

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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*Prime Minister to champion cause
for disabled children in Urban Renewal*

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NASSAU, The Bahamas - Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Perry Christie has challenged the Urban Renewal 2.0 Citizens Advisory Committees to identify all disabled children in the communities so that their needs can be properly addressed.

The Prime Minister, whose son Adam is autistic, threw out the challenge during the Appointment Ceremony of the Urban Renewal 2.0 Citizens Advisory Committees at the Paul H. Farquharson Conference Centre on Thursday, September 13, 2012.

One of the challenges he threw out was to identify all disabled children in the communities and what their needs are.

“We need to help to form public policy to deal with this problem, then we can put in place the strategy to deal with it. It is what I am committed to doing. No politics. The parents don’t have it. I am making sure we can do it,” the Prime Minister said.

In July 2012, a Citizens Advisory Committee (URCAC) was established in all of the 10 Urban Renewal areas. The committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the various centres as a workgroup of community members who are passionate about the well-being of their whole community and understand the importance of engaging others in addressing issues that impact the quality of life in neighbourhoods.

The advisory committee is to inform the Urban Renewal Centres of community problems and concerns; to assist in educating the community-at-large about the function and role of the centres; to assist in developing an active citizen-police partnership for the prevention of crime; to represent neighbourhood residents to ensure their concerns and issues are addressed, amongst other things.

The URCAC consists of 12 to 15 citizens from throughout the community who represent a range of interests and experience. Members are from diverse backgrounds, including business, education, non-profit, public relations, faith community, and more.

The Prime Minister said that his government is close to a breakthrough in two issues facing the country. One, the economy and joblessness and the other, the question of crime. Both, he said are incubators for crime.

“The Government has a relevant function today, which is to find ways to improve the level of unemployment and put together strategies to reduce the level and fear of crime in the country,” he said.

If the urban renewal programme is to be successful, the police have to obey a commitment from the commissioner and play a major role in the execution of the Urban Renewal Programme. “The police by their profession are exposed to a diverse group of people. They have to try and be all things all people as much as possible,” he said.

The Prime Minister said he is committed to utilising the services of the Police Force because he knows they can deliver.

He noted that because of politics, the question of whether urban renewal is a good programme has come up. But he said that any programme that can empower a population to better equip their lives is beneficial to the country.

To the question of whether police are needed in the schools, he said it is no accident that there is a history of violence in some of the nation's schools, particularly on New Providence. He said the police know when to withdraw their services from the schools based on the results they get from being there.

“We have determined that we are not going to let lawlessness impact this country in a negative way. We are not going to compromise with that. There is no short cut,” the Prime Minister said. He then warned young men to be careful when they point a gun in the face of a police officer – that they might get killed.

In this vein, he said, “Any kind of mentoring programme the Urban Renewal can provide, gives the children an understanding that there is a better way.”

“You are going to have to be the eyes and ears for the programme; you are going to have to make it work,” he told the police.

Regarding finance, the Prime Minister said a lot of money is being spent to ensure that the programme works. There will also be accountability in the process, he added.

The 10 Urban Renewal Centres are Fort Charlotte, headed by Inspector Densil Barr, Bain and Grant's Town West, headed by Inspector Anthony Rolle, Bain and Grant's Town East, headed by Woman Inspector Frankie Mather; Pinewood, headed by Inspector Virgil Cenatus; Nassau Village, headed by Inspector Kirk Douglas, Englerston East, headed by Inspector Roderick McKenzie, Englerston West headed by Inspector Bradley Pratt, Kemp Road headed by Inspector Kendal Smith, Fox Hill headed by Inspector Alvin Munroe and Centreville headed by Inspector Ricardo Richardson.

– The Rt. Hon. Perry Christie, Prime Minister addressing the Appointment Ceremony of the Urban Renewal 2.0 Citizens Advisory Committees at the Paul H Farquharson Conference Centre September 13. (BIS Photo/Derek Smith)

The Appointment Ceremony of the Urban Renewal 2.0 Citizens Advisory Committees was held at the Paul H Farquharson Conference Centre September 13. Pictured from left are the Rt. Hon. Perry Christie, Prime Minister; the Hon. Philip Brave Davis, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Works and Urban Development; the Hon. Andre Rollins, Member of Parliament for Fort Charlotte; and Algernon Allen, Co-chairperson, Urban Renewal Commission. (BIS Photo/Derek Smith)

The Rt. Hon. Perry Christie, Prime Minister interacts with the Urban Renewal Youth Marching Band at the Appointment Ceremony of the Urban Renewal 2.0 Citizens Advisory Committees at the Paul H. Farquharson Conference Centre September 13. (BIS Photo/Derek Smith)