



REMARKS BY
THE HON. PHILIP DAVIS, M.P., QC,
PRIME MINISTER
ON THE OCCASION OF
HIS CEREMONIAL SWEARING-IN AS
PRIME MINISTER OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 19TH, 2021
BAHA MAR BALLROOM

Your Excellency, the Governor-General; First Lady, Ann Marie Davis, Deputy Prime Minister Elect, I. Chester Cooper and Mrs. Cooper, Honourable and Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I wish to thank the Bahamian people who turned out and voted resoundingly for change.

As I said on Thursday night, you voted with brave hearts, and you voted with hearts full of hope for our country.

It was unfortunate that many Bahamians who wished to participate in this election were not able to do so. It was the first time in modern Bahamian history that so many voters were disenfranchised - and I hope it is the last. The right to vote is the essential right in a democracy.

Our new administration comes into office at a time when the Bahamian people are hurting as never before.

In recent months, as I travelled the length and breadth of our beautiful country, many people

shared with me their stories of hardship and need and despair.

Against that backdrop, we face the many crises borne out of the Covid-19 pandemic: tragic numbers of our people are becoming ill and dying; our hospitals in a state of collapse; our doctors and nurses and other frontline workers pleading for support to shore up our healthcare system.

The economy is also in decline, as we face an historically high deficit and debt. The news of the downgrade yesterday underscores the severity of the fiscal crisis and the urgency of moving quickly to address it.

The challenges in education also deeply concern me. Thousands of young Bahamians have missed out on their education during the past few years, first because of the displacement caused by Hurricane Dorian, then because of the way the Covid-19 crisis has been managed.

These are indeed big challenges.

Some have questioned why we want to serve when the problems are so difficult.

But my team and I offered ourselves for public service precisely because these problems are so difficult – and precisely because we believe that we have the right vision, the right policies, and the right team to take this country forward.

We will not fail if we keep the best interests of the Bahamian people as our guiding north star.

As a young boy growing up in Cat Island, I faced many hardships and obstacles.

I know what it is to be poor.

As a young man trying to find his first job, I faced doors that seemed always slammed shut.

I know what it is to feel disappointment.

As a lawyer trying to build a practice, I missed out on many opportunities because I didn't have the right connections.

I know what it's like to be on the outside looking in.

In my family life, I know the ups and downs of raising children and sending them out into the world.

I am determined to take the wisdom gained from these experiences and use it to help others.

It is possible to overcome.

It is possible to work hard and succeed.

It is possible to forgive.

And it is possible to bring about the changes you wish to see.

These are the values that will inform my decisions in office.

In just under two years 'time, we will celebrate fifty years of The Bahamas being a fully independent, sovereign nation.

We must begin to deliver more purposefully the promise of Independence.

Independence is more than freedom from rule by others.

It is the defining purpose of our country, which says that every one of us is entitled to reach our fullest potential.

And so each day we will ask ourselves:

What can we do to ensure that the aspirations and hopes of the Bahamian people are translated into opportunities and paths to success?

Deep in my heart I know that with God, “all things are possible”.

If we work together, towards a common purpose, in the common interest and for the common good, great things are indeed possible for our country and our people.

But no government can do great things on its own.

I am sure that my government can only succeed if we partner with the Bahamian people.

We are going to listen.

We are going to consult widely.

And we are going to bring people together.

That is the best way to make progress as a nation.

No leader and no government should be isolated from the people.

I also commit to lifting the veil of secrecy on that which has gone before us, so that all of the arrangements under which we have to live are transparent, and those who authored them are accountable.

We will govern in the interests of all Bahamians, not just the privileged few.

We will act in ways that rebuild trust between the government and the Bahamian people.

We will uphold the constitution and the rule of law, and ensure that everyone is treated fairly, so that it's not one rule for one set of people, and another for another set of people.

There is much work to be done; but I know that by working together, we can succeed and build the kind of prosperous, independent Bahamas that our founding fathers dreamed for us.

It will not happen overnight, but with steady progress, we will get there.

I pray God's blessings and guidance upon us all, and in the words of St. Francis, "make us instruments of your peace; where there is discord, let me bring union; where there is doubt, let me bring faith; where there is despair,

let me bring hope; where there is sadness, let me bring joy.”

I thank God for having blessed us with this beautiful country, and the bountiful birthright which we have inherited.

I thank the many people over the years who have supported me to this moment, where I am able to step into servant leadership for the benefit of the Bahamian people.

I thank my family, especially my wife Ann, and my children, my siblings, Alvin, Don, Craig and Trevor, my one and only sister, Diane, who every day continue to give me so much love and support.

And I thank the Bahamian people who have placed their faith and confidence in me and my team.