



*The
Bahamas*

**STATEMENT
BY**

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE DR MARCUS BETHEL
MINISTER OF ENERGY & THE ENVIRONMENT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**AT THE
HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Mr. Chairman,

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas welcomes the opportunity to inform the Commission of the strides taken relative to the themes covered in CSD14.

The Government of The Bahamas has recently formed a Ministry of Energy & Environment and it is through this ministry that great steps are being taken to identify renewable energy options suitable for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) like The Bahamas. My government is also developing an energy policy with the aid of national stakeholders and international agencies such as the Inter-American Development Bank.

Energy efficiencies are being implemented through public awareness and education programs on conservation, and also the installation of more energy efficient power generating plants

Despite the fact that The Bahamas has substantial solar resources and in spite of the government's removal of import duties on solar panels, the high capital cost associated with this technology is one example of the difficulties being faced by the government and national consumers desirous of making the switch to this alternative source of energy.

The complete electrification of the archipelago has raised the standard of living throughout the nation and as a result by 2005 the national consumption of oil is approximately 25,000 barrels per day. Mr. Chair, while this may not seem like a lot for some States but the cost is considerable for a small country as mine. Therefore, Mr. Chair it is imperative for the future of The Bahamas that we seek to diversify to more sustainable and reliable sources.

Mr. Chairman,

There is a need for more research and information on suitable renewables for SIDS. The Bahamas would welcome support from our partners in our efforts to explore alternative energy sources in our attempts to ensure energy security for the Bahamas. In this connection, The Bahamas will be hosting a SIDS-Tourism conference, from the 7th to the 9th of June 2006, which will have as one of its major components resilience building in the tourism sector, and the use of renewable energy resources. The support of our partners would prove most useful in ensuring the success of this timely event.

Mr. Chairman,

In 2005, my government enacted a National Climate Change Policy. The Bahamas is an archipelago of low-lying islands being very vulnerable to sea-level rise and more frequent hurricanes which are the result of Climate Change. Mr. Chair, the 2005 hurricane season set a recorded twenty-seven hurricanes, five of which affected The Bahamas resulting in millions of dollars of damage. Mr. Chair while The Bahamas will do all it can to build a level of resilience, it is imperative that all countries meet their commitments made under the Kyoto Protocol to reduce GHG emissions and multilateral mechanisms be implemented to address mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Mr. Chairman,

The Government of The Bahamas is also in the process of adopting Environmental Legislation for the effective monitoring and evaluation of our environment and the adoption of regulations for air quality standards. Currently, The Bahamas is in the process of installing lined sanitary landfills throughout the major islands, providing a more environmentally friendly method for solid waste disposal. Mr. Chairman, this will reduce the traditional open burning of solid waste and reduce emissions resulting from plastics and other hazardous material. Mr. Chair my Government is also looking at cost effective methods, which could be utilized to capture the methane that would be produced from landfills and its potential use as a source of energy.

Mr. Chairman,

Even though The Bahamas only imports unleaded gasoline and diesel fuel the lack of an organized mass transit system and the large number of cars in the capital of New Providence make vehicular emissions the major contributor to air quality issues. The Bahamas is eager to engage others in discussions relative to lessons learnt and case studies which could be of use to our efforts.

Mr. Chairman,

It will be through the enactment of legislation, proactive policy formulation, financial support and partnerships that The Bahamas can pursue and adopt more environmentally friendly technologies that would help us reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, assure sustainable development and thereby attain the Millennium Development Goals.

Thank you.