TO ACTIVELY SUPPORT SHOREBIRD EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS ON THE ISLAND OF ANDROS. FIELD STAFF OF THE BNT

ASSISTED NATIONAL AUDUBON AND US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE WITH BANDING OF PLOVERS ON ANDROS, THE BERRY ISLANDS AND ABACO. A HIGHLIGHT OF THE 2015 FIELD WORK WAS THE FILMING OF THE RESEARCH BY THE PBS NEWS HOUR TEAM. FROM JANUARY 18<sup>TH</sup>- FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup> 2016, THE PIPING PLOVER CENSUS WAS CONDUCTED AGAIN, COVERING THE ENTIRE BAHAMAS ARCHIPELAGO.

THE RESULTS WERE ASTONISHING. OVER 1260 PIPING PLOVERS WERE FOUND IN THE BAHAMAS, A 17% INCREASE FROM 2011.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE NINE ROCK IGUANAS *THAT* WERE INTERCEPTED AT HEATHROW AIRPORT IN 2014 WERE REPATRIATED TO THE BAHAMAS AND WERE RELEASED ON PIGEON CAY IN THE MORIAH HARBOUR CAY NATIONAL PARK IN 2015. BNT PAST PRESIDENT SANDRA BUCKNER, BNT WARDEN STEVE SMITH, DIRECTOR OF THE BEST COMMISSION ,

PHILIP WEECH, SCIENTISTS JILL JOLLAY, DR. AND MRS. JOHN IVERSON AND DR. AND MRS. WILLIAM HAYES THE SPECIAL TEAM WHICH FACILITATED THIS WILDLIFE RELOCATION. THE TEAM WAS JOINED BY EXUMA RESIDENTS AND BNT MEMBERS BAILEY AND LORRAINE SMITH AND STEPHEN COLE.

**SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION AND IDB/ AUDUBON /  
MINISTRY OF TOURISM BIRD TOUR GUIDING  
PROJECT**

MR. SPEAKER,

IN JANUARY 2015, THE BNT BEGAN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PHASE 1 OF THE IDB/ AUDUBON, MINISTRY OF TOURISM BIRD TOUR GUIDING PROGRAMME. THE PROJECT WAS IMPLEMENTED ON ANDROS AND INAGUA WITH 70 COMMUNITY MEMBERS SIGNING UP TO BECOME BIRD TOUR GUIDES. IN DECEMBER 2015, 60 PERSONS GRADUATED FROM PHASE 1. PHASE 2 OF THE PROJECT WILL PROVIDE

ADVANCED TRAINING FOR GRADUATES WHO WISH TO PROVIDE TOURS NATIONALLY. THESE PARTICIPANTS WILL RECEIVED ADVANCED BUSINESS TRAINING AS WELL AS MARKETING FOR THE NATURE BASED TOURISM

## **REVERSE THE DECLINE**

MR. SPEAKER\

MY MINISTRY AND THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST IS COORDINATING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGIC PLAN WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE DISNEY CONSERVATION FUND TO ADDRESS THE THREATS TO CORAL REEFS IN THE COUNTRY. STRATEGIES HAVE BEEN PROPOSED TO ADDRESS THREATS TO CORAL, MANGROVES AND SEAGRASS ECOSYSTEMS.

MR. SPEAKER

THE THIRD BAHAMAS NATURAL HISTORY TOOK PLACE IN MARCH 2016 AT THE COLLEGE OF THE BAHAMAS IN

OAKES FIELD ATTENDED BY OVER 500 PEOPLE. THE BAHAMAS NATURAL HISTORY CONFERENCE WAS INITIATED BY THE BNT TO PROVIDE A FORUM FOR SCIENTISTS WORKING IN THE BAHAMAS TO PRESENT THEIR FINDINGS TO THE PUBLIC. A SECONDARY GOAL IS TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS THAT CAN LEAD TO MORE INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND IMPROVED CONSERVATION EFFORTS.

MR. SPEAKER

THE BNT HAS HAD A BUSY YEAR AND HAVE SEVERAL NOTEWORTHY PROJECTS IN THE PIPELINE. THAT IS WHY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHAMAS ONCE AGAIN, HAS AGREED TO INCREASE THE SUBVENTION TO THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST TO ASSIST THAT ORGANISATION WITH ITS WORK.

