



Office of  
the Prime Minister

**COMMUNICATION TO THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**  
**BY PRIME MINISTER HON. PHILIP DAVIS, QC, MP**  
**ON THE 26<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**  
**WHICH FORMS PART OF**  
**THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE**  
**CHANGE**  
**AND INCLUDES THE WORLD LEADERS' SUMMIT**  
**HELD FROM OCTOBER 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2021, TO NOVEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2021**  
**IN GLASGOW, SCOTLAND**

**WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2022**

## **Introduction**

Madame Speaker:

I wish to communicate to the House to report on the participation of The Bahamas in the 26<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of The Parties, or COP26, which forms part of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The meeting was held in Glasgow, Scotland, from October 28<sup>th</sup> 2021, to November 14<sup>th</sup> 2021, and included the World Leaders Summit.

Afterwards, I will table the full report contained in this Communication.

Madame Speaker:

In November 2021, some ten short weeks after taking office, I led the Bahamian delegation to Glasgow, Scotland, to participate in the most prominent global forum on Climate Change referred to as COP26.

My Administration, deeply aware of the impacts of climate change, especially its manifestation through hurricanes, sought to ensure that the plight and struggles of The Bahamas were recognized and that efforts to address these issues would be at the forefront of the negotiations.

Through this Communication, I wish to draw the attention of Honourable Members to the successes, achievements, and plans that came out of this meeting, and speak to other projects and programmes being

implemented as we now move forward in preparation for COP27.

I will also draw attention to my Government's climate change agenda in "Our Blueprint for Change".

Madame Speaker:

I am incredibly proud of what we achieved. COP26 put us on the map as never before.

It is no exaggeration to say that our participation greatly enhanced the profile of

The Bahamas, and the increased attention from the international media and other world leaders shows the wisdom of our decision to participate.

As you will soon hear, our participation's practical, tangible benefits were manifold.

This was no easy feat, Madame Speaker, as the previous administration had done nothing by way of preparation.

They didn't get it.

It beggars belief that, even after the experience of Hurricane Dorian, even with the impact of climate change dominating the global conversation, the previous administration chose to ignore the largest gathering in the world, where the single biggest, existential threat to all our lives was being discussed, and significant financing opportunities negotiated.

Madam Speaker, it was only through the determined effort made by our team members that we were able to secure flights,

hotels, transportation, and other logistical arrangements at such short notice.

We are deeply grateful for the efforts made, and support is given by the British High Commissioner and the Government of the United Kingdom to facilitate our participation.

My thanks also to our delegation at the United Nations in New York, our High Commissioner in London and his team, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff, the Department of the Environment and the Office of The Prime



Minister for their collective determination to make it all happen.

**Strengthen international co-operation  
on climate change mitigation**

Madame Speaker:

In our 'Blueprint for Change', which we published last summer during the election campaign, we committed to strengthening our cooperation with international partners on climate change mitigation.

I am happy to report that during COP26, The Bahamas significantly stepped up its representation on various UN Climate Change committees.

In the past, The Bahamas was on the outside looking in. While rules were being developed and innovative climate finance funds were being accessed, we were not benefitting fully from these activities.

I am proud to say that as a result of our strong leadership at COP26, we now have the

following Bahamians representing us on climate mitigation committees:

In Article 6.4, dealing with Carbon Markets, Mr. N. Charles Hamilton was elected to serve as the Caribbean and Latin America representative.

On the Kyoto Protocol Compliance Committee's Facilitative Branch, Dr. Lisa Benjamin, a Bahamian lawyer and a fellow of the University of The Bahamas, were elected

to serve as the Caribbean and Latin America representative.

These two Bahamians will ensure that mitigation issues of importance to The Bahamas remain on the table and are actioned through proposed global finance and programmes.

Madame Speaker:

This is not just success for our administration, committed to fulfilling the promises made to the Bahamian people; this is success for all Bahamians. Our brightest and best among us

have a seat at the table and can best represent our interests on all our behalf.

**Strengthen and deepen international partnerships to secure [the] most beneficial commercial relationships in connection with Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goals**

Madame Speaker:

In our 'Blueprint for Change', we also committed to "Strengthen and deepen international partnerships to secure [the]

most beneficial commercial relationships in connection with Climate Change and Sustainable Development Goals”.

In Glasgow, we also had the opportunity to engage with the two largest financial donors within the United Nations System, along with other financial agencies.

As a result of our participation at COP26, The Bahamas drew international attention to the impacts of Hurricane Dorian, including its effect on our Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

For years we have advocated that GDP was not an accurate indicator of a country's unique vulnerabilities or economic stability. I made the point back in September when I addressed the UN's General Assembly and did so again in Glasgow.

Madame Speaker:

Every country's economy is vulnerable to environmental shocks.

In recent years, our annual hurricane season has demonstrated the extent of that vulnerability.

However, Hurricane Dorian, unprecedented in its size, duration and ferocity, showed how these single events could completely cripple our country.

Against this backdrop, the use of GDP to determine the level of financial assistance offered to our country is not reasonable.

Therefore, our delegation consistently made interventions throughout COP26 that drew attention to this stark reality.



We forcefully drove home this argument in discussions with the 'Global Environment Facility, a significant financial donor for environmental programmes.

Madame Speaker:

I am thrilled to report that at the recent global meeting of countries in January, the Global Environment Facility indicated that they would be moving away from using GDP as the primary economic indicator.

Currently, the Funding available to The Bahamas through the Global Environment Facility for 2022-2023 is approximately \$7 Million.

The Global Environment Facility is now proposing to use two indices: an Economic and Environmental Vulnerability Index or EVI and a Human Development Index or HDI.

EVI indicators would capture economic and environmental shocks, while HDI indicators

would consider the country's health and living standards.

Madame Speaker:

This is a major win for The Bahamas and other Caribbean Small Island Developing States or SIDS.

These new indicators are better suited to convey our countries' realities and are likely to increase the mobilization of climate finance.

This change will also aid in amplifying the continued efforts of SIDS to move toward the

much-needed 'Multi-dimensional Vulnerability Index or MVI.

Most SIDS are considered middle or high-income countries and are currently ineligible for concessional financing due to the present GDP income classification.

This change will help secure the much-needed financial support to address the adverse impacts of climate change.

Therefore, progress on the development of the MVI is critical, and we need to support the efforts of our regional, Atlantic and Pacific partner countries in having this addressed.

Our Technical Teams will continue to advocate and negotiate for the rapid adoption and implementation of the MVI by international financial organizations. The Bahamas can get the much-needed support to address climate change.

Madame Speaker:

We also met with the 'Green Climate Fund' to discuss financial support for matters relating to Health and building a 'Sustainable Resilient Infrastructure'.

The Bahamas is presently conducting a Green Climate Fund 'Health-Readiness' project, managed by the Ministry of Health and Wellness, with a capital value of approximately \$800,000.

Once completed, The Bahamas would be ready to develop and submit a complete

Health Project to address the healthcare infrastructure needs within the country, which is estimated to cost approx. \$300 Million.

The Green Climate Fund encouraged The Bahamas to move this plan forward, as a Green Climate Fund health-based proposal of this magnitude would be the first of its kind globally.

Once again, Madame Speaker: our efforts in Glasgow are already producing the kinds of benefits for the Bahamian people that have been sorely neglected in recent years.

## **Country Partnership and Technology**

### **Transfers**

Madame Speaker:

Our attendance at COP26 also allowed us to engage in discussions to facilitate partnership arrangements with other countries.

The Bahamas held discussions with Israel regarding capacity-building opportunities and technology exchange.



We have also communicated with the International Renewable Energy Agency headquartered in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). This will come under Mr. Toni Joudi as The Bahamas' non-resident Ambassador to the UAE.

