



The  
*Bahamas*

**STATEMENT  
BY**

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MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
AND THE PUBLIC SERVICE  
OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**AT THE  
FIFTY-NINTH SESSION  
OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

**30 SEPTEMBER 2004**

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Mr. President,

1. It is my honour to congratulate you on your election to the Presidency of this the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly, on behalf of the Prime Minister, Government and people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I take this opportunity to also congratulate your predecessor, HE Mr. Julian Hunte of our sister Caribbean State of St. Lucia, for his outstanding leadership of the 58<sup>th</sup> session. His legacy is one of which we in the Caribbean can be proud, and we wish him well in his future endeavours.

2. I would also like to pay tribute to the esteemed Secretary General of this body for his stalwart defence of multilateralism and the rule of law.

Mr. President,

3. Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan, and Jeanne, have ravaged the Caribbean islands and parts of the United States. Lives were lost in Haiti, Grenada, Jamaica, Cuba, the United States and The Bahamas. The damage to homes, infrastructure, the interruption to normal life and commerce compel us to stress the need for immediate and dramatic measures to ensure reconstruction and rehabilitation. What has been on offer to the region so far is woefully inadequate.

4. Our country's northern islands Grand Bahama and Abaco received double hits. First there was Hurricane Frances that struck on 13<sup>th</sup> September leaving hundreds

this regard, The Bahamas welcomes the preliminary moves by the Government of Britain toward putting climate change closer to the top of the agenda. We urge them to continue to use their influence on their friends to cause a major shift in attitude. The implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States adopted at the Global Conference in Barbados in 1994 becomes even more urgent. The follow up meeting on this issue in Mauritius in January 2005 now takes on even greater significance.

Mr. President,

6. In this context, I wish also to highlight the region's efforts to designate the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area in the context of sustainable development. We also reiterate our grave concern over the serious threat posed to the security and economic development of Caribbean countries by the transshipment of nuclear waste through the Caribbean Sea, and continue to call on States involved in transshipments to desist from this practice.

Mr. President,

7. The scenes of death and destruction from the hurricane that we witnessed in Haiti over the last days reminded us of the political turmoil that this country has endured during the past year. The Bahamas extends its deepest condolences to the Haitian nation for this tremendous and sad loss of life. The year, which began with the celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> year of their Independence on 1<sup>st</sup>

a set of goals with respect to development with a human face, and we must all do what we can to achieve them. The Bahamas has committed itself to the fight. We offer our heartfelt condolences to the survivors of all who have lost their lives in such senseless attacks, particularly in the United States, Kenya, Tanzania and Indonesia. But we also admonish all states that terrorism cannot be the excuse to limit freedom, and to dispense with the very liberties that we are trying to defend and that form the foundation of free and democratic societies. No one can defend the increasing reliance on detentions without charge, detentions without access of families to legal representation, to administrative decisions that truncate rights without the right of a person to be heard. All

12. It is an inescapable fact that there can be no meaningful social or economic development without security. For many of us in the Caribbean in particular, this security is being undermined by the activities of those trafficking in illegal drugs and weapons. By virtue of its geographical location, The Bahamas is an unwitting transit point for illegal drugs from producing countries to the south of our borders to consumer nations to the north of our borders. What is often overlooked by those who are the consuming countries is that The Bahamas neither produces these substances, nor is it the final destination for them. However, as a transshipment point, The Bahamas, as do other transit countries, experiences the illegal activities associated with this trade. These activities undermine the economic and social fabric of our nations. We therefore welcome the convening in June 2004 of the first session of the open-ended working group to negotiate an international instrument to enable states to identify and trace, in a