

FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

FNM

CONTINUING ITS TRANSFORMATIONAL
SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROWTH AGENDA
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY



IT'S THE PEOPLE'S TIME

2 0 1 7 M A N I F E S T O



CONTENTS

FOREWORD	1
INTRODUCTION	3
GOOD GOVERNANCE	6
STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE.....	8
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT	10
EDUCATION	11
LOCAL GOV FOR NEW PROVIDENCE.....	15
YOUTH AND SPORTS	17
OUR CULTURE	19
ECONOMY	21
LABOUR.....	26
SOCIAL AGENDA	27
GRAND BAHAMA	28
FOREIGN AFFAIRS.....	30
IMMIGRATION.....	32
TOURISM.....	34
HEALTHCARE	36
CRIME	39
JUDICIAL REFORM.....	41
AGRICULTURE & FISHERIES	42
LAND & HOUSING	44
ENVIRONMENT	45
TRANSFORMING OVA-DA-HILL	47
ENERGY	48
FAMILY ISLAND DEVELOPMENT	49

My fellow Bahamians,

When I assumed the leadership of our great party in 2012 after our traumatic defeat at the polls, I fully understood and appreciated the awesome responsibility entrusted upon me to guide our party into the future. Most importantly, I recognized that I was following in the giant footsteps of our great leaders who founded and led our party over many years, achieving great successes including, most significantly, three non- consecutive terms in government.

Since becoming leader, my team and I have made it our duty to travel throughout the length and breadth of our Commonwealth to familiarize ourselves with, to listen to and to hear directly from you our people. It became very clear to us that Bahamians all over our country are extremely dissatisfied with the direction in which our nation is headed. They have overwhelmingly expressed particular concerns regarding corruption, freedom of information, Bahamian ownership opportunities in our economy, land reform, disrespect by the government for the expressed will of the people in the referenda, youth empowerment, burdensome taxes, our education system and opportunities, increasing poverty, obstacles to doing business, healthcare, government's failure to deliver basic services such as affordable electricity and solid waste collection.

Bahamians have also expressed concerns about the disrespect for our workers and the labour laws of our land, the high levels of crime, the deterioration of our traditional businesses and neighborhoods, the wastage of tax payers' money, the lack of respect for the rule of law and the lack of accountability in the governance of our country. The Bahamas has been led in the wrong direction. Our economy has become unnecessarily weak and wages stagnant.



We in the **FNM** have heard your stories, your hopes and your dreams. And we have heard too, your frustrations concerning the countless Bahamians not working and others working as hard as they possibly can, yet still living paycheck to paycheck and struggling to pay the bills, sacrificing and suffering while our young people with great ambitions harbour deep anxieties about their future. Many are asking, where is our country going?

This manifesto is inspired by you.

Based on our engagement with our people, we have collectively crafted a vision for a new and better Bahamas, building on past accomplishments to move The Bahamas forward. Central to achieving this objective is developing a knowledge-based society, greater ownership by Bahamians in our economy, our promotion and support for entrepreneurship, creating and building safer communities and addressing corruption.

The fundamental truth that runs through this manifesto is that the Bahamas will only succeed when our people succeed. It is an idea at the heart of our beliefs. And it drives our better plan for a better future. It means building a future for all our young people, so they can get access to affordable, higher education. It means stronger and safer communities, where power is shared by people in every part of the country and where we respond to people's concerns. It means a Bahamas where everyone plays by the same rules, including those at the very top of our society.

Fast-forward to 2017 and the current state of our Bahamaland. It is very clearly déjà vu in terms of the incumbent Government's gross financial mismanagement, lack of accountability and transparency, a climate of an even stronger dictatorship in arrogantly ignoring the wishes of the people in the first of two failed referenda, and sealing the sale of Baha Mar in secrecy under the protection of the Supreme Court.

We believe that people are our ultimate resource — and that the people, not the government, are the best stewards of our country's God-given natural resources.

This Manifesto is a plan for a better future for your family. Above all, it is a plan for you.

