

### Climate Change and Its Possible Security Implications in the Bahamas

It is worth noting that the vulnerability of The Bahamas as well as other CARICOM Member States mirrors that of the Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The vulnerability stems from its geographical isolation from markets and limited internal markets, its small size and limited natural resources, its vulnerability to external economic and financial shocks, its high dependence on imported goods and services, its poor infrastructure (roads, public utilities), and environmental, because of its size, its geographical dispersion, natural disasters (cyclones, flooding, drought, hurricanes, etc.), its high dependence on non-renewable resources (coral reefs, forests, fisheries, etc.), and limited natural resources and depletion of non-renewable resources. We can also add the fact that we produce very little of our own food and other necessities, and depend heavily on the importation of fossil fuels for energy supplies.

Climate Change from a national security perspective, has the potential to affect the lives of Bahamians through increased food insecurity, freshwater shortages, increased natural disasters through the spread of disease, by creating conflict over loss of property due to ground subsidence, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events, and other security interests such as migration of populations from environmentally sensitive areas, the depletion of our fisheries resources, and an increase in the number of refugees. In addition, hurricanes are likely to also further stress and weaken the coral reef systems that play a vital role in dissipating the wave energy of tropical processes that are naturally weaker in our coastal zones.

The Bahamas is already experiencing many of the adverse impact of climate change and based on the available scientific consensus we can expect more frequent and intense impacts over time. In order to prepare itself, the Bahamas is undertaking a detailed analysis of the likely impact of climate change to address the effects on security. Already, analyses have been done on the water, issue of energy sustainability. Research efforts are planned to understand the food security issues and to secure supplies.

We are making concerted efforts to achieve the millennium development goals of eradicating poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; and ensuring sustainable development. A national development strategy is planned.

We now seek global partnerships to make the technological and behavioral transition to a low carbon economy. Equally important is access to financial and technological resources to assist us to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, such as rising sea level, and to improve the quality and intensity of tropical processes.

An international response that includes defensive measures such as greater protection against flooding and sea level surges is urgently needed to address and avert the adverse effects of climate change. It is essential to secure a global framework of climate change commitments for the period after 2012 to achieve quantifiable reductions in global carbon emissions to meet global energy needs in a sustainable way.

Finally, The Bahamas would like to see the continuation of the dialogue between the Caribbean and other vulnerable developing countries, as well as support from the sustainable development efforts of SIDS vulnerable to the security and other implications of climate change.