## **THE NATURE CONSERVANCY (TNC)**

MR. SPEAKER,

THE TNC ALSO CONTINUES ITS SUPPORT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. THROUGH EFFORTS OF THE NATURE CONSERVANCY, THE WAITT FOUNDATION APPROVED IN DECEMBER 2016, A \$100,000 GRANT TO SUPPORT THE OPERATIONS OF THE BAHAMAS PROTECTED AREA FUND. FOLLOWING THE EXPANSION OF THE BAHAMAS PROTECTED AREA NETWORK IN AUGUST 2015 THE NATURE CONSERVANCY HAS SECURED MORE THAN 1.5 MILLION DOLLARS TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING:

- O COMPLETION OF AT LEAST THREE MANAGEMENT PLANS TO GUIDE THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THESE AREAS.
- O DEVELOPMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR CO-MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS BY LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY GROUPS IN AN EFFORT TO SUPPORT EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF PROTECTED AREAS



- O UPDATE OF THE FINANCIAL GAP ANALYSIS WHICH WILL DETERMINE THAT AMOUNT OF FUNDING NEEDED ON AN ANNUAL BASIS TO PROPERLY MANAGEMENT THE PROTECTED AREA NETWORK
- O ASSIST THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF BY-LAWS FOR ALL PARKS THEY MANAGE
- O ASSIST IN THE DESIGN OF A SUSTAINABLE FINANCE MECHANISM THAT WILL SUPPORT THE FURTHER CAPITALIZATION OF THE BAHAMAS PROTECTED AREA FUND

MR. SPEAKER,

IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO REACH THE CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE INITIATIVE GOAL OF PROTECTING 20% OF THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT BY 2020, THE CONSERVANCY HAS NOW ALSO BEGAN THE PROCESS OF UPDATING THE ECOLOGICAL GAP ANALYSIS WHICH IS THE FIRST STEP IN IDENTIFYING ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR PROTECTION. THROUGH THIS FUNDING 3

NEW JOBS WILL BE ADDED FOR MARINE CONSERVATION."

## **THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS & PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY**

MR.SPEAKER

THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY WAS FORMED BY AN ACT OF PARLIAMENT IN 2014. IT IS A QUASI-GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY, OPERATING UNDER THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING. THE MANDATE OF THE AUTHORITY IS TO CONTROL, PLAN, AND DESIGN, DEVELOP, ADMINISTER, MANAGE AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES. IN ADDITION, THE AUTHORITY IS TO CONSERVE THE NATURAL BEAUTY, SHAPE AND FEATURES OF PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES. IT IS ALSO REQUIRED TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE ANIMALS, PLANTS AND OTHER ORGANISMS WITHIN THE PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES, PRESERVE OBJECTS AND PLACES OF AESTHETIC, HISTORICAL OR

SCIENTIFIC INTEREST; REMOVE DERELICT OBJECTS FROM ANY PARK OR BEACH AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC ACCESS TO BEACHES WHICH IT SHOULD PROVIDE WITH LIFEGUARD SERVICES. THE AUTHORITY ALSO MAINTAINS GREEN VERGES, ROUNDABOUTS, OPEN GREEN SPACES, PARKS AND BEACHES ENSURING SANITARY AND CLEAN CONDITIONS.

DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF ITS OPERATION IT HAS BEEN QUITE ACTIVE WITH PROJECTS IN PROGRESS OR COMPLETED INCLUDING : CLEANUP OF THE BAIN & GRANTS TOWN COMMUNITY; THE INTRODUCTION OF PARK WARDENS ON PUBLIC PARKES; THE REFURBISHMENT AND REDEDICATION OF FRANCES MOTHER BUTLER PARK; UPGRADES AT THE PERCY MUNNINGS PARK IN SUNSET PARK; REFURBISHMENT OF THE YELLOW ELDER GARDENS COMMUNITY PARK; REFURBISHMENT OF THE EXUMA BASKETBALL COURT; CLEAN UP OF THE NASSAU BOTANICAL GARDENS; REDEVELOPMENT OF THE GO SLOW BEND; THE PROVISION OF LIFEGUARDS AND LIFEGUARD CHAIRS AT

PUBLIC BEACHES ( OUR LIFEGUARDS GRADUATE NEXT WEEK AND WILL BE DEPLOYED TO PUBLIC BEACHES IN NASSAU); THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LONG WHARF BEACH; TRIMMING OF CASUARINA TREES IN NEW PROVIDENCE AND CONSTRUCTING NEW STALLS AT LONG WHARF BEACH.