The Free National Movement has a proud history and record of governance, deliverance, trust, and leadership in office and we present this Manifesto which articulates the diverse views and concerns you have expressed. This Manifesto represents our party's mandate when elected to office. I wish to assure the Bahamian people that we have assembled a team of talented individuals who are **"Committed to Change."** It will no longer be the "same old same old." We will restore good governance to our country and implement our new vision. As leader of our great party you have my assurance that we are steadfast and focused in our determination to carry out our mandate.

For me, the privilege of serving as Prime Minister of our country would be for one purpose alone and that is: "to work every day to help build a country that works for our people." This manifesto is our plan to achieve that goal. Come join us; we are **IN THIS TOGETHER**. I ask for your support, so that together, we can bring about the change our country so desperately needs.

I invite you to study our Manifesto and review our plans to implement our new vision. I ask for your support so that together, with the help of the Almighty God, we can build a new and better Bahamas. This time.....

IT'S THE PEOPLE'S TIME!

Hubert A Minnis
Leader



INTRODUCTION

In the historic election of 1992, the **Free National Movement** assumed the reins of the government of a country that was on the brink of total economic and social collapse after 25 years of “sovereign majority rule” under the **Progressive Liberal Party**. The once proud and highly regarded archipelago known as “**The Bahamas**” was found to be reeling from: lawlessness, a thriving drug culture with its accompanying climate of violence, drug, gun and human trafficking, a climate of political secrecy, dictatorship and political victimization with their concomitant erosion of human dignity, and the inculcation of a spirit of dependency on politicians for a livelihood. In short, the once economically thriving Bahamas was mired in scandals, political greed, arrogance, cronyism and nepotism, dishonest dealings with prospective foreign investors, and globally referred to as: “**a nation for sale**”, the main clientele being the drug cartels.

It was clear that after 25 years in office, the **Progressive Liberal Party** had demonstrated beyond doubt that it lacked the vision, moral authority, and ideas to revive the economy of the Bahamas or even to,

“attract talented Bahamians, committed to the people’s purpose, who could bring to the management of the nation’s affairs new ideas, new attitudes and innovative strategies relevant to today’s rapidly changing economic and political environment globally and regionally.”
—**FNM’s Manifesto ’92**

During its first two terms in office (1992 – 2002), the **Free National Movement** Government aggressively pursued and successfully implemented a comprehensive economic and social reconstruction agenda, which was geared to the restoration of human dignity, national pride, and sustainable economic growth. This was done through a new political culture of participatory democracy, accountable and transparent government, social and economic justice, job creation and entrepreneurial opportunity for our youth, encouragement of individual enterprise, assistance for our most vulnerable, and the assurance of upward mobility in an open society fueled by a market-driven economy.

Ironically, during their first term in office (2002 – 2007), the “**New PLP**” succeeded not only in stalling progress made by our **FNM** government, but in five years they had actually reversed national progress by some 25 years to the former culture of drugs, crime, cronyism, victimization, greed, scandals, corruption, and “**a nation for sale**” status—this time through a virtual giveaway of hundreds of prime Bahamian acreages for what resulted in failed mega-projects, viz: the **I-Group project in Mayaguana**, the **Gin Sur Mer project in West End, Grand Bahama**, and the **Baha Mar project in New Providence**, inter alia. This was also the period of **blatant immigration corruption** in the giveaway of Bahamian citizenship to many, including Ana Nicole Smith.

It was no surprise, therefore, that after one term in office, the people quickly put an end to that inept and corrupt **PLP** government and voted in the **FNM** for a third term. During this period, (2007 – 2012), the **FNM** Government had to work strenuously to reverse the country’s downward economic spiral, while simultaneously strengthening the economy during the worst global economic recession since the 1930’s. It was during this term that the **Free National Movement** Government embarked upon an ambitious programme of enacting laws and implementing other social safety-nets to arrest the burgeoning crime problem, as well as to provide employment through investing heavily in major capital works to rebuild the country’s aging infrastructure.

