



**FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE PRESS CONFERENCE
ACCESS ACCELERATOR BUSINESS OFFICES, GLADSTONE ROAD**

November 27, 2023

REMARKS

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MARINE RESOURCES

HON. JOMO CAMPBELL

10:00 A.M.

ESTABLISH PROTOCOL

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I AM HONOURED TO BE HERE TODAY AS THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MARINE RESOURCES, THE BAHAMAS AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRIAL CORPORATION (BAIC) AND ACCESS ACCELERATOR SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE PARTNER TO, ONCE AGAIN, BRING FOCUS TO THE ISSUE OF FOOD SECURITY, TO ADVANCE FARMING AND MARINE VENTURES IN THE COUNTRY AND TO

GENERALLY AID BAHAMIAN ENTREPRENEURS IN THESE VITAL INDUSTRIES.

FOOD SECURITY AND THE LOWERING OF OUR FOOD IMPORT BILL IS ONE OF THE MAIN PRIORITIES OF THE DAVIS ADMINISTRATION. THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCCESSFULLY FURTHERING THE EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE YEARS IN ENSURING THAT THE BAHAMAS AND BAHAMIANS CAN SUSTAINABILITY UTILIZE, DEVELOP AND BENEFIT FROM THE RESOURCES FOUND IN OUR SEAS AND THE LARGE AMOUNT OF ARABLE LAND WE HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH CANNOT BE OVERSTRESSED. IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT THAT THE AVERAGE BAHAMIAN UNDERSTANDS THAT THEY CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE FOOD SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY BY STARTING A BACKYARD FARM AND BY SUPPORTING DOMESTIC FARMERS AND FISHERMEN.

FOOD SECURITY GOES FURTHER THAN JUST THE AVAILABILITY OF FOOD ITEMS. IT INCLUDES THE NUTRITIONAL VALUE, QUALITY CONTROL AND THE PRICE OF FOOD AMONG OTHER THINGS. IN RECENT YEARS, WE HAVE WITNESSED THE FLUCUATION IN THE AVAILABILITY AND PRICE OF STABLE ITEMS IN OUR NATIONAL DIET. THE OCCURANCE OF FOOD

SCARCITY AND THE UNAFFORDABLE COST TO SOME, CAUSES BAHAMIANS TO HAVE TO MAKE DECISIONS PERTAINING TO WHETHER, WHAT AND HOW MUCH TO EAT AND IN SOME CASES IF TO EAT AT ALL. INTERNATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES SUCH AS THE PANDEMIC, WAR, INFLATION, SUPPLY CHAIN ISSUES HAVE ADVERSELY AFFECTED FOOD AVAILABILITY NOT JUST IN THE BAHAMAS BUT AROUND THE WORLD. IT HAS ALSO PLACED A SPOTLIGHT ON THE NEED FOR MORE ATTENTION TO BE PAID TO AGRICULTURE, FISHING AND FOOD PRODUCTION, WHICH ARE VITAL SECTORS OF OUR ECONOMY. AND MORE OVER, VITAL TO OUR EXISTENCE AS HUMAN BEINGS.

IT IS MY AIM AS THE MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR AGRICULTURE AND MARINE RESOURCES TO ASSIST BAHAMIANS IN ANY WAY POSSIBLE TO BEGIN AND SUSTAIN THEIR FARMS, FOOD PRODUCTION COMPANIES AND FISHING VENTURES. THE SUCCESS OF THESE TYPES OF BUSINESSES WITHIN THE LOCAL ECONOMY LEADS TO SUSTAINABLE JOBS, WEALTH CREATION AND, OF COURSE, THEY CONTRIBUTE TO DECREASING THE IMPORT OF ITEMS THAT CAN BE SOURCED DOMESTICALLY. I BELIEVE IN THE INGENUITY OF THE BAHAMIAN PEOPLE AND OUR ABILITY TO DO

WHAT IS NECESSARY TO SURVIVE AND EVEN THRIVE WHEN GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY AND THE NEEDED GUIDANCE TO GO WITH IT.

THE SUSTAINABLE FOOD GROWTH GRANT IS DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS – 60 PERCENT FUNDING FOR FISHERS, WHERE WE RARELY SEE NEW BUSINESSES AND 40 PERCENT FOR FARMERS ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO USE CLIMATE SMART TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE THEIR YIELDS. THE GRANT WILL ALSO HELP TO FOSTER INNOVATION, ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION AND PROVIDE ONGOING SUPPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD GROWTH PROJECTS. BY INVESTING IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, THE BAHAMAS CAN REDUCE ITS RELIANCE ON IMPORTED FOOD, CREATE NEW ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND PROTECT ITS NATURAL RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

THE FOOD CENTRAL WILL BE AN IMMERSION EVENT FOR THE SENSES FOR PATRONS WHILE CREATING A PLATFORM FOR FARMERS, FISHERS AND CHEFS TO COME TOGETHER TO SHOWCASE THEIR PRODUCE AND SKILLS – ALL WHILE BUILDING A GREATER CONNECTION TO THE COMMUNITY. UP TO 40 VENDORS WILL BE SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE. OUR COUNTRY HAS A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTRED AROUND

ITS CUISINE. AND SO, I AM EXCITED TO SEE THE CULINARY SHOWCASE WHERE CHEFS WILL DEMONSTRATE THEIR CREATIVITY AND EXPERTISE USING LOCAL INGREDIENTS. THIS IS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR LOCALS AND TOURISTS ALIKE TO EXPERIENCE THE DIVERSE FLAVOURS AND CULINARY TRADITIONS OF THE BAHAMAS. THERE WILL ALSO BE A FUN FARM TO TABLE CHEFS COMPETITION WHERE ATTENDEES WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOTE FOR THEIR FAVOURITE DISHES. I LOOK FORWARD TO THE ROLL OUT OF MORE DETAILS OF THIS REMARKABLE EVENT.

TRULY, I AM EXCITED ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE AVAILABLE VIA THE FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE. BY SUPPORTING FARMERS, FISHERS AND FOOD BUSINESSES, THIS INITIATIVE WILL CREATE JOBS, STIMULATE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BOOST AND DIVERSIFY THE LOCAL ECONOMY. THIS FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE IS CRUCIAL FOR THE BAHAMAS TO ENHANCE ITS FOOD RESILIENCE, IMPROVE PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFEGUARD THE ENVIRONMENT. SO I ENCOURAGE ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS OR COMPANIES TO CONTACT ACCESS ACCELERATOR TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS EXCITING INITIATIVE AND LET'S GET GROWING BAHAMAS. THANK YOU.