## **REMOVAL OF ILLEGAL ROAD SIGNAGE**

THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY BEGAN THE PHYSICAL PROCESS OF REGULARIZING THE DISPLAY OF SIGNS ON ROADSIDES AND VERGES ON THE ISLAND OF NEW PROVIDENCE. ALL UNAUTHORIZED SIGNS AND BILLBOARDS ERECTED ON ROADSIDES AND ROUNDABOUTS THAT WERE NOT REMOVED BY THEIR OWNERS AS ADVISED, ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31ST, 2015 ARE NOW BEING REMOVED. THIS REMOVAL PROCESS WILL BE ONGOING. .

THESE MEASURES ARE BEING ADVANCED IN AN EFFORT TO REGULARIZE THE WAY IN WHICH SIGNS ARE DISPLAYED ALONG OUR STREETS. IT IS ALSO A SAFETY MEASURE AS THESE SIGNS CAN BE DISTRACTING TO

DRIVERS AND PEDESTRIANS ALIKE, ANDS IS ALSO A PART OF THE CLEANUP INITIATIVE OF THE AUTHORITY.

### **TRAINED PARK WARDENS**

WITH REGARDS TO PARKS MR, SPEAKER, THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY HAS PROVIDED PARK WARDENS FOR OUR VARIOUS COMMUNITY PARKS. PARK WARDENS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE PARKS, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, AND PUBLIC SAFETY. THEY ARE PRESENTLY BEING TRAINED TO MONITOR ECOLOGICAL CONCERNS AND MAINTAIN THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OF OUR WETLANDS AND NATIONAL PARKS.

### **GO SLOW BEND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

MR. SPEAKER,

THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY CONTINUES TO MAKE UPGRADES AROUND NEW PROVIDENCE IN AN EFFORT TO BEAUTIFY THE

ISLAND. WORK WAS UNDERTAKEN AT THE 'GO SLOW BEND' TO ENHANCE THE POPULAR STRIP LOCATED AT THE WESTERN PART OF THE ISLAND. A FAVORITE SPOT FOR TOURIST TO STOP AND TAKE PHOTOS OF THE BREATHTAKING SCENERY, THE UPGRADES WILL ENSURE A MORE IMPRESSIVE BACKDROP TO THE BEAUTY ALREADY SUPPLIED BY NATURE. THE GO SLOW BEND RECEIVED SUBSTANTIAL UPGRADES AS REDEVELOPMENT WORK WAS COMPLETED IN THE AREA. LARGE CASUARINA TREES WERE DEMOLISHED AND CLUMP SHRUBS, SOIL AND DEBRIS REMOVED.

## **THE IMPROVEMENTS TO OUR BEACHES.**

MR. SPEAKER,

CONCERNED FOR THE SAFETY OF PERSONS ENJOYING THE BEACH, THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY IS ENSURING THAT BAHAMIANS AND TOURIST CAN FROLIC KNOWING THAT TRAINED AND CERTIFIED LIFEGUARDS ARE ON DUTY. FIFTEEN

NEW LIFEGUARDS RECENTLY GRADUATED FROM LIFEGUARD TRAINING. THE LIFEGUARDS BEGAN THE PROCESS IN FEBRUARY WITH INTERVIEWS, BACKGROUND CHECKS AND MEDICAL EXAMS. INITIALLY, THE LIFEGUARDS WILL BEGIN DUTY ON THOSE BEACHES THAT ARE MORE HEAVILY POPULATED, SUCH AS JUNKANOO BEACH, LONG WHARF BEACH, SAUNDERS BEACH, GOODMAN'S BAY, AND MONTAGUE BEACH, FAVORITE SPOTS FOR TOURIST AND BAHAMIANS.

