REMARKS BY
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AT

THE COLLEGE OF THE BAHAMAS' SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE PUBLIC SERVICE LECTURE SERIES

AT THE

HARRY C. MOORE LIBRARY AUDITORIUM

THE COLLEGE OF THE BAHAMAS

WEDNESDAY, 29TH OCTOBER, 2014

9:45 A.M.

SALUTATIONS:

Dr. Rodney Smith, President of The College of The Bahamas;

Dr. Earla Carey-Baines, Executive Vice President of The College of The Bahamas;

Dr. Pandora Johnson, Vice President of Academic Affairs, of The College of The Bahamas;

Dr. Ian Strachan, Vice President of Advancement, of The College of The Bahamas;

Dr. Eslyn Jones, Vice President of Student Affairs of The College of The Bahamas;

Mr. Matthew Kemp, President of COBUS;

Ms. Valdarez Miller, Executive Vice President of COBUS;

Committee Members;

Lecturers;

Students;

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a distinct pleasure for me to be here this morning to participate in this first Public Service Lecture Series under the theme "Charting the Course…Serving and Securing the Public Service". I wish to applaud the organizers for facilitating this dialogue between academia and professionals within the public sector. I believe that your efforts will bring about positive, far-reaching change in our country.

This morning I will address the topic, "Improving the Cross-Sector Collaboration". I will place emphasis on the stigma of the public service, efficient collaboration of the public sector with the private sector and improving the working relationship between the government and civil society.

The Stigma of the Public Service

While employed as a civil servant in the Ministry of Finance with the Treasury Department I encountered a veteran civil servant who said to me "Governments come and governments go, but civil servants remain". He later gave me a copy of the Constitution of The Bahamas

and told me to read it and be guided by it as a career civil servant.

Currently, there is a general perception that attitudes, service and work ethics are poor in the public sector. We all know that there exist excellent, average and mediocre workers in any organization; however, there appears to be greater performance accountability in the private sector. How do we correct or remove this negative image? I suggest that there is an immediate need for orientation and or systematic re-orientation of all civil servants to bring back the focus of the vision and mission of the public service. Consistent

opportunities for training and a results-based focus will help to improve the overall performance of civil servants. An effective reward system to compensate employees for excellence is also a great incentive for change.

Efficient Collaboration of Public Sector with Private Sector

It is important to recognize that the primary resources of time, money and relationship are critical to the efficient collaboration of the public sector with the private sector. The earliest engagement of key stakeholders prior to policy decisions being made demonstrates the best use of time and

accelerates the process of quality results.

Best practices must be in place in order for there to be economic exchange between the two sectors. We must facilitate a win-win environment so that both parties benefit from the business transaction. The watchword must be quality - quality product, quality service and quality performance.

This collaboration between the public and private sector is an urgent need as evidenced in recent experiences of our society such as the process of the passing of the Value Added Tax

legislation. Here we saw how necessary it is for both sectors to work in tandem when it comes to making major decisions that will impact every level of our society. Policy decisions should not hamper the growth of the business community nor impede the development of new business ventures.

Improving the Working Relationship between Government and Civil Society

The Collins English Dictionary defines Civil Society as the arena outside the family, the state and the market place where people associate to advance common interests. It is sometimes considered to include the family and the

private sector and then referred to as the "third sector" of society, distinct from government and business. Sometimes the term is used in the more general sense of "the elements such as freedom of speech, an independent judiciary, etc., that makes up a democratic society".

The concept of involving civil society and the private sector in the work of government in The Bahamas is crucial to our development as an independent nation. As formalized in the operational theme of Civil Society Bahamas, "Re-education, Training and Development" we must begin to embrace the power of

shared leadership as it relates to good governance in the Bahamas.

There are two primary concerns to be addressed in the process of an improved working relationship between Government, Private Sector and Civil Society consisting of the development of <u>National Tripartite Good Governance Plan</u> for inclusion of stakeholders and the development of a consultative and inclusive non-partisan <u>national</u>

development plan.

The tripartite stakeholders

must jointly recognize and address the

urgent need to reconcile power or the

decision making process in our

Bahamian democracy as a priority for

the Bahamas.

The expressed expectation for a <u>tri-part</u>

<u>national governance plan</u> and a greater

power-sharing, decentralization,

openness and accountability <u>to eradicate</u>

<u>apparent corruption and conspiracy as</u>

<u>a perceived accepted culture</u> must also

be supported by all stakeholders of civil society.

This objective can best be achieved through joint stakeholder partnership and volunteer support of Civil Society Bahamas, the apex body for civil society organizations of the Bahamas. A powerful demonstration of the required support can begin with the enactment process of the recently drafted Civil Society Organization Bill.

Research informs that collaborative activities have become more prominent and extensive in all sectors of many

nations in the past 25 years, resulting in a "stunning evolutionary change in institutional forms of governance" since the 1980s. Partnerships among business, government, and civil society, the three main societal sectors have become popular and address social issues and causes. Such alliances are a growing organizational imperative, but are poorly understood. We must work together to bring clarity and meaning to this phenomenon for the betterment and benefit of our citizenry and country.

Thank you and good morning.