



BRIEF REMARKS

by

HONOURABLE DR. HUBERT A. MINNIS, M.P.,

MINISTER OF HEALTH

on the occasion of the:

The 3rd Annual Hospitality Conference

at the:

**Geoffrey Brown Auditorium
Queen's College High School
Village Road
Nassau, The Bahamas**

25th, October 2010

9:30 a.m.

GREETINGS & SALUTATIONS:

Mr. Frank J. Comito – Executive Vice President,
Bahamas Hotel Association

Dr. Larry Rice – Vice-President, Johnson & Wales University

Mr. Derek R. Whyms, Chairman,
Bahamas – Johnson & Wales University Advisory Board

Administrators and Staff, Queen's College High School

Distinguished Presenters

Teachers, parents and Students

Good Morning!

On the occasion of the **3rd Annual Student Hospitality Conference**, it is my pleasure to greet you the organizers, the presenters and the smart and talented students drawn from our public and private schools.

Firstly, let me state that I am impressed by your theme for it immediately tells me that you are creative individuals who think out of the box. Your intriguing theme asks ***“How Strong is Your Parachute...How Soft Will Your Landing Be...Will a Commitment to Life-Long Learning Help?”***

Your arresting theme forces one to stop and break it down beginning with the phrase ***“How Strong is Your Parachute...”*** Hmmmmmm, ***How Strong IS Your Parachute...*** A parachute, as you know, is an umbrella like apparatus used in descending safely through the air from a great height. Let's pause for a moment and imagine dropping from a great height, higher than the tallest building in Nassau, perhaps out of a Bahamasair flight...and immediately the question comes to mind, ***How Soft Will Your Landing Be...*** Indeed, how does one achieve a soft landing? The answer clearly is only through preparation and

training can one achieve the feat of a soft landing, a landing that is injury free.

That kind of preparation and training is ongoing and can be equated to the commitment to lifelong learning that life in the twenty-first century demands.

Lifelong learner...yes. Do not allow yourself to feel alarmed or threatened by the term lifelong learner, but rather embrace it. I'll give you a brief example. I don't know if your parents know how to text or not, but at my age, for me to be able to exchange text messages with my son, I had to be open to learning a new skill...to use a mode of communication that did not exist when I was your age...Learning to text was possible because I am a committed lifelong learner.

Every single one of you will live and function in a technology driven world that I can't begin to imagine and to successfully compete in the global arena you have to be a committed lifelong learner as you theme suggests.

This also leads to the question what does the future hold for The Bahamas? The answer lies within each of you, the industry leaders of tomorrow. Will tourism continue to be lucrative for The Bahamas? Again the answer rests with you. However, thanks to conferences such as this, you, our students, are being prepared to become enlightened decision makers.

That is evident by the exposure to the many hospitality career opportunities this conference will afford as well as the various presentation that were designed especially for you.

The presentations will include:

- Hospitality Careers & You;
- How to find Fulfillment through Education & your Career;
- How to Manage Relationships;
- Sports Entertainment & Events Management; and
- Fashion & Merchandizing;

Your teachers and I encourage you to listen attentively to the well qualified local and international presenters, ask relevant questions, share ideas, analyze, and take notes, so that you leave more enlightened than when you arrived.

Remember, tourism is a highly competitive market that demands quality services and products. This in turn demands a trained, skilled workforce. We must understand that the beauty of our islands alone is not enough to keep us the front runner. Rather, the beauty of our islands has to be coupled with quality service and the right attitude.

I repeat... the right attitude coupled with the knowledge that **Tourism is everybody's business.**

Yes, everybody's business beginning with the first person who greets the visitor , the immigration officer, the taxi cab driver who transports the visitor to his / her hotel, the hotel doorman, the front desk receptionist who checks in the guest and so on.

Tourism is everybody's business including the thoughtless individual who throws litter from his car, such as KFC boxes, beer bottles, empty plastic bottles, on the side of the road, the very same road that the taxi cab driver drove the tourist on from the airport.

Tourism is everybody's business including the person who refuses to spay or neuter his dog which roams unchecked in packs sometimes attacking visitors and locals alike.

Tourism is everybody's business including the students who must go downtown after school to catch a bus and sometimes carry on in an unseemly manner in front of everyone including visitors who often capture their antics on camera.

Tourism is everybody's business including the selfish individuals who dare to rob or harm our visitors. Given today's technology their negative actions are immediately transmitted worldwide and let's face it would you travel to a destination where you do not feel safe.

Yes **Tourism is everybody's business** and you students are our industry leaders of tomorrow and participation in this conference place you in preparation mode. I commend you for your participation in this conference and wish you every success in your pursuit of lifelong learning and the realization of your goals. For as an unknown author states

“Today’s preparation determines tomorrow’s achievement”.

I also commend the Ministry of Education and its partners; Johnson & Wales University (North Miami Campus), the Bahamas Hotel Association, and Queen’s College. Thank you for putting on this event. Thanks you for the exposure you are affording our students in terms of the diverse careers the industry offers and the educational opportunities available through Johnson & Wales University.

Johnson & Wales’ mission statement reads: **To empower its diverse student body to succeed in today’s dynamic world by integrating general education, professional and career-focused education.”** We at the Ministry of Education find this to be complimentary to our own mission which seeks: **To provide 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 ad life in a democratic society, guided by Christian values.”**

We are united in our goal that our students who pursue studies in the Hospitality Industry will gain valuable knowledge and skills in communication, business, culinary arts, and technology – skill sets that will match with the right attitudes.

Ladies and gentlemen, students, this is most timely forum and once again I offer congratulations and best wishes for a successful conference.