THE REDEVELOPMENT OF LONG WHARF BEACH HAS BEGUN. THE BEACH ON THE WESTERN SIDE OF LONG WHARF ADJACENT TO THE FISH FRY WAS RECLAIMED AS A LARGE PORTION OF THE AREA SUFFERED THE EFFECTS OF MANY HURRICANES AND TROPICAL STORMS WHEN THE SAND WAS REPOSITIONED. THIS UPGRADE HAS INCREASED THE AREA FOR SUNBATHING ON THE POPULAR BEACH. THE AREA WAS SUBSEQUENTLY ROPED TO DISCOURAGE PARKING BY VEHICULAR TRAFFIC.

## **LAKE KILLARNEY**

MR. SPEAKER,

THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISION IS TO CREATE A UNIQUE NEW NATIONAL PARK THAT TAKES ADVANTAGE OF THE UNDERLYING BEAUTY OF LAKE KILLARNEY. THE SITE IS COMPRISED OF OPEN WATER, WETLANDS AND UPLANDS, IT WILL CONSIST OF VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTAL PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES WITH SUPPORT AMENITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE. PROPOSED ELEMENTS INCLUDE:

- ENTRANCE PAVILION
- INTERPRETIVE CENTER
- OBSERVATION TOWERS
- CAFÉ
- MEETING CENTER
- LAKE OBSERVATION PLATFORM
- WOOD BOARDWALKS
- KAYAK/BOAT HOUSE
- OUTDOOR AMPHITHEATRE
- LAKE/BIRD OBSERVATION PLATFORMS



THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLIC SPACE ALONG THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OF LAKE CUNNINGHAM IS ONE OF THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARK AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY'S PRIORITIES. ELEMENTS WILL INCLUDE ENHANCED LANDSCAPING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF AMENITIES SUCH AS PARKING FACILITIES, RESTROOMS, GAZEBOS AND DOCKS. THE PROJECT WILL INCLUDE:

- BIKE PATHS
- BOARDWALKS
- KAYAK/CANOEING BUILDING
- TRELLIS AND PAVING
- PICNIC TABLES

## **THE BOTANIC GARDENS**

MR. SPEAKER,

THE POTENTIAL OF THE GARDEN AND ITS UNIQUE FEATURES MAKES THIS AN EXCEPTIONAL SITE. PROPOSED FOR THE AREA IS AN ENTRANCE GARDEN, THAT WILL FUNCTION AS THE "LIVING ROOM" OF THE BOTANICAL GARDENS. ENHANCEMENTS WILL INCLUDE:

- THE POND GARDEN – CELEBRATING THE GARDENS PAST AND USHERING IT INTO THE PRESENT AND FUTURE
- THE HEALING GARDENS – A GARDEN OF BUSH MEDICINE
- THE EDIBLE GARDEN – THIS GARDEN IS A CELEBRATION OF COLLECTED AND FARMED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS OF THE BAHAMAS
- THE GARDEN OF USEFUL THINGS – THIS WOODLAND GARDEN WILL CELEBRATE BAHAMIAN CRAFTSMEN AND WOMEN INCLUDING BOAT BUILDERS, CRAFTERS, STRAW VENDORS, ETC. IT IS INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE LOCAL MATERIALS USED IN THE CRAFTS AND BUILDING INDUSTRIES.
- THE GARDEN OF DELIGHT – A 'CATCH-ALL' GARDEN THAT ALLOWS FOR A VARIETY OF USES RANGING FROM HOSTING LARGE EVENTS TO WALKING, RELAXING AND ENJOYING A LITTLE TIME AWAY FROM THE URBAN BUSTLE.

- CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND – DESIGNATED FOR THE WEST END OF THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS, THE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND OFFERS A SPACE THAT ENTIRE FAMILIES CAN ENJOY YEAR ROUND.
- GREEN HOUSE/MAINTENANCE AREA – THOUGHT OF AS MAINLY A BACK OF HOUSE FUNCTION TO SUPPORT THE GARDENS, THE GREENHOUSE/MAINTENANCE AREA ALSO OFFERS LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

