



Office of the
Prime Minister

**STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ON THE PASSING OF HER MAJESTY
QUEEN ELIZABETH THE SECOND BY THE GRACE OF GOD QUEEN OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS AND OF HER OTHER REALMS AND
TERRITORIES QUEEN AND HEAD OF THE COMMONWEALTH**

**HON. PHILIP DAVIS, KC, MP
PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH
OF THE BAHAMAS**

WEDNESDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2022

Mr. Deputy Speaker:

Today's assembly is gathered on this, the most solemn of occasions, to mark the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second, By The Grace of God, Queen Of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas and of Her Other Realms and Territories, Queen and Head of The Commonwealth.

We extend our condolences to His Majesty, King Charles III, and all members of the Royal Family, for whom this moment is at once

profoundly personal, and of great public consequence.

And we acknowledge the presence this morning of His Excellency, Thomas Hartley, the newly-appointed British High Commissioner to The Bahamas, [and his wife Jenny].

You are [both] very welcome.

Here in The Bahamas, the death of our monarch, and the accession of her heir is

both a constitutional and institutional moment of transition.

Institutionally, monarchy part of the fabric of our national life reaching back to the year 1718, when these islands first became a British Crown Colony.

Constitutionally since 1973, when our country became an independent and sovereign nation.

Although I have been in Her Majesty's presence on several occasions, I have not had the pleasure of a private audience.

The accounts of the Bahamians who have met The Queen over the years, accord with the many tributes and testimonies of recent days, from leading voices around the world.

Her Majesty's dedicated commitment to fulfilling her duty, and the warmth, wit, and wisdom with which she did so, are legendary.

How many 25-year-olds can you think of, who would not only take on such weighty responsibilities, but would then discharge

them in such a sustained and dignified way for 70 years?

From every perspective, Queen Elizabeth II was a remarkable woman.

Her Late Majesty's commitment to the Commonwealth is well-known.

In pursuit of her work in promoting better relations amongst all peoples, she has visited over 117 countries, and is estimated to have made journeys which are the equivalent of having circled the earth some 42 times.

The Queen made four official visits to The Bahamas: in 1966, 1977, 1985 and 1994.

Her opening of the new Broadcasting Corporation of The Bahamas in 1977, and the Elizabeth Estates subdivision in 1985, are just two of the legacies of her visits.

But the role that The Queen played in 1985, during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting hosted here in Nassau, was of historic significance.

This was the gathering hosted by the Father of Our Nation, the late Sir Lynden Pindling. Sir Lynden skilfully managed to negotiate The Nassau Accord, an agreement among members of what was then, a deeply divided Commonwealth.

The agreement marked the beginning of the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

This resulted in the liberation of millions of black South Africans, and the release from prison after 27 years, of Nelson Mandela.

Her Majesty's unwavering support and encouragement for the leaders to reach significant agreement, exerted a strong influence on the final accord.

Mr. Deputy Speaker:

As we move forward from the Second Elizabethan Age, it is our hope and expectation, that relations with the United Kingdom will continue to deepen and grow.

On the current line of succession, it will certainly be a generation or more before we see another Queen on the throne.

I am pleased that I have met King Charles III: last year at COP26 in Glasgow, and earlier this year at CHOGM in Kigali, Rwanda.

I was also pleased to host Prince William and his wife Katherine, on their royal visit back in May.

King Charles was an early and vigorous proponent of the need to do something more and better, to protect our environment.

Prince William has followed in his footsteps.

They have both publicly stated their strong support for the work that we are doing here in The Bahamas.

I look forward to the further strengthening of relationship between our two countries, especially in this regard.

Mr. Deputy Speaker:

The passing of Her Late Majesty has prompted pockets of debate about how it might impact any future constitutional arrangements.

That said, I do not think it necessary to begin that conversation while we remain in our Period of Official Mourning.

Once we have paid our final respects, there will be time enough in the future for such discussions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker:

As a nation of the realm, The Bahamas has a privileged position, both during this Period of Official Mourning, and during the Funeral Proceedings.

Our High Commissioner in London, Mr. Ellison Greenslade, was hosted by King Charles at a private reception two days ago.

He also represented us earlier today, by being a member of the small official delegation receiving the Queen's body at Westminster.

And after the State Funeral in London on Monday, I will be representing The Bahamas at the Final Committal of Her Majesty's body at Windsor.

These privileges attest to the fact that the British monarch remains Head of State in The Bahamas, represented by the Governor-General.

Her dignified rule is a hallmark of the past 70 years.

In publicly acknowledging the various challenges of her family life, Queen Elizabeth II also showed us her humanity.

In her generosity in sharing the wisdom accumulated over many years, Queen Elizabeth was a shining example of the timeless virtues of service, discretion, and compassion for all people.

In these turbulent times, we have lost in her, a beacon of constancy and stability.

I have seen ordinary people on television, in several countries, saying how they feel

unexpectedly sad at the passing of a lady they never knew, and in fact, never met.

Even from a distance, somehow she reminded people around the world, of the joy and benefit of being a part of something larger.

For those of us who are people of Faith, we understand The Queen's lifetime of service as part of God's plan.

And so we give God thanks for her life and legacy.

And as we say at times like these, may she
Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory.

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