



Office of
the Prime Minister

Remarks for the Groundbreaking Ceremony of the Ocean Hole Subdivision

Hon. Philip Edward Davis QC, MP Prime Minister

30 June 2022

Good Morning Ladies and Gentlemen.

Today's Groundbreaking ceremony of the Ocean Hole subdivision is another example of my government's commitment to empowering Bahamians.

This expansion of 100 additional lots forms part of our strategy to ensure the provision of affordable housing throughout the country.

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This achievement has only been made possible because of the leadership provided, and the partnership encompassing a number of significant people.

First of all, my thanks to you, the people of Eleuthera, for hosting us today in the land named for 'Freedom'.

My thanks also to Minister Clay Sweeting, who I'm advised, is 'putting the sexy back into agriculture'.

This certainly creates a challenge for the rest of us.

I'm not sure I'll ever be able to 'put the sexy back into Finance', but as a progressive team, eager to innovate in order to advance our national development, I'm certainly willing to try.

But I digress.

I add my thanks to all government and local administration members, who have worked so hard to make today a reality.

And of course my thanks and congratulations to the Minister of Housing, the Hon. Jobeth Coleby Davis, and her team, for launching this Private Public Partnership with the Pineapple Development Company. She has been working to expand access to homeownership since Day 1 of our New Day Administration, and many Bahamians are already benefitting from her efforts.

Our administration understands that Bahamians deserve opportunities to make the most of their God-given talents, and the opportunity to thrive and pass on a better life to their children.

But these opportunities sit alongside our present challenges

Over the past few days, I've been sharing our plans to bring down the cost of living for Bahamian families, along with strategies and plans as to how we will move our country forward.

And so, we are putting in place a package of measures to help Bahamians cope with inflation, one of our biggest economic challenges of the moment, driven by global forces beyond our control.

Our measures include:

- Multiple reductions in import duties so that people can pay less for their purchases;
- Funding to increase the enforcement of price controls, so that unscrupulous vendors don't take advantage of the present challenges;
- An increase in the minimum wage in the public sector, with incremental increases beginning next month. As the largest employer in the country, the government can improve the take-home pay for workers across all sectors of society;
- The establishment of a contributory pension plan for public officers;
- The reintroduction of the RISE programme, as part of the offering from social services;

- The introduction of a new Catastrophic Health Care programme;
- A substantial investment to make homeownership more accessible, such as we see here today;
- The establishment of the Universal Service Fund to make technology more accessible and affordable throughout our islands;
- Significant agricultural investments to increase our nation's food security, and reduce our import bill for food..
- A 10% increase in funding to NGOs;
- A 50% increase in social services assistance, compared to pre-pandemic levels;
- A salary increase for teachers and a retention bonus for both teachers and nurses.

I know the people of Eleuthera understand the challenges our country is facing right now.

Many of these challenges are caused by problems outside the Bahamas and yet they wash up on shores.

But Friends, in the last nine months, we have fought our way back.

We are putting our country onto a better path.

I have heard the stories from so many Bahamians, who have worked hard and done everything right.

Yet they are spending years scrapping together and saving towards the dream of home ownership.

Last month I met a couple who, under my Government's housing program, are well on the way to having their dream of home ownership come true.

This strategic priority, to provide accessibility to home ownership, is set out in our campaign document, 'A Blueprint for Change'.

Housing is a basic right for our people.

It is a shared part of our national development.

Under the Leadership of Minister Jobeth Coleby Davis and her team, we have returned to the real business and the heavy lifting of building homes and communities.

Under the present Regulations, concessions are available for those people who purchase a home for the first time.

We are expanding these concessions, so that people who for the first time buy a home, or purchase land and construct their first home, or buy a house and renovate it to be their first home – these people will receive the same level of concession.

My Friends:

Your government is serious about helping Bahamians across the finish line to new homes and new beginnings.

This is why it is indeed such a pleasure, to celebrate this groundbreaking today.

Thank you so very much again, for inviting The Bahamas to pick up the relationship and these discussion, in earnest..

May God continue to bless you all, and may God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.

Thank you.

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