MR. SPEAKER,

OPENED AT THE TIME OF BAHAMAS INDEPENDENCE ON JULY 10, 1973, THE BOTANICAL GARDENS PROVIDE A TRANQUIL RETREAT FOR NATURE-LOVING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. IT FEATURES 18 ACRES OF TROPICAL FLORA COVERING OVER 600 SPECIES, INCLUDING THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL FLOWER, THE YELLOW ELDER. ONCE KNOWN AS THE PIT, THESE GARDENS WERE AN OLD ROCK QUARRY SUPPLYING STONES FOR ROADWAYS AND THE BUILDING OF FORT CHARLOTTE.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND MEMBER FOR CENTREVILLE HAS MANDATED THE AUTHORITY TO CREATE A SPACE TO HONOUR BAHAMIAN HEROES HIGHLIGHTING THE ROLE EACH ONE HAS PLAYED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRY. THE GARDENS WILL BE A PLACE TO MEMORIALIZE AND CELEBRATE THESE HEROES. THE HEROES GARDEN WILL TELL THE STORY OF OUR NATIONS' DEVELOPMENT.

### **PERPALL TRACT PARK**

MR. SPEAKER,

THE NUMBER-ONE AMENITY FOR ANY COMMUNITY IS AN OUTDOOR AREA THAT CAN BE USED FOR RELAXATION AND RECREATION. WITH THIS IN MIND, THE BAHAMAS PUBLIC PARKS AND PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY SEEKS TO ESTABLISH A PASSIVE PARK AT THE WEST BAY/PERPALL TRACT LOCATION. THE PARK WILL HOUSE OUTDOOR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT THAT WILL BENEFIT THE YOUNG AS WELL AS OUR NATION'S SENIORS. THE OUTDOOR FITNESS EQUIPMENT WILL BE ENJOYED BY PEOPLE OF ALL AGES AND FITNESS LEVELS - FROM TEENAGERS TO SENIORS, FITNESS ENTHUSIASTS TO

THE CASUAL USER. THE PASSIVE PARK WILL BRING A SOCIAL, MULTI-GENERATIONAL ELEMENT TO THE PUBLIC SPACE. WE ALSO INTEND TO ADVANCE A PROGRAMME WHERE WE WILL ENGAGE FITNESS TRAINERS THROUGHOUT THE BAHAMAS TO COORDINATE TRAINING PROGRAMMES AND PROVIDE FITNESS INSTRUCTION TO THE PUBLIC AND COMMUNITIES ON OUR COMMUNITY PARKS.

WORKS AT GOODMAN'S BAY ARE TO INCLUDE A LIFEGUARD STATION, SITE WORKS AND UTILITIES AS WELL AS ASPHALT STRIPING OF THE PARKING AREA

AT SAUNDERS' BEACH, COASTAL PLANTS WILL BE USED TO STABILIZE THE BEACH, TREE AND SHRUB PLANTING TO ENHANCE THE SITE.

A BOTANICAL GARDENS WILL BE DESIGNED AND DEVELOPED IN MARSH HARBOUR, ABACO AND MAJOR FAMILY ISLANDS. A CULTURAL HERITAGE SITE WILL BE

CREATED IN NORTH AND SOUTH BIMINI AND ROCK SOUND, ELEUTHERA.

MR. SPEAKER, THE PUBLIC PARKS & PUBLIC BEACHES AUTHORITY IS MY BABY. IT IS DOING GREAT WORK AND I THANK SENATOR GREG BURROWS, PERICLES MAILLIS, THE ENTIRE BOARD, MANAGEMENT AND STAFF FOR THEIR HARD WORK.

I ALSO WANT TO SAY TO THE LINE STAFF OF THE ROADS AND PARKS DIVISION, THE AUTHORITY AND THE DEHS, YOU HAVE HEARD THE PRIME MINISTERS ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT THE REGULARISATION OF WEEKLY AND CONTRACTED STAFF. MANY OF YOU HAVE BEEN WAITING AND FIGHTING FOR YEARS. I WILL CONTINUE TO WORK ON YOUR BEHALF TO SEE THIS THROUGH! YOU ARE DESERVING AND THIS GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT.

