

**Annual High-Level Conference for South-South Cooperation and Sustainable
Development
Hong Kong
13th-14th April 2014**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

It is an honour to be here.

I thank the conveners of this high level conference and its organizers. I thank our host city for all the arrangements they have put in place for a generous welcome and excellent hospitality.

The Bahamas identifies with the goals of this conference. It is critical as we review the most recent report on climate change and its effects that we push this agenda. It is becoming ever more urgent for the very survival of small island developing states. The financial costs are ever increasing. Yet the demands of our people are greater than ever for education, and for equity.

On 30 May 2013, the High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda released "A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development", a report which sets out a universal agenda to eradicate extreme poverty from the face of the earth by 2030, and deliver on the promise of sustainable development. The report calls upon the world to rally around a new Global Partnership that offers hope and a role to every person in the world. In the report, **the Panel called for the new post-2015 goals to drive five big transformative shifts:**

i) **Leave No One Behind.** After 2015 we should move from reducing to ending extreme poverty, in all its forms. We should ensure that no person – regardless of ethnicity, gender, geography, disability, race, sexual orientation or other status – is denied basic economic opportunities and human rights.

ii) **Put Sustainable Development at the Core.** We have to integrate the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability. We must act now to slow the alarming pace of climate change and environmental degradation, which pose unprecedented threats to humanity.

iii) **Transform Economies for Jobs and Inclusive Growth.** More diversified economies, with equal opportunities for all, can drive social inclusion, especially for young people, and foster sustainable consumption and production patterns.

iv) **Build Peace and Effective, Open and Accountable Institutions for All.** Calling for a fundamental shift – to recognize peace and good governance as a core element of wellbeing, not an optional extra.

v) **Forge a New Global Partnership.** A new spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability must underpin the post-2015 agenda. This new partnership should be based on a common understanding of our shared humanity, based on mutual respect and mutual benefit. It should be centered around people, including those affected by poverty and exclusion, women, youth, the aged, disabled persons, and indigenous peoples. It should include civil society organizations, multilateral institutions, local and national governments, the scientific and academic community, businesses, and private philanthropy.

There was also a call for a **data revolution** for sustainable development, with a new international initiative to improve the quality of statistics and information available to citizens.

We embrace and adopt all of these goals in the report on the Global Partnership. There is no turning back.

Our region is dedicated to the goals.

The country therefore proposes the following:

The Bahamas should actively participate in the elaboration of the post-2015 development framework. The Bahamas is a member of the Open Working Group on the development of the SDGs.

The Bahamas is considering contributing to the UNDP and its associated funds and programmes, in order to demonstrate the Country's commitment to the UN development agenda and its operational activities. The Bahamas stands to benefit from more direct participation with these funds and programmes in the way of technical assistance and information sharing in the post-2015 context.

South-South Cooperation could complement these effort. South-South cooperation is a useful addition to the traditional modes of cooperation; they should be seen as complementary to them.

I wish to mention the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and its recently approved Strategic Framework 2014-2017, particularly as it relates to the agency's activities around leveraging the rising volume of partnerships, technologies, networks and practical solutions to our sustainable development challenges.

The Bahamas will be looking to increasing the benefits of its UN membership, particularly in the areas of: aid; resources; technical assistance and UN staffing Posts, especially at the higher echelons of international Secretariats.

The Bahamas will conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to analyze the resources needed to achieve the MDGs and develop a plan that outlines how the Country could utilise the UN to achieve the MDGs by 2015. Given the most recent report on climate change, that needs assessment will also include the monies that will be needed to ameliorate the expected effects of higher tides, rougher seas, more intense rains and more severe storms and droughts. The building of sea defences and the like are a major priority in a country where 80 per cent of the land is said to be one metre or below.

Financing for development continues to be vexing problem especially since our countries in the region are plagued by the insistence on GDP per capita as the measure for the availability of that assistance. We again urge less use of this as a policy instrument.

In the meantime, we are looking toward private public partnerships in order to move the country forward toward development.

Finally, we wish to address the digital divide. ICT is key to the development of a modern and progressive state. It is good for development and good for governance. The main telecommunications player was privatized in our country but the results have been uneven and universally disappointing in terms of the quality of service and the delivery of the product. We believe that this will be modified now that competition is available, the pernicious monopoly has ended and there is an open market for other telecommunications to enter our markets. We are dedicated to improving access to telecommunications and to the internet.

Once again I thank you for this forum.