

**ADDRESS BY THE HON. C.V. HOPE STRACHAN**

**MINISTER OF STATE MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND AVIATION**

**GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE CELEBRATION OF THE PEOPLES NATIONAL PARTY –  
JAMAICA 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2013**

I wish to thank you for inviting us from the Progressive Liberal Party in The Bahamas. I wish to extend to you on behalf of the Leader of the Progressive Liberal Party and the Prime Minister Perry Christie our warmest congratulations on your 75th anniversary as a party. This is a great occasion. We share the pleasure in it and in particular what it says about the traditions of democracy in the region and the role the party has played in the deepening of democracy throughout the region.

The Progressive Liberal Party of which I am member and who I represent today is going to mark its 60th anniversary on 23rd November 2013. Our party was founded in 1953. Legend has it that the founder of the PLP, my party, were coming back from the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 and before returning home stopped in Jamaica to have a chat with the then Leaders of the PNP about the formation of a political party. There were then no political parties in The Bahamas. Armed with that information, the founders of the PLP went home to Nassau

and within months had founded the Progressive Liberal Party which like you today is the governing party of The Bahamas.

I wish therefore on this night as you celebrate this glorious anniversary to mark that seminal event in our party's history and say thank you to the leaders of your party for their assistance in the political development of The Bahamas.

The history of Jamaica and The Bahamas and our mutual political development are intertwined at many junctures.

You may know that the founding Prime Minister of The Bahamas Sir Lynden O. Pindling was the son of a Jamaican policeman who emigrated to the Bahamas and married a Bahamian woman.

You may also know that legal luminaries such as the late Vivian Blake defended the founder of our Labour movement Sir Randol Fawkes when he was charged by the authorities with sedition.

Mr. Blake later served as Chief Justice of The Bahamas.

You may recall that former Prime Minister P J Patterson during his time as an advocate was a familiar face in The Bahamas. You may recall that the late Dudley Thompson was an associate with the firm of the late Sir Lynden Pindling our founding Prime Minister and was a familiar face

in our country up to the time of his death gracing us with his presence as recently as 2010 when he spoke at our Emancipation Day ceremonies that year. You may know that other prominent Jamaicans like the late Rex Nettleford helped to shape as he would have called it "the ethos" of our nation. Most recently our Prime Minister spoke at the Lloyd Barnett Lecture held in Nassau.

Perhaps though the most significant assistance your country gave us was when in 1980 the six week old Royal Bahamas Defence Force faced its first crisis. Cuban Migs sunk the HMBS Flamingo and four of our Marines lost their lives. Then Prime Minister Michael Manley and the Foreign Minister Dudley Thompson were instrumental in helping to resolve the dispute with the Cuban government over the issue.

So we and you have had close ties. Those ties continue today. Many Bahamians go to school here at the University of the West Indies and at the University of the Northern Caribbean.

Recently our Prime Ministers met at the Heads of Government conference in Trinidad and Tobago and agreed to deepen the exchanges between our two countries. In pursuance of that there was a recent visit by the Agriculture and Education Ministers to Jamaica to look at some

of your programmes. We do not believe in inventing the wheel when sister Caricom countries can share their experiences.

The PNP and the PLP share a history as nationalist parties. We believe in the national development of our people, dedicated to lifting up the ordinary man and woman, eliminating poverty and ignorance, wiping every tear from every eye.

I wish to congratulate particularly Mrs. Portia Simpson Miller for the pioneering role which she is playing for women in the region by lifting up by her example the possibility for all women in the region.

It is against that backdrop, an illustrious history in Jamaica of taking your nation to higher heights that I am pleased to represent my party and the government of The Bahamas here today. I thank you for inviting us and we will take away fond memories of this event and important milestone in our history.

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