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Government to ensure success of Urban Renewal Programme

By Matt Maura
Bahamas Information Services

NASSAU, The Bahamas --- The Urban Renewal Programme 2.0 will be a success because the Government of The Bahamas cannot afford for it to fail - considering the many social ills impacting the country, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and Urban Renewal, the Hon. Philip Davis said Thursday.

Mr. Davis said the Programme is already reaping numerous benefits for a number of Bahamian communities and is assisting the Government in addressing many of the socio-economic challenges impacting the nation - despite being launched just four, short, months ago.

“There will be critics and yes, mistakes will be made, but we will succeed because the need is real and we are committed to providing help where it is needed,” Mr. Davis said. “Each citizen who lives in any of the communities to which Urban Renewal has turned its attention to in the past four months can point to the fruits of the labour. Abandoned and/or dilapidated buildings hiding criminal activities have been torn down; derelict vehicles that were used by criminals and vermin alike to hide contraband or make rats’ nests have been removed.

“Overgrown and garbage-strewn properties have been cleaned and made useable by citizens again. These are some of the immediate gains communities have netted as a result of the Urban Renewal Programme,” Mr. Davis added.

Addressing the Official Launch of the Urban Renewal Citizens Advisory Committee initiative at the Paul H. Farquharson Centre, Mr. Davis said Urban Renewal is an effort by the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to renew communities.

The Deputy Prime Minister said each citizen, in each of the communities that have been positively impacted by the Programme, and those that will be positively impacted by the programme in the future, “must be a part of protecting the gains made and keeping clean the communities in which they live.”

“They must be sure to tell the police of things that bother them and their safety,” Mr. Davis said. “We are all part of the effort, and our combined energy will be the impetus guiding us to success.

“This is the plain and simple fact. There are many ways to make a difference. We each have to choose what we will do and how we will do it,” he added.

The Deputy Prime Minister said 10 years ago, Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Perry G. Christie launched the Urban Renewal Programme during Mr. Christie's first administration, as a means to make local communities safe.

The Programme, Mr. Davis said, brought the Police back into the neighbourhoods as "caring partners" in the prevention of criminal activities; as partners in solving crimes, and as partners in helping to make communities safer places to live.

"This is what Community Policing is all about," Mr. Davis said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said the initiative also allowed Social Workers from the Department of Social Services, Ministry of Social Services and other government agencies to work even more closely in distressed communities.

"That first programme was a success and this programme will be a success as well. It will be a success because we cannot afford for it to fail," Mr. Davis added.

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- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and Urban Development, the Hon. Philip Davis addressing the Official Launch of the Urban Renewal Citizens Advisory Committee initiative, September 13, at the Paul H. Farquharson Conference Centre, Police Headquarters. Mr. Davis thanked the members of the respective Advisory Committees for volunteering to make a difference in their various communities. **(BIS Photo/Derek Smith)**