Despite strong opposition from the **PLP** at every step, the **FNM** Government successfully maneuvered The Bahamas through the treacherous economic recession without having to be downgraded to ‘junk’ status. Unfortunately, our people did not, or were persuaded not to, understand the Government’s strategy for embarking upon the major road and other infrastructural works, and blindly followed the **PLP** in campaigning against these efforts to keep bread on their tables. This, together with other ulterior forces, led to the return of the incompetent **PLP** to office and the rest is history.



Fast-forward to 2017 and the current state of our Bahamaland. It is very clearly *déjà vu* in terms of the incumbent Government’s gross financial mismanagement, lack of accountability and transparency, a climate of an even stronger dictatorship in arrogantly ignoring the wishes of the people in two failed referenda, and sealing the sale of **Baha Mar** in secrecy under the protection of the Supreme Court.

Against this background it is no secret that, given today’s socio-economic malaise and this government’s atrocious malfeasance on all fronts, Bahamians’ eyes have been opened and they can now not only appreciate the tangible and wide-ranging accomplishments of the **FNM’s** past administrations, but can see clearly that the **Free National Movement** is a visionary Party. Since as early as 1992 and in its most recent **2012 Manifesto**, the **FNM** has promulgated, *inter alia*, the following forward-thinking **national strategic plans** for the country’s economic recovery and sustainability into the 21st century:

- ✓ Continue its National Security Strategic Plan to guide the fight against crime, drug and gun trafficking, human trafficking, illegal immigration, and poaching;
- ✓ Build an Opportunity and Shareholding Society to economically empower Bahamians;
- ✓ In consultation with Bahamians launch Jubilee Bahamas, which is a 10-year National Plan leading to the 50th anniversary of our National Independence;
- ✓ Launch the Back to the Island Campaign, which is anticipated to become the largest migration of Bahamians back to the Family Islands;
- ✓ Launch a focused Heritage Tourism Initiative, and a further incentivized Creative Economy that will provide both economic growth and human development;
- ✓ Continue to build on the **FNM’s** Social Development Agenda in the fields of Health Care, Education, Housing, and Social Security;
- ✓ Introduce National Catastrophic Health Insurance.



Given the lacklustre and visionless performance of the **incumbent PLP Government** over the years, it is no surprise that during this term in office and desperate to hold onto power, they have now shamelessly resorted to plagiarizing our plans as contained in our **2012 Manifesto** and as outlined above. As one Charles Caleb Colton once observed: “**Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery**” and we in the **FNM** are indeed flattered!



More importantly, however, is the fact that Bahamians need a Government that has a vision for the future – a vision that will transform lives for the better by declaring war on poverty; by transforming the “**Over-Da-Hill**” communities into vibrant economic jewels; by expanding our middle class and the economy through implementing tax free zones and supporting entrepreneurship; by bringing integrity back to governance by enacting and enforcing a Code of Conduct and Anti-Corruption Laws for Parliamentarians and Civil Servants as a matter of priority; and by implementing a meritocracy system for the Public Service.

Going forward, we in the **Free National Movement** are passionate about rescuing our country from the current socio-economic maelstrom and depression to which it has sunk and which, if not addressed sooner rather than later, will inevitably lead to the economic demise of our once proud country as we knew it. Given the recent economic downgrade by **Standard’s & Poor’s**, it would appear that we are not far from reaching this nadir in our development.

Consequently, there is no question that despite the many ongoing personal and character assaults and assassinations by both the incumbent **PLP** regime as well as by internal negative forces to publicly denigrate the capability of the **FNM’s** leadership, public perception is again growing in favour of the **Free National Movement** as being the best viable option, based on proven capability and past accomplishments for changing lives for the better and restoring both the economy and public trust in a fair, accountable and transparent government for **ALL Bahamians**.

