



MESSAGE
FOR
MR. CARLTON BOWLEG, M.P.
ON THE OCCASION
OF
BAHAMARTS FESTIVAL OPENING CEREMONY
SATURDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 2019
10:00 A.M.
Arawak Cay

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my esteemed pleasure to have been afforded the opportunity to be here with you this morning for this significant occasion.

As you are aware, the BahamArts Festival was designed to promote small scale producers and provide an avenue for them to showcase their art, crafts, souvenirs, clothing, jewelry and packaged and processed food. This festival has become a cultural treat for many locals and tourist alike. Through this medium many artisans, artist and entertainers collaborate to help keep our culture alive.

Your theme, “Bahamian Tings”, is indicative of the vision that our great leader the Most Honorable Prime Minister, Dr. Hubert Minnis, and his team has to stimulate and encourage entrepreneurship for small and medium size businesses. The government is fully committed to investing in the future of small and medium sized enterprises. For this, I am proud to be a part of the present administration.

Since becoming the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, I have gained a deeper

insight and appreciation for the marvelous potential and opportunities that exist in the industries of Handicraft and Arts, Food Processing and the like.

There were some 6.6 million tourists who visited the Bahamas in 2018, which is approximately 17 times the population of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas. If we can ensure that each tourist buys a minimum of a \$10.00 totally Bahamian made goods that would total 66 million U.S dollars per year added to the Bahamian economy.

While we are happy for and grateful to those that invest in our country, my goal has always been this – Bahamians must own the Bahamian economy.

Our ability to produce quality handicraft, arts, souvenirs and processed foods can be tied into our tourist market to produce a huge economic windfall for our artisans. This will in turn enrich the Bahamas.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources along with BAIC has a mandate, which finds itself in the vision of all true nation builders, It is a mandate that when carried out will

ensure that all Bahamians benefit.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources, led by The Hon. Michael Pintard is taking that mandate of creation, expansion and promotion of small to medium sized businesses to a new height. With the evolution of technology we are armed with better science, greater access to education and information, and far greater resources than any previous generation.

The Ministry is fulfilling its role in many aspects. We are creating an enormous amount of opportunities and facilitating training in different fields, all connected to the small business development mandate of our government.

We are also giving our support to light manufacturing and indeed we are seeking to aid every Bahamian in their professional pursuits within this sector.

The Ministry and BAIC are not merely concerned with assisting you in bringing your product to a high quality of market readiness, we are also willing to help you find your

market, hence BahamArts National Festival and Tradeshow.

We are willing to teach you how to manage your business, in a way that guarantees success.

As Parliamentary Secretary, my vision is for every tourist to be sold a Bahamian produced handicraft or souvenir while in the Bahamas. However, I don't expect this to happen overnight and I know there is a process involved, but we cannot remain indifferent in our approach to this potential, sitting right on our door step.

At this moment, I wish to recognize my colleague, Bishop Gregory Collie, Chairman of the Bahamas Agricultural and Industrial Corporation for his role and vision for BAIC's overall development.

He along with his team deserves to be highly commended for the great job they are doing at the Corporation to highlight indigenous Bahamian made products.

I also wish to assure him of my continued support at the Ministry of Agriculture and Marine Resources. We are part of

a team and I am happy to be here to celebrate with him on this occasion.

With that, it is now my pleasure to declare this 16th BahamArts Festival - 2019, officially Open.

Thank you.