Other countries where we have common interests are Gabon and South Africa.

We will report further on these partnerships as they develop.

Madame Speaker:

One of the fascinating outcomes of our presence at COP26 has been stimulating interest among climate investors to come to The Bahamas.

We strongly signalled that The Bahamas is a country seeking investors to present proposals for renewable energy.

Our invitation to work with and advance renewable technology projects has created effective options for our sustainable development platform.

'Proof of Concept' Projects are being developed to address energy gaps.

For example, an OTEC project is being developed for Eleuthera, where power generation costs exceed profit capabilities.

Concerted efforts to engage our continued competitive investor calls can only result in favourable outcomes for the country's lower costs and technological advances.

A similar investor framework is being examined to address public transportation improvements, which may yield, for example,

environmentally friendly and sustainable public buses.

Once these partnerships are confirmed, these programmes will be flagged as “national development projects”, and The Bahamas will be in a position to target global financing in climate change funds.

The capital budget requirements would be in the hundreds of millions of US dollars, so financing these national-level projects would significantly contribute.

## **International Coalitions and Partnerships**

Madame Speaker:

I wish to highlight two vital international partnerships concluded around COP26, significantly benefiting The Bahamas.

In addition to representation on UN Climate Change international committees, The Bahamas, at the highest level, took a seat at the table with other national leaders as the newest members to The NDC Partnership.

The NDC or Nationally Determined Contributions is our country's road map to addressing climate change mitigation and adaptation challenges.

The NDC Partnership supports countries like The Bahamas and provides a platform for knowledge and information-sharing.

More importantly, it assists in aligning our nation's NDC goals with much-needed climate finance and resources. Being a member of

this partnership means that we no longer will be the “Johnny-Come-Lately” from our region. We now have a seat at the table.

We joined the second critical partnership was ‘The Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action.

Madame Speaker:

It is hard to overstate the significance of this.

Membership of the Coalition provides us access to new and emerging strategies to

integrate climate change into our economic and financial policies.

It also offers us access to investment opportunities that support climate action.

As only the second CARICOM member state to join this committee, The Bahamas is leading in influencing international monetary policies and decisions. Our country will be on the cutting-edge of climate finance mechanisms.

Madame Speaker:



Less than six months in office, this is what our New Day Administration has already achieved for the Bahamian people.

And this is still just the beginning!

**Seek[ing] support from the UN and international bodies for Climate Justice**

Madame Speaker:

As a result of my Administration's efforts during COP26, we have further arranged to be elected next-in-line for the following UN Climate Change Committee seats related to Firstly Loss & Damage.

And secondly, we will have a seat on The Committee to Facilitate Implementation and Promote compliance with Article 15.2 of the Paris Agreement.

Membership of this committee is strategically essential because all world actors must be held accountable to uphold their commitments to carbon reductions under the Paris Agreement.

Madame Speaker:

I called for more significant support for financing and technology transfer for our

country at COP26. Our Administration ensured that we now have people in the room at the UN Climate Change Committee level.

I am pleased to announce that Dr. Rhianna Neely has been appointed to the 'Adaptation Committee'; we will be next-in-line to be elected to the 'Adaptation Fund Board' through the appointment of Mrs. Rochelle Newbold.

These boards and committees directly influence how international funds are

distributed for projects and programs aimed at helping developing countries adapt to the harmful effects of climate change.

Madame Speaker:

The Bahamas has advanced several training opportunities for capacity-building.

For 2022-2023, we have negotiated a series of training opportunities to ensure Bahamians are trained for climate-change-related jobs.

Successful candidates will then be identified as national and global experts with these training certifications.

The 2022-2023 UN certification offerings are centred around collecting, analyzing and reporting on Greenhouse Gases for the following sectors in The Bahamas and globally, namely:

- Agriculture
- Forestry
- Industry
- Energy, and
- Waste

Candidates who complete the courses will be able to apply for Consultant positions for people with such skillsets, which are being advertised internationally.

Additional capacity building activities which will be undertaken this year to enhance our data collection and climate reporting requirements are:

Evaluation and assessment of institutional arrangements;

The development of a National Inventory

Improvement Plan;

And Support with developing Energy  
Statistics.

## **Bahamian Representation across COP26**

### **Side Events**

Madame Speaker:

COP26 was the first time The Bahamas  
hosted a side event at any Conference of the  
Parties.

Our side event titled "Hurricane Dorian:

Analysis-to-Action: Mobilizing nature-based

solutions & Partnerships for Resilience” was seen by nearly 1,000 people.

This event was produced in partnership with The University of The Bahamas, The Nature Conservancy, and the Department of Environmental Planning and Protection (DEPP).

Bahamian experts spoke in more than 15 side events, proving that the Bahamian people can hold their own on the international stage.



Our delegation advanced public education and outreach activities with the most vulnerable among us in the country. This was achieved through a virtual event with more than 130 Bahamian students from across five islands of our islands.

Some exciting youth and educational partnerships were formed for climate action/climate education that the team is pursuing.

We will share more in the future.

Madame Speaker:

These long-term strategic positions will significantly enhance The Bahamas' voice and role in global decision-making.

Under our administration, this, Madame Speaker, is how the world "marks the manner of our bearing."

## **Youth Empowerment and Capacity**

### **Building**

Madame Speaker:

Throughout our 'Blueprint For Change', we made clear that the young people of The

Bahamas are not just our future; they are very much key to the success of our present.

As well as appointing significant numbers of young people to critical roles in our

Administration, we recognize the need to involve young people in the key opportunities and challenges of our time.

Before travelling to COP26, I engaged with The Bahamas Caucus of the "One Young World" organization.

Since then, my Office has committed to partnering with the University of The Bahamas and One Young World to host a youth climate change dialogue tomorrow, on February 17th, 2022. Young people worldwide will participate, and I look forward to their discussion.

This engagement is the first of several initiatives by my Administration to connect, collaborate and strategise with young people on climate change matters.

Additionally, my government has agreed to host a Youth Climate Conference, which will be held at the University of The Bahamas from July 6-8, 2022. Young people worldwide will be invited to engage with Bahamians from 15-30yrs old, to debate and discuss issues including climate change mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, and climate justice.

Along with our private sector partners, we have committed to ensuring that at least two

students from each of our Family Islands can participate in this event.

And we are going further.

Madame Speaker:

I am proud and excited to announce that we have appointed two 'Climate Youth Ambassadors' to help us to engage and empower young people on the world stage. I am delighted to inform the House that Ms. Maya Delaney and Mr. Bradley Watson are the first two Youth Ambassadors to hold this post.

And as we make preparations for The Bahamas to be well-represented at COP27 in Egypt, my government, assisted by partners in the private sector, is committed to ensuring that at least eight youth representatives will form part of the delegation from The Bahamas.

These students will be identified through a national selection process.

Ruby Nottage has agreed to lead the committee making that selection. We hope all that young people interested in climate change will put themselves forward in what is expected to be a competitive process.

And we will continue to do what we can to ensure that the voices of young Bahamians can be brought to the highest level of international discussion, debate and negotiation.

## **Conclusion**

Madame Speaker:



At no time in our history have the Bahamian people been so actively involved and aware of climate change's happenings on the international stage.

And at no time has the presence of our people been so necessary.

We are one of the countries most vulnerable to climate change.

To do nothing, to say nothing, not to show up, not to raise our hands and voices and be counted: this is not an option for our administration.

Madame Speaker:

I am proud to be leading an administration that 'gets it'.

Our presence at COP26 in Glasgow was a game-changer for our country and our Bahamian people.

And we will continue to make every effort to secure a better future for our country.

I pray God's blessings upon us all.

Thank you.

END