In this vein, it is no secret that one of the philosophies to which the **Free National Movement** subscribes and by which it is guided, is that espoused by former **U.S President Franklin Delano Roosevelt** when he stated that:

“The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little”. —Second Inaugural Address

For the **FNM**, this is undoubtedly the era of the people’s time and this tenet, together with the grace of Almighty God, will continue to guide our vision and infuse our thoughts as we focus on the uplifting of our people economically and socially. Hence, we in the **FNM** are proud to present this document as a real **roadmap** – not empty promises – of well thought-out, practical and doable plans and strategies for the economic advancement of our country for 2017 and beyond!

It is indeed
THE PEOPLE’S TIME!

GOOD GOVERNANCE

The **Free National Movement** came to public office in 1992 fully committed to the principles of good governance through accountability, transparency, predictability and participation. The **FNM** continued to demonstrate these principles throughout its three non-consecutive terms in Office.

As a result, the Party's guiding principles for all candidates, standard bearers and officials are enshrined in their codes of conduct: "Standards in Public Life", "The Seven Principles of Public Life" and "Standards of Conduct for Ministers of Government".



*The **FNM** came to public office in 1992 fully committed to the principles of good governance... accountability, transparency, predictability and participation and this was demonstrated throughout its terms in Office.*



AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Introduce term limits for Prime Ministers
- ✓ Introduce a system of recall for non-performing Members of Parliament
- ✓ Establish the Office of Ombudsman to protect members of the public against acts of maladministration
- ✓ Amend Regulations to the Constitution to establish an independent Boundaries Commission and a fixed date for General Elections.
- ✓ Amend the Public Disclosure Act to broaden its scope of application to include campaign finance reform and to make provision for direct referral to an independent prosecutor.
- ✓ Ensure the timely submission of all mandated reports to the House of Assembly
- ✓ Establish Organization and Management units as well as other compliance units to facilitate greater efficiency in the delivery of public services
- ✓ Establish a process in which designated public officials will be required to take an oath of public office
- ✓ Re-establish policy to require Ministries to submit to the Government periodic progress reports on the implementation of the Government's goals and decisions.
- ✓ Review the role of Ministries and Departments to enhance implementation of decisions.
- ✓ Provide the Office of the Auditor General with the necessary resources to enable it to discharge its responsibilities as mandated by the Constitution.

THE FNM:
MAKING TOMORROW
BETTER
FOR ALL



STANDARDS IN PUBLIC LIFE

T

he **Free National Movement** strongly believes that the traditions and institutions of a democracy are the most precious of a nation's assets.

The **Free National Movement** believes that it is the personal responsibility of every Member of Parliament to maintain these standards of conduct in order to protect the good name of Parliament and to advance the people's interest. Similar standards of conduct are also expected of senior public officers, whose responsibility it is to implement the laws of The Bahamas and the policy directives of Cabinet.

Accordingly, Members of Parliament and all those who hold public office are expected to observe seven general principles of conduct which apply to all persons in public life.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY



IT'S THE PEOPLE'S TIME!





THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE



1. SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should make decisions solely on the basis of public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or material benefits for themselves, members of their family, or their friends.

2. INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to individuals or organizations that might compromise them in the performance of their official duties.

BETTER FOR ALL PEOPLE

3. OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices solely on merit.

4. ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to scrutiny appropriate to their office.

5. OPENNESS

Holders of public office must be open about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly so demands.

6. HONESTY

Holders of public office have an obligation to declare any private interest related to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts in a way that protects the public interest.

7. LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

T

he **Free National Movement** believes that Ministers of Government must be held to the highest standards of constitutional and personal conduct. In particular they must observe the following principles of Ministerial conduct:

- ✓ Ministers must ensure that no conflict arises, or appears to arise between their public duties and their private interest.
- ✓ Ministers are accountable to Parliament for the policies and operations of their Departments and Agencies.
- ✓ Ministers must not mislead Parliament. They must be open with Parliament and with the public.
- ✓ Ministers must avoid accepting any gift or hospitality which might appear to compromise their judgment or place them under improper obligation.
- ✓ Ministers in the House of Assembly must separate their roles as Ministers, Members of Parliament and Party Representatives.



EDUCATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

GOVERNING PHILOSOPHY

The **Free National Movement** is in agreement with the “*Working Draft*” of the 2016 National Development Plan Secretariat” that identified five key areas of challenges in the country’s educational system: ►

1. National Skills deficit
2. Sub-standard numeracy, literacy and oracy levels
3. Lack of inclusiveness in the society
4. Lack of inclusiveness in education
5. Unemployment

As a Government, the **Free National Movement** recognizes and believes that the progressive and sustainable economic development of the Bahamas rests entirely upon the proper education and training of its people.

A review of the World Bank development indicators suggests that government expenditure as a percentage of GDP on education is below regional and international competitors and continues to decline.



The **Free National Movement's** Education Agenda will comprise four fundamental principles:

- ✓ **Commitment to all stakeholders:** civil society, the home, government, students, teachers, trainers and facilitators to understanding the crucial value and significance of education as a tool of national development.
- ✓ **The creation of enhanced, stimulating and rewarding learning environments throughout The Bahamas;**
- ✓ **The recognition and encouragement that learning and skills development never stop;**
- ✓ **Understanding that all trainees (students) have a fundamental right to become through education and training, economically productive and capable of competing successfully in their chosen fields of endeavour, both locally and internationally.**

A **Free National Movement** proposes to comprehensively address the identified challenges in the following manner:

1. End social promotion in the school system
2. Increased investment in education: human resources and training, private sector involvement and technical & vocational training;
3. By greater investment in the continuous training, re-training and professional development of teachers and educational professionals;
4. Increase expenditure on educational infrastructure to reduce class sizes and provide greater resources for the educational establishment;
5. Recruit interested Bahamian candidates for teaching careers through attractive incentives;
6. Increase investment in technical and vocational education in high schools;
7. Encourage and financially support through tax breaks and subventions, private sector involvement in education, subject to rigorous regulatory standards;



Your Free National Movement government is committed to a complete reform of the educational system.

8. Amend the Education Act to mandate pre-school learning for all two and a half year olds;
9. Enhance the provision of special education to ensure equity in education;
10. Review existing policy and programmes to determine and establish a national apprentice scheme;
11. Increase research capacity throughout the educational system;
12. Finance through scholarships, grants and tax incentives, the ability for all qualified students to access a tertiary education;
13. Introduce a pilot programme of single gender classes and schools;
14. Where practicable, ensure the availability of adequately staffed and equipped pre-school facilities in all Family Islands.
15. Provide proper oversight to ensure compliance with the relevant Act and Regulations governing early childhood care

SCHOOL SAFETY AND SECURITY

The safety and security of our schools, teachers and students are of paramount concern and essential to a safe and secure learning environment.

An **FNM** government will:

- Ensure that effective security protocols are established and properly trained security personnel are in place and managed at all public schools;
- Utilize metal detectors to screen all personnel and the school parameters;
- Increase police presence during critical hours before and after school at campuses and school routes to prevent and intervene in potential conflicts;
- Enhance the use of CCTV and other technology with real time monitoring of school premises;



Ensure accessibility of quality higher education through increased scholarship and grant funding

EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

Your **Free National Movement** government is committed to substantial reform of the educational systems. Such reforms will include:

Information Technology

- Ensure that each school is a “smart school”- fully computerized;
- Fully integrate and utilize the latest technology in all schools throughout the country to facilitate distance learning;
- Enable all students, deprived of specialist teachers in math, science and other subjects, to benefit from lectures and tutorial in real time;
- Provide everyone in education access to the world’s libraries, materials and methodologies

Technical & Vocational Education

- Identify and dedicate at least three schools as Academic Technical & Vocational Education institutions on New Providence and in the Family Islands where practical.

POLICY REFORM

Administrative

- Improve systems at the Ministry of Education to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of services to stakeholders
- Introduce a pilot program of single gender classes at Junior High School level (ages 11-14) to assist in closing gaps between the achievement of girls and boys.
- Establish school facilities as Community Centres for the conduct of afterschool programmes, adult educational, training and recreational activities.