**THE BAHAMAS MORTGAGE CORPORATION (BMC)**

MR. SPEAKER,

**LENDING ACTIVITY**

THE CORPORATION'S MORTGAGE LENDING PROGRAM CONTINUES WITH APPLICATIONS BEING PRESENTED FOR GOVERNMENT INITIATED AND PRIVATE HOME OWNERSHIP. OVER THE PAST YEAR, THERE HAS BEEN A MARGINAL INCREASE IN REQUESTS FOR MORTGAGE LOAN FINANCING FOR HOMES AND VACANT LAND WHICH WERE SOLD VIA FORECLOSURE BY VARIOUS BANKS AND OTHER LENDING INSTITUTIONS. DUE TO THE INCREASE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND HOUSING'S HOME CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM, LOANS WERE PLACED IN THE BMC'S PORTFOLIO IN THIS REGARD. THIS IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE IN THE NEAR FUTURE AS MANY HOMES ARE CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION FOR WHICH LOANS ARE BEING PROCESSED.

OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS, THE CORPORATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO PLACE SEVERAL NEW MORTGAGES IN ITS PORTFOLIO - TWO HUNDRED AND ONE (201) GOVERNMENT INITIATED MORTGAGES AT A VALUE OF

NINETEEN MILLION, SIX HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED TWENTY DOLLARS (\$19,659,220.00); AND TWO HUNDRED, THIRTY-SEVEN (237) LOANS (PRIVATE INITIATED MORTGAGES) FOR A VALUE OF THIRTY MILLION, NINETY-FOUR THOUSAND, TWO HUNDRED FIFTY-NINE DOLLARS (\$30,094,259). ALL IN ALL FOR THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW, THE BMC APPROVED FOUR HUNDRED, THIRTY-EIGHT (438) LOANS FOR A VALUE OF FORTY-NINE MILLION, SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY-THREE THOUSAND, FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY-NINE DOLLARS (\$ 49,753,479).

MR. SPEAKER,

THE CORPORATION CONTINUES THE MANDATE TO PARTNER WITH PRIVATE HOME DEVELOPERS TO MEET THE COUNTRY'S DEMANDING HOUSING NEEDS, WHICH HAS BEEN MET WITH SOME SUCCESS SINCE THE ONSET OF THE INITIATIVE.

MR. SPEAKER,

THE BAHAMAS MORTGAGE CORPORATION CONTINUES ITS PRUDENT FISCAL MANAGEMENT WITH THE VIEW TO



IMPROVING BMC'S FINANCIAL POSITION, AND THE CORPORATION REMAINS RESOLVED IN ITS EFFORTS IN THIS REGARD. SPECIAL ATTENTION HAS BEEN GIVEN TO THE MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF FISCAL AND OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES OVER THE RECENT YEARS IN THIS REGARD.

DESPITE MANY CHALLENGES SUCH AS DOWNTURNS IN THE ECONOMY AND RESULTING ECONOMIC RECESSIONS OVER ITS HISTORY, BMC HAS BEEN ABLE TO ADEQUATELY SERVICE THE INTEREST AND PRINCIPAL PAYMENTS TO ITS BONDHOLDERS, WHILE PRUDENTLY ALLOCATING FUNDS TO FINANCE NEW MORTGAGE LOANS. FURTHER, BMC'S OPERATING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES ARE MET WITHOUT REQUIRING SUBSIDIES OR SUBVENTIONS FROM THE BAHAMAS GOVERNMENT.

THE CORPORATION IS CURRENTLY IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING VIABLE OPTIONS WITH REGARDS TO ACCESSING FUNDING TO PROVIDE MORTGAGES FOR THE ONGOING GOVERNMENT HOME CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM. WE HAVE HAD SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS WITH

THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE OVER THE LAST FEW WEEKS AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO ADVANCING THOSE OPTIONS IN THE WEEKS AHEAD.

## **THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING**

ECONOMIC FORECASTS CAN BE UPENDED BY NATURAL PHENOMENA WHICH FORCES YOU TO RE-ORDER PRIORITIES. HURRICANE JOAQUIN AND THE RECONSTRUCTION NEEDED IN THE HOUSING SECTOR ON FOUR (4) ISLANDS OF THE BAHAMAS HAS CAUSED THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING TO SHIFT ITS FOCUS TOWARDS SECURING LODGING FOR PERSONS LEFT HOMELESS IN OCTOBER 2015 BY HURRICANE JOAQUIN, BEFORE THE 2016 HURRICANE SEASON IS UPON US.

