



Office of
the Prime Minister

Remarks by the Prime Minister

Hon. Philip E. Davis QC, MP

Minister of Finance

Member for Cat Island, Rum Cay and San Salvador

Local Government Practitioners Conference

Under the Theme:

Local Government: Today and Beyond – Positively
Impacting Communities

SuperClub Breezes Resort

Cable Beach - Nassau, Bahamas

25th May 2022

Good afternoon to all.

Clay Sweeting, Minister of Agriculture, Marine
Resources and Family Island Affairs;

Phedra Rahming, Permanent Secretary in the
Ministry of Agriculture;

Neil Campbell, Acting Director of Local Government.

Family Island Administrators and other Local
Government Practitioners;

I thank Minister Sweeting and his team for their kind invitation to address our Local Government Practitioners as we work together to address the new challenges and embrace the associated opportunities to positively impact our Family Island Communities.

I appreciate conferences and workshops such as these as they align the policy objectives of the central government with local communities spread over one hundred thousand miles.

You are aware that earlier today I delivered the government's budget for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The priorities of the government as reflected in the budget will affect the way you conduct business.

I wish to highlight just a few of the measures we have taken and our broad priority areas.

Upon coming to office in September- of 2021, my government immediately removed unnecessary covid restrictions and ended the Emergency Orders. This resulted in increased investor confidence as Bahamians returned to work and many small

businesses reopened. These measure also stimulated inter-island trade.

My government's three priority areas are as follows:

- To help Bahamians to cope with the increase in cost of living prices.
- To facilitate the expansion of economic and job opportunities for Bahamians.
- To address various security issues to make our borders stronger.

Further, it is the policy of my government to achieve 30% reliance on renewable energy by 2030 as part of our energy sector reform policy.

You can expect new building codes and increased access to affordable housing in addition to increased food security measures, or food import replacement measures, to reduce our food import bill.

Additionally, the government has begun the legislative process that will govern how we will leverage and monetize our natural resources to receive carbon credits and protect the environment.

We must do our part to arrest rising sea levels around our islands.

These policy measures are significant for Local Government practitioners and Family Island Administrators because much of our natural resources in the blue and green economies exist in and around the Family Islands.

My government is moving quickly and decisively in these areas. For example, this weekend, a team of Government officials and a Representative from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) will

conduct Technical Assessments for the Installation of Solar Photovoltaic Systems for Public Buildings on RoofTops or Ground Mounters in Inagua, Acklins, Crooked Island, Mayaguana, and Long Cay.

The visits and Technical Assessments are being led by Members of the Project Execution Unit (PEU), Reconstruction with Resilience in the Energy Sector in The Bahamas Program (RRESBP), in the Ministry of Finance so I have direct superintendence of this energy and economic development project.

These technical assessments in Family Island communities will continue so each practitioner will be affected and fully engaged in this energy reform initiative.

This transformative initiative is contained in my Government's Economic Plan and Blueprint to provide Renewable and Solar Energy for the country thereby reducing the country's reliance on fossil fuel by 30 percent by 2030.

I welcome the new economy, the entrepreneurial and well-paying job opportunities this energy

initiative will create. As Local Government Practitioners, you will be on the frontline – on the ground so to speak - in leading this transformation so Clay Sweeting and I are counting on your strong leadership in making this a success.

Your challenge, however, as Local Government Practitioners is to embrace these twenty-first century changes, but to do so in a manner that you improve your various communities “by placing the wellbeing of our citizenry first and delivering the highest standards of service”. This is your sworn

mission and commitment as you bring government closer to the people.

Please know that we are partners in the sustained development of our family island communities and economies. The unique culture and sensibilities of our people must be respected, protected and preserved as we fight what is called the 'rural push' and the 'urban pull' economic migration phenomenon.

Our collective vision is aligned fellow practitioners.

Together we will "facilitate, and ensure that there is

a sustainable, effective form of governance at the community level, that encourages expansion of the economic, political, spiritual, and sociological development of The Bahamas”.

As we govern the ordered and systematic development of our Family Island communities, we must be ever mindful of the real existential threats of climate change and bio-based pandemics. We who had the least to do with creating these external threats are most affected by them.

We will not complain fellow practitioners, instead, we will roll up our sleeves and put our collective heads together and craft island specific developmental strategies that comport with the vision, mission and value proposition of the Department of Local Government in the delivery of public goods and services within our various Family Island Districts.

While I appreciate that government services must be duplicated in each island and in some cases in each island district, I thank you for your resourcefulness and patience in facilitating the execution of

government policies under challenging
circumstances.

I have an open door policy and I believe in building
consensus so I will listen to your unique
circumstances and concerns.

I appreciate that a cookie cutter approach will not
work in the Family Islands so as you continue your
deliberations, presentations and exchange of ideas
during this conference and work shop, I am satisfied
that you will take into consideration and
communicate the individual needs of your districts.

This will inform public policy on how we can best serve these communities with the least amount of disruptions to the way of life in our island districts and communities.

I look forward to the outcome and recommendations from this conference on how we can improve on the delivery of government services to our Family Island communities.

I invite you to review my budget communication and the government's priorities contained therein as

these priorities will serve as a general policy and strategic guide on how you can deliver government services in your Family Island communities over the next fiscal year and beyond.

Thank you again for your kind invitation to address this important body and arm of the government.

Thank you for being the eyes and hears of the central government in the Family Islands and may we continue to work together to renew, rebuild and revolutionize our beautiful country, one family island at a time.

May Almighty God continue to bless the
Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Thank you.

END

