

# Closing Remarks for the 15<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations United Periodic Review

## *Introduction*

Excellencies, Members of the Human Rights Council, Representatives of Civil Society, Ladies and Gentlemen—Good Afternoon.

## *The Thanks*

We express many thanks to the Troika selected for The Bahamas, the distinguished Representatives of Costa Rica, Gabon and Pakistan, for their support, cooperation and insight into the UPR process. We also acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Mr. Mohammad Abu-Harthieh, his staff, and Colleagues in the Caribbean, American and Treaty Divisions for the assistance rendered to The Bahamas' Delegation during this process.

## **The Process**

On behalf the Honourable Z.C. Allyson Maynard Gibson, Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, I also wish to extend my deep thanks and appreciation to all Council Members and Stakeholders who had the interest, and took the time, to participate in this critically important Review for The Bahamas. As the Head of our Delegation

in her Opening Statement elucidated, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) emphasises and reinforces the significance of international collaboration and, more essentially, accountability. This exercise of self-evaluation, consequently, highlights culture, values, the efficacy of values in relation to their abandonment or abuse, as well as progress, and, the mindset of prevention, as a guarantor, in relation to Human Rights.

The Bahamas is, and always has been, committed to ensuring full Human Rights to all persons living in and visiting her shores. The Bahamas looks forward to active, immediate and full review of all Recommendations, with a view to responding as soon as possible.

The Bahamas, however, would wish to avail herself of this opportunity to refer briefly to the Report of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the Carmichael Road Detention. We would wish, in this regard, to remind that significant steps are in progress to respond fully and formally to the UNHCR Report. It is envisaged that this Report will be forthcoming, at the latest, by the end of June of this year.

In addition, as previously stated in The Bahamas' Opening Remarks, the

Government will be instituting mechanisms to formalise implementation of Conventions and Reporting mandates to improve the overall reporting process for The Bahamas.

The founders of the United Nations responded to the horrors of the Second World War, by not only emphasising Human Rights in the United Nations Charter, but by establishing, in the very

first words of the Charter, that the primary beneficiaries of the rights, privileges and obligations under the Charter, are not the acknowledged key actors in the international environment, sovereign States, but, **“We the Peoples...”** Additionally, the 1968 Declaration of Teheran which synthesises the major strategic tenants for the enjoyment of Human Rights underscores, *inter alia*, that the “achievement of lasting progress in the



implementation of human rights is dependent upon sound and effective national and international policies of economic and social development”, as well as, the “urgent” promotion of “education at all levels” [Articles 13 and 14].

The fundamental and unwavering commitment of The Bahamas to Human Rights, is evidenced, both in the birth pangs of our Nation and in our

Constitution. Bahamas Independence has been characterised by one of her 'Founding Mothers', the late Dame Doris Johnson, as "*The Quiet Revolution*". Her book, with the same title, has been described as, quote: "the first historical-political story of this beautiful island country". Her concluding charge in this book was, and I quote:

*"...Let it be the national hope that Bahamians can continue to witness, with God's help, to the power of the human*

*intellect to change unwanted conditions without violence or bloodshed. Let the world continue to watch and take courage from the results of the quiet revolution in The Bahamas. Let the tiny island country, lifted at last to the peak of independence, continue to be a refuge and haven of peace in a world so sadly torn by futile wars among men who were meant to be brothers. And finally, let there be complete freedom **for our people in an independent***

***Commonwealth of The Bahamas!***”

[1972, page 154]

## **Conclusion**

Our People and their welfare are paramount on the minds and the plans of the Government, and we can assure you, that the preservation of the dignity and honour of each citizen, is the force that drives us daily, to work, effectively and diligently.

I refer to the words from our *National Anthem*, which states, and I quote:

“...see how the **world marks the manner of your bearing**, pledge to excel in love and unity, pressing onward, march together, to a common lofty goal, ‘til the road you trod, leads unto your God. March on Bahama Land.”

It is our desire to march in a way that always promotes excellence.

Mr. President, I thank you.