Human Resources

- Establish a National Educational Commission;
- Increase teacher compensation packages;
- Provide teachers and educational professionals with at least ten(10) years of service and who meet prescribed criteria, with a paid sabbatical for professional development and recertification.

Curriculum

- Expand our focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Education in our schools;
- Enhance the provision of special education to ensure equity in education and employability of students with special needs;
- Mandate a Bahamian core curriculum that will contain the following components:
 - Bahamian history, civics and culture
 - Multi-lingual and numeracy competence
 - Information Technology (IT) competence
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Personal Financial Planning
- Prioritize literacy and numeracy to ensure that all children by grade one possess age appropriate reading, writing, comprehension, oracy and mathematical skills

Parental Involvement

- Institute a National Parenting Skills Development Programme
- Encourage parental involvement and participation in education through appropriate incentives
- Expand the scope and authority of School Boards

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FOR NEW PROVIDENCE

The **Free National Movement** administration introduced a modern system of Local Government in the family islands with the enactment of the Local Government Act in 1996 which resulted in greater participation by the people in the governance of the affairs of their communities.

The **FNM** believes that the deepening of our democracy requires the immediate introduction and implementation of local government in New Providence so that our citizens could likewise participate in the governance of their communities.

AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Will introduce Local Government to New Providence during its next term in office.





YOUTH AND SPORTS

The **Free National Movement** understands the importance of our young people to the future development and growth of our nation and the positive impact sports have on youth and the potential of sports for national and economic enhancement. The FNM recognizes the tremendous work done in drafting the National Youth Policy for The Bahamas and has taken note of the following areas addressed in that report:

- Youth and Immigration
- Education Technology and Capacity
- Employment, Social Enterprise and Young Professionals
- Health and Sustainable Livelihood
- Youth in Conflict with the Law, Youth Justice and Safety
- Inclusion in the Decision-making Process
- Youth Development

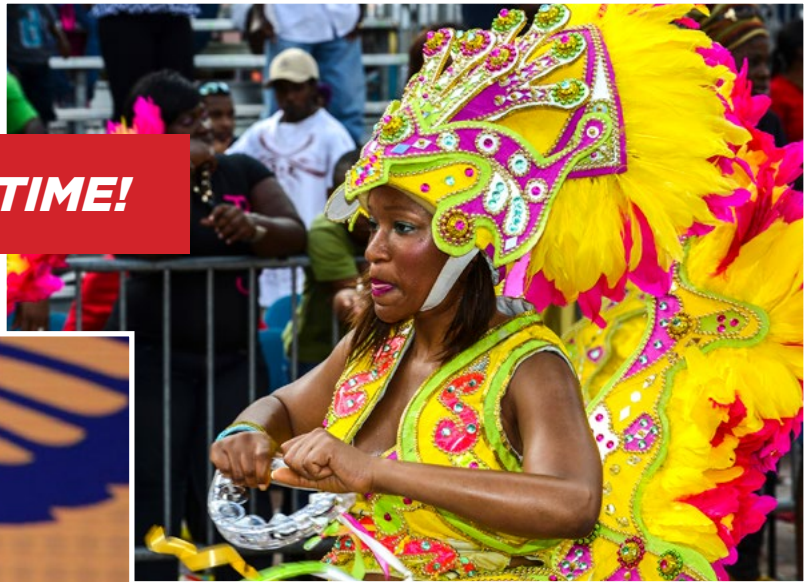
AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Create a National Youth Development Council and establish a Youth Development Fund for the support and development of our youth.
- ✓ Establish an Annual Prime Minister's Youth Award.

An FNM Government will review the recommendations contained in each section to determine those appropriate for implementation. And as has already been demonstrated by the recently held Torchbearers' Convention, the FNM has a high regard for its youth and will continue to provide them opportunities to become involved in the national decision-making process as well as share their concerns and vision for the future of our Bahamas. An FNM Government will also reorganize the structure of the Ministry of Youth and provide resources to facilitate the implementation of appropriate recommended intervention programmