



Remarks

by

**Hon. Philip "Brave" Davis, M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister of Public Works & Urban Development**

On the Occasion of

The Progressive Liberal Party's All-Exuma Mini Convention

Saturday, 29th November 2014, 9:30 a.m.
E.C. McKenzie Hall
Ramsey, Exuma Island, The Bahamas

Theme: "Exuma, Your Time is Now!"

Salutations:

Rt. Hon. Perry G. Christie, Prime Minister and Minister of Finance

Cabinet and Parliamentary Colleagues

Mr. Anthony Moss, Member of Parliament for Exuma

Stalwart Councillors

Delegates

All Residents of Exuma

PLPs!!!

Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening...

The New York Times once declared that “The real Exuma is a do-it-yourself place, best discovered with sand between your toes.” I now declare that Exuma is one of the world’s jewels, and as a Government, we will do all that we can to ensure that you remain just that!

I am so happy to see so many of you today – so many, so hopeful, and so eager to embrace the future that Exuma holds for you. We know that Exumians are very hard workers, independent thinkers, focused and creative people who have not lost touch with your ancestry. You are a proud people. For that, I commend you. Notwithstanding your independence and our awareness of your strengths, as a Government, we also know that you cannot do it alone. That is why we are committed to providing the infrastructure, the environment, the services, and improved capacity for human development – not later...now! Exuma, your time is now!

This Government has been busy securing a good outlook for all of us. We have waded through some perilous waters and we have had to make some very tough decisions. Tough, yes they were – tough and absolutely necessary. When the PLP left office in 2007, The Bahamas was on course for great things.

Particularly, in Exuma, we commissioned reverse osmosis plants in George Town and Staniel and Farmers Cays so that all residents have access to pure running water for drinking, cooking, bathing and preservation of health. We also commissioned a new power station and new transmission/distribution power lines have been constructed to bring reliable supplies of energy to residents, Emerald Bay, and the other touristic projects. We brought BTC’s GSM and I-Connect services via a Fibre Optic Cable Network. In other words, Exuma, your Government worked to ensure that you had the same amenities afforded to residents of New Providence.

Since our re-election, though we have had some tough challenges, we have taken them head on because tough is what strengthens our resolve to work hard for you.

Exuma, we are working hard for you in the Ministry of Works! We have completed structural engineering projects to include the refurbishments to **Georgetown Dock** in Exuma, and the completion of remedials to the **Ferry Dock Bridge** in Exuma. We have also completed repairs to the seawalls that were devastated by hurricanes.

We are making progress by advancing the **Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)-Funded feasibility studies** into the new **Port** and the new **North to South By-Pass Highway for Georgetown**. Additionally, the Tenders Board has recently endorsed my officers' recommendations for the award of consultancy contracts for feasibility studies into those proposals. These consultancy contracts have a total value of approximately \$720,000. We look forward to timely execution of the feasibility studies to enable us to proceed to construction during the budget year 2015/2016.

When I gave my contribution to the budget debate earlier this year, I mentioned the fiscal challenges that we face. I also committed to cause my Ministry to do the best that we can with what we have. During the fourth quarter of this budget year, we will turn our attention to **maintenance and rehabilitation of Family Island** key airports including that in George Town.

We are addressing the Regatta Committee's request for reclamation and other works for the expansion of activities. We are keenly aware of the key role that the Regatta plays in Exuma's economic engine. This matter is being given urgent attention. Exuma, your time is now!

Farmer's Cay! Our engineers are diligently preparing a scope of works to construct a dock to replace the one that has collapsed. For you, we know that dock is essential to the transport of people and cargo. We are working for you!

Black Point! There is a great hill in Black Point that resulted from an even greater source of contention. But even the Bible tells you that "weeping may endure for a day, but joy comes in the morning". A new day is dawning, Black Point! The Harvard Graduate School of Design is partnering with Government to build a new health centre in your community. That mountain of fill will be used to assist its construction. Our engineers have been assigned to work with the school to design a facility that you will all appreciate.

My Ministry is also working on designs for a clinic and dock in Staniel Cay.

Delegates, Exumians, PLPs, we are readying to bring **Urban Renewal 2.0 to Exuma**. Your caring Government has established and strengthened this batch of programmes with the goal of engaging young people in positive activities, alleviating poverty, preventing and arresting destructive, antisocial behaviour, and addressing the environmental and psychological influences that contribute to crime and criminality. Unfortunately, even the Family Islands are not immune to these challenges.

Urban Renewal will bring with it all of the programmes, projects, and components available in New Providence, Grand Bahama, Abaco, and Cat Island. ALL components, including the Small Home Repairs Project. The direct investment of the Small Home Repairs Project will employ contractors and individuals, and inject substantial funds into the local economy. Further, qualified homeowners will be able to make critical repairs when otherwise, it would not have been possible.

Fellow Delegates, you have my personal commitment and that of my Ministry, to do all that we can to bringing relief to those that need it the most. We commit to doing what is right and good regardless of what others say or do. We have to start from somewhere. Staying true to ourselves and standing up for our beliefs, we start here! Exuma, your time is now!

PLP!!!