

**NATIONAL STATEMENT  
BY  
HON. PHILIP DAVIS, KC, MP  
PRIME MINISTER OF  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE  
BAHAMAS,  
TO THE WORLD LEADERS' SUMMIT OF  
THE UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE  
CHANGE CONFERENCE  
COP 28  
DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
SATURDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> DECEMBER 2023**

I first wish to offer my thanks to the President and people of Dubai for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality you have bestowed on us.

My congratulations also to the people of the United Arab Emirates on the celebration of today, your National Day.

We wish you peace and prosperity.

Your Excellencies:

Time has run out.

Thankfully, mercifully, the record-high temperatures experienced earlier this year in The Bahamas, did not translate into a catastrophic hurricane season.

We were lucky.

But tropical storms and depressions did hit us. They caused high levels of rain, extreme winds, widespread flooding, interrupted our

power supply and resulted in significant costs and lost revenue.

Over the coming six months, before the next 'Hurricane Season' begins, we can use the time to strengthen our National Youth Guard.

We can build more homes out of the ground-breaking, carbon-negative, ocean-resistant concrete pioneered by a Bahamian company, Partanna, headed by entrepreneur Rick Fox.

We can also raise more finance using our Blue Carbon Credits, backed by our extensive underwater fields of seagrasses, which absorb more carbon than the Amazon Rainforest.

We welcome the pledges made in the past two days at this COP, to the 'Loss and Damage Fund'.

Surely this puts beyond doubt and debate, that the principle has now been settled: "the polluter pays".

But it has taken 30 years to agree that there should be a fund for 'Loss and Damage'.  
And in 13 years we have not yet hit the original pledge goal of \$100 billion per year.

How long must we now wait to have this new fund capitalized?

And how long must we wait before we can access the funds?

Time is a luxury we do not have.

And so we are left wondering how we should interpret the pledges of this COP.

*So little pledged, given what is needed.  
So late in the day, given what is forecast.*

Is the effort here more to reduce the 'noise pollution' generated by our advocacy, rather than to address the 'carbon reduction and 'climate financing' so urgently needed?

Are we expected to remain quietly grateful?

Frankly, we do not understand why everyone does not share our sense of urgency.

Doing what is needed to help us, also helps you.

Will you not act urgently to save yourselves?

His Holiness, Pope Francis, recently exhorted those of us who are Leaders, to “demonstrate the nobility of politics and not its shame”.

But our truths remain inconvenient and, to my mind, shameful.

We still live in a world where financing always seems immediately available for the bullets and the bombs.

This is a choice.

We still live in a world where narrow economic interests continue to drive an increase in the burning of fossil fuels.

This is also a choice.

But we have no choice.

Our plight is not seen in the images of women and children bleeding in the streets.

Our plight is mostly invisible: the slowly-warming seawater, slowly rising up through our porous limestone islands.

The slowly dying coral, no longer able to support the slowly-dying fish.

By the time our plight is made visible for all to see, our luck will have run out.

It will be too late.

The storm will have passed.

We can only pray that there is something left to see.

Friends: we simply want to live.

**END**