IN MARCH OF THIS YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING WAS CHARGED TO INTERVENE AND ASSIST NEMA WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REBUILDING HOUSES IN ABACO, ACKLINS, LONG ISLAND AND SAN SALVADOR DESTROYED BY HURRICANE JOAQUIN. THAT WORK CONTINUES.

ELSEWHERE MR. SPEAKER,  
THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, FOR FISCAL 2015/16,  
HAS BEEN BUSY CARRYING OUT ITS MANDATE TO  
DELIVER AFFORDABLE HOMES TO BAHAMIANS.

ON THE ISLAND OF **NEW PROVIDENCE**, **18 NEW HOMES WERE** COMPLETED IN **STRACHAN HILL**. THAT SUBDIVISION IS NOW BUILT OUT. THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING STARTED CONSTRUCTION OF NINE (9) NEW HOMES IN **DIGNITY CRESCENT** (7 ARE NOW COMPLETED), AND STARTED 16 NEW HOMES IN **FIRE TRAIL EXTENSION** (10 ARE NOW COMPLETED). THE BAHAMAS MORTGAGE CORPORATION ALSO STARTED CONSTRUCTION OF 14 SINGLE FAMILY HOMES ALONG WITH 8 NEW TOWN HOUSE MODELS IN **JOHN CLARIDGE SUBDIVISION** IN EASTERN NEW PROVIDENCE.

INFRASTRUCTURE WORK HAS BEGUN IN THE CARMICHAEL VILLAGE SUBIDIVISION, WHICH SHOULD PROVIDE 303 HOMES. 10 MODEL GREEN HOMES ARE BEING CONSRUCTED AS A PART OF THE FIRST PHASE

AND IT IS ENVISAGED THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT WILL RAMP UP IN THE FALL OF THIS YEAR.

MR. SPEAKER,

61 HOMES ARE BEING CONSTRUCTED IN **THE ADASTRA GARDENS PHASE 3**. TWENTY HOMES ARE NOW OUT OF THE GROUND AND THE FIRST PHASE IS ESTIMATED TO BE COMPLETED BY THE END OF JUNE WITH THE TOTAL BUILD OUT SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION BY YEAR END.

### **NEW HOUSES**

THIS BUDGET YEAR, HOMES WILL BE BUILT IN **ROMER STREET FOX HILL** AND **SUNSET CLOSE EXTENSION**.

MR. SPEAKER,

IN THE FAMILY ISLANDS, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING BEGAN CONSTRUCTION OF 18 HOMES IN **SPRING CITY ABACO** IN FEBRUARY 2016. ALL OF THE HOMES ARE NEARING COMPLETION AND HAS PROVIDED A BOOST FOR THE ECONOMY OF ABACO.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING BEGAN THE CONSTRUCTION OF 35 HOMES IN **BAHAMIA REPLAT** IN GRAND BAHAMA IN FEBRUARY 2016 .THE HOMES ARE NOW AT VARIOUS STAGES WITH THE MAJORITY OF THE HOMES BEING AT LEAST TO THE ROOF STAGE. SEVERAL HOMES ARE ALSO COMPLETE. FROM ALL INDICATIONS MORTGAGES OF THESE HOMES WILL BE OVERSUBSCRIBED. THE CONSTRUCTION OF THESE HOMES HAS ALSO PROVIDED A MUCH NEED ECONOMIC BOOST TO THE ECONOMY OF GRAND BAHAMA.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF 15 HOMES IN SAN SALVADOR WAS SUSPENDED DUE TO THE PASSAGE OF HURRICANE JOAQUIN, AS MANPOWER WAS RECHANNELED TO COMPLETE NEW HOME CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIRS TO HOMES DAMAGED BY THE STORM. WORK ON THE SUBDIVISION IS SCHEDULE TO RESUME THIS SUMMER. THESE HOMES ARE AT VARIOUS STAGES OF COMPLETION.

## **HOME REPAIRS**

MR. SPEAKER,

IN 2015/2016 THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING CONTINUED TO HAVE TO CARRY OUT NUMEROUS REPAIRS TO HOMES PREVIOUSLY BUILT. THESE REPAIRS HAVE RANGED FROM MINOR REPAIRS TO TWO HOMES HAVING TO BE TOTALLY CONDEMNED DUE TO STRUCTURAL DEFECTS.

