



## **Remarks**

**The Most Hon. Dr. Hubert Minnis**

**Prime Minister**

**Commonwealth of The Bahamas**

**925<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**The Committee of Ambassadors of the  
African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP)**

**Group of States**

**Brussels, Belgium**

**14 November 2019**

Chairperson of the ACP Committee of

Ambassadors;

Dean of the ACP Group of States;

Secretary-General;

Excellencies;

Ladies and gentleman:

A very pleasant good morning.

It is a privilege to address you today on  
the occasion of my visit to this historic city in

the heart of Belgium and at the heart of Europe.

I wish to applaud you for the excellent work you do on behalf of our countries, which has enabled us to implement policies and programmes for the benefit of our peoples and to effectively protect our mutual interests.

Mr Chairman:

Hurricane Dorian was documented by the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency [CDEMA] as “the strongest Atlantic hurricane to impact a land mass since records began.”

Dorian, which the United Nation’s Secretary-General described as Category Hell, caused death and devastation to the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama, and their surrounding Cays, disrupting the

economy and lives of thousands of residents.

Both islands, our second and third most populated islands in The Bahamas archipelago, are crucial to our economy, contributing some 20 percent to GDP.

Initial assessment by the Inter-American Development Bank and ECLAC on the effects and impact of Hurricane Dorian estimated total damages at \$2.4 billion, with

an additional cost estimated to be \$200 million and losses of over \$700 million.

Our economy was projected to grow by 2.2 percent in 2019.

Following this catastrophic storm, our projected GDP growth rate is now 1.1 percent.

On behalf of the Government and people of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, I thank the Secretary General and the

member-states of the ACP for your expressions of solidarity and support.

I also wish to thank member-states of the European Union for their assistance through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism, the British Royal Navy, the Royal Dutch Navy and French and German personnel.

Mr Chairman:

Through the implementation of a number of measures to bring relief and to stimulate rebuilding and restoration, The Bahamas is making significant strides in providing stability and some sense of normalcy to the lives of those affected

In September, my government created a new Ministry for Disaster Preparedness, Management, and Reconstruction, which



will lead our recovery and reconstruction efforts.

I appeal to our international partners and friends to continue to accompany us as we continue the formidable task of recovery and reconstruction and to be rebuilt with resilience.

Mr Chairman:

Researchers have concluded that the largest and most damaging hurricanes are

now three times more frequent than they were one hundred years ago.

They have determined that there is a correlation between the intense storms and increased global warming.

We are painfully aware of the warnings of the impact of climate change on all of our states, including rising sea levels and the threats to agriculture and fisheries.

The recent examples of the deadly tropical Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and Malawi and Hurricane Dorian, in The Bahamas confirm this.

Idai, a category 3 cyclone, was one of the most extended storms and recorded as the worst to hit Africa.

Dorian, a category 5 storm, was also the worst to hit The Bahamas.

The impact of the global climate emergency is especially felt in the most vulnerable areas in the ACP, including the Caribbean region.

We must collectively and urgently intensify our response to the climate emergency.

The most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report recognizes that the choices we make now

will dictate how we are affected by and respond to more storms like Hurricane Dorian and Idai.

We must unite with one voice and protect our shared patrimony and a better future.

Mr Chairman:

The Bahamas has remained committed to the ideals and objectives of the ACP group of states since its inception in 1975.

This commitment has recently manifested itself in the establishment of our opening of an embassy here in Belgium, as we seek to further engage and strengthen cooperation among our fellow member-states and our European Union partners.

“The upcoming Ninth Summit of ACP Heads of State and Government in December in Nairobi, Kenya, is critical to finalizing the revised Georgetown

Agreement, and to reaffirming our commitment to this process.

The Bahamas will be represented at this summit.

We will convene this Summit under the theme, “A Transformed ACP: Committed To Multilateralism”.

This is a reflection of our acknowledgement that our organisation must adapt to a rapidly changing global

landscape in order to respond to the needs and concerns of our member states, particularly in the context of the 2030 Development Agenda.

Our summit agenda will contain a number of issues which require our determined and sober deliberation.

Of particular note, is the ACP'S efforts to highlight the concerns of the Small Island Developing States [SIDS].



We seek to ensure that our development partners are sensitized to the particular vulnerabilities faced by SIDS, including: recent developments in international trade and finance and the frequency of destructive weather events.

The Bahamas also understands the urgency in finalizing the negotiations for a new ACP-EU Partnership Agreement which will replace the Cotonou Agreement that expires in February 2020.

We have much to celebrate through our history, shared experiences, and shared goals.

Let us strengthen our commitment to one another as we strive to serve our respective nations and the global commons in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation.

Excellencies, Secretary-General:

I thank you.

---