



**BRIEF REMARKS**

*by*

**T. DESMOND BANNISTER, M.P.,  
MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

*on the occasion of:*

*Cape Eleuthera Island School's Conference  
"Small Island Sustainability"*

*at*

**Cape Eleuthera Island School  
Eleuthera, The Bahamas**

**10:00 a.m.**

**20th February 2010**

***Salutations:***

1. Hon. Brent Symonette –Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of  
Foreign Affairs
2. Hon. Earl Deveaux –Minister of Environment
3. Hon. Byran Woodside –Minister of State for Lands & Local  
Government
4. Hon. Oswald Ingraham –M.P. for South Eleuthera
5. Hon. Lynn Holowesko –Speaker for the Senate
  
6. Governor Christine Todd Whitman – President of the Whitman  
Strategy Group
  
7. Mr. Ronald Thompson –Permanent Secretary, Ministry of  
Environment
  
8. Mr. Lionel Sands –Director of Education
9. Mrs. Karla Cosgriff –Cape Eleuthera Institute
10. Mrs. Gloria Bain – Senior Island Administrator
11. Mr. Eric Carey –Bahamas National Trust Executive Director
12. All Stakeholders

***Good Morning!***

I am delighted to join the **Cape Eleuthera Island School** for this conference on “**Small Island Sustainability.**” You recently celebrated your tenth anniversary, and on behalf of the Government of The Bahamas, I would wish to thank you for your outstanding contributions in the promotion of sustainable development of our nation. You have truly demonstrated both locally and globally that The Bahamas is more than just sun, sand and sea.

Globalization has brought many changes to our shores. We have noted major developments in the areas of technology, education, medicine and in the environment. In many instances, we have been forced to raise our standards, and to improve the way we operate in order that we might successfully compete in the global marketplace. We have also had our eyes opened by groups such as the Cape Eleuthera Foundation to the vast potential that our natural resources can provide.

Due to the global economic downturn, we have had to become more diverse and creative in our thinking, which has led us to embrace collaborations with offshore entities. For this reason, we once again reaffirm our commitment to the

goals of this public/private partnership and we wholeheartedly look forward to the benefits of a sustainable future for Eleuthera, The Bahamas and beyond.

The work of the Island School touches four areas that are key to our survival. These comprise:

**(a) Energy:**

- *Through use of the sun and wind, electricity is produced*
- *Bio-diesel is created from waste vegetable oil which successfully prevents the release of carbon dioxide into our atmosphere*

**(b) Building & Restoration:**

- *Incorporation of green building techniques such as timberframing, and living roofs*
- *Utilization of local materials such as casurina*

**(c) Water:**

- *Collecting of rainwater in the practice of conservation techniques*
- *Processing of waste water*

**(d) Food:**

- *Raising of marine fish in an offshore aquaculture cage*
- *Use of permaculture concepts to raise perennial crops and animals*

We are all aware of the threat to our marine environment due to the presence of the non-indigenous Lionfish which is native to the Indo-Pacific region. It is good to know that the Island School has taken on the challenge of studying the negative effect this fish is having on our reefs. I do not think any Bahamian relishes the thought of the permanent loss of the spiny lobster, grouper, or queen triggerfish forever. For this reason, we look forward to learning much more from the data, and perhaps determining ways to better protect our marine life that fall prey to the Lionfish.

In addition to finding ways to preserve and protect our marine life, I am advised that the Island School also monitors our rising sea levels. This is yet another development which is being attributed to global warming. We are aware that our native bonefish thrive in the mangroves, and that an increase in the salinity level of the water can have dire consequences on both the mangroves and on the local fish species. We applaud your work in this area and look forward to the results of our continued research.

Education is a critical factor in The Bahamas' ability to sustain itself. We, at the Ministry of Education, therefore,

take our mission of *providing all persons in The Bahamas an opportunity to receive an education that will equip them with the beliefs, attitudes, knowledge and skills required for work and life in a democratic society* very seriously. Through various initiatives and programmes which we have embarked upon, we hope to effectively meet the needs of our students so that they may have every opportunity to maximize their learning and achievement levels. We are always pleased when our students are able to *achieve their dreams through excellence in education*.

Deep Creek Middle School, which comprises grades seven through nine, was founded in 2001 by the Cape Eleuthera Foundation. This is another great example of how the Government of The Bahamas through the Ministry of Education has united with a private entity in the best interest of our youth. I am pleased to learn that the students which number forty two (42) in total are remaining focused on their education which is evident by such accomplishments as:

- School wide GPA of 3.0;
- 37% of students being named to the Honour Roll with a GPA of 3.3 or higher;
- 50% of grade eight students being named to the Honour Roll;

- Overall improvement of reading levels;
- Students being able to meet and in some instances surpass a passing grade on 76% of the total BJC tests taken in 2007.

I encourage the school's administrators, teachers and students to continue to work together so that you may realize even more success in the coming months and years.

I commend the Cape Eleuthera Foundation for achieving excellent gains over the past ten years in areas such as:

- (a) **Educational Tourism** which generates money as visitors come to see what the Island School is all about;
- (b) **Bahamian Student Opportunities** which are augmented by the Foundation's donation of \$450,000 plus to the Bahamas Environmental Steward Scholars (BESS), and the Deep Creek Middle School (DCMS).
- (c) **Hiring Local Talent** which helps our economy as the products and services of our local citizens are utilized.
- (d) **Contributions to Bahamian Economy** which was estimated to be at \$1.8 million last year.
- (e) **Protecting Bahamian Resources** through research that would bolster The Bahamas both economically and ecologically.

(f) ***Focus on Bahamian Food Security*** which is being done through aquaculture, aquaponics and permaculture in the provision of sustainable food.

(g) ***Outreach and Community Impact*** which involves networking with the local communities to enhance prosperity.

We are grateful for the contributions of the Cape Eleuthera Foundation, and know that your work extends well beyond the activities and programmes which I have mentioned. It is said that the challenges of environment, energy, and education mandates that no small state can afford to exist in isolation. Therefore, I encourage you to continue to assist us in our growth and to keep abreast of the latest developments worldwide so that our nation might be better positioned to meet its challenges in this ever changing world.

Once again I applaud the Cape Eleuthera Foundation, and the dedicated administrators and teachers who provide excellent leadership for our students. The work you do with building their confidence, skills, and values cannot be understated. To all policy makers, business leaders, resort developers, philanthropists, and stakeholders in general, we

thank you for your contributions this far, and look forward to your continued support.

Your goal for this conference is to create an action plan to articulate what is needed for a sustainable Eleuthera. I am certain, however, you will achieve your goal through productive feedback, networking, sharing of ideas, questioning, and discussions that will go on here today. Therefore, in conclusion I extend best wishes to you for continued success.