MOST OF THE REPAIRS WERE RELATED TO ISSUES WITH TILING AND NUMEROUS REPAIRS HAD TO BE MADE DUE TO ISSUES WITH TERMITE INFESTATIONS SPECIFICALLY IN THE **DIGNITY GARDENS SUBDIVISION**. MANY OF THESE HOMES WERE CONSTRUCTED WITHIN THE LAST 5 - 10 YEARS. THE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO ADDRESSING ITS PROTOCOLS AS IT RELATES TO TREATMENT OF BUILDINGS FOR TERMITES DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PHASE. THE DEPARTMENT HAS ALSO ESTABLISHED A COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE APPROVED BUILDERS LISTING AND AMENDING IT BASED ON CONTRACTORS WHO PROVIDE SUB STANDARD WORKMANSHIP.

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING, GIVEN ITS COMMITMENT TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOMES, IS ACTIVELY INVESTIGATING AND RESEARCHING SEVERAL NEW HOME DESIGNS AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES TO MINIMIZE HOME COST TO BAHAMIANS. ADDITIONALLY, REALIZING THAT TRADITIONAL HOME OWNERSHIP WILL REMAIN UNATTAINABLE FOR SOME, THE DEPARTMENT IS COMMITTED TO PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE HOME SOLUTIONS. IN THIS REGARD SEVERAL SITES ARE BEING INVESTIGATED FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW RENTAL COMPLEXES.

## **CONCLUSION**

MR. SPEAKER,

I WHOLEHEARTEDLY SUPPORT THE PRIME MINISTERS BUDGET STATEMENT "AN AGENDA FOR A MORDERN BAHAMAS". WE ARE A SMALL BUT SPECTACULAR NATION AND OUR GROWTH MUST CONTINUE. THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US DID THEIR PART TO MAKE WAYS AND MEANS FOR US TO SUCCEED AND WE MUST DO

THE SAME FOR THOSE GENERATIONS WHO WAIT IN THE WINGS TO TAKE THE REIGNS OF THE COUNTRY.

I DO BELIEVE THAT WITH THE EFFORTS OF THIS GOVERNMENT WE ARE WELL ON OUR WAY. WE MUST ENSURE HOWEVER, THAT OUR PEOPLE KNOW AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS BEING DONE FOR AND ON THEIR BEHALF. WE MUST ALSO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE. DESPITE OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS SOME PEOPLE I SPEAK TO AND MEET DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WE HAVE DONE. SOME SAY THEY DO NOT FEEL THE DIRECT BENEFIT OF WHAT WE HAVE DONE.

THEREFORE, IT IS OUR JOB TO ENSURE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY FEEL AND EXPERIENCE THE BENEFITS OF OUR GOVERNANCE. WE SHOULD NOT BE BASHFUL IN TOUTING OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND TELLING OUR PEOPLE HOW THEY CAN BENEFIT FROM THEM. IF THAT MEANS THAT WE MUST TAKE TO THE AIRWAVES AND STREETS ONCE AGAIN THEN SO BE IT. WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO ADVANCE AND DEVELOP THE COUNTRY WITHOUT THE PEOPLE TAKING A GREATER ROLE IN THAT DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS NOT ONLY THE



RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT BUT THE PEOPLE MUST ENSURE THAT WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS, THEY ARE PREPARED TO ANSWER THE CALL.

MR. SPEAKER

WE ALL LOVE THIS COUNTRY AND WE ALL HAVE OUR ROLES TO PLAY IN THE BUILDING OF THIS NATION. I HAVE SAID IT BEFORE IN THIS PLACE, WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO TRADE ON THE TRIUMPHS OF THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US BUT MUST BLAZE NEW TRAILS FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW US. IN MY VIEW, WHEN HISTORY IS TOLD YEARS FROM NOW, IT WILL BE STATED THE THIS PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY GOVERNMENT, IN LINE WITH THE WORKS OF THE FIRST PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY GOVERNMENT AND IN LINE WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL PARTY WAS ONE OF THE MOST TRANSFORMATIVE ADMINISTRATIONS TO DATE IN BAHAMIAN HISTORY. THE PROGRESS MUST CONTINUE. WE NEED FIVE MORE YEARS!

SOUTHERN SHORES SUPPORTS THE RESOLUTION