



Office of
the Prime Minister

REMARKS

BY

HON. PHILIP E. DAVIS QC, MP

PRIME MINISTER – COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

URGENT GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

NATIONAL DISCRIMINATORY LAW REVIEW FORUM

BAHA MAR

17th FEBRUARY, 2022

Minister of Social Services and Urban Development,
Hon. Obie Wilchcombe;

State Minister for Social Services and Urban
Development, Hon. Lisa Rahming;

Parliamentary Colleagues;

Senior Government Officials;

Presenters, ladies and gentlemen, good morning to
you all.

I thank the Minister for his kind invitation to open
this forum. I think we can all agree that our laws
regarding gender-based violence must be aligned
with our values.

As Bahamians, we should speak with one voice when we repudiate discrimination against women and girls and denounce gender-based violence and domestic abuse – just as we should be ardent advocates for gender equality and child and family welfare.

There is a proud tradition in our country of fighting for equality that stretches back to at least the Burma Road Riots in 1942. Many brave women who were part of the struggle to end racial and political discrimination in this country also worked tirelessly for women’s suffrage.

As a member of good standing in the United Nations, our country subscribed to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in December of 1979.

Our ratification of the Human Rights Convention in October of 1993 underscored our continued commitment to improve the legal status of women in our national life.

And, of course, we have passed landmark legislation in this country that furthered the cause of equality, and implemented progressive policies which furthered inclusion and justice.

But we have much more to do, clearly.

The recommendations that emerge after this three-day forum will be very important to the formulation of new public policies.

I thank both the substantive and State Ministers of Social Services and Urban Development for this opportunity to review and debate these issues.

My government supports the UN Charters and Conventions on human rights, gender equality and greater access for the disabled, and will continue to legislate and advance public policies to achieve these objectives.

I think we who are gathered here share an understanding that bringing our laws up to date and in line with our values is crucial, but not sufficient. To end violence against women, something deeper is required – a national consensus that preventing and responding to such violence is a shared priority and a shared responsibility.

To that end, we will also need long-term prevention strategies which include civic and community involvement.

I wish you a very productive few days. May your presentations, deliberations and exchange of ideas during this forum propel our country forward on this path to equality and justice.

Thank you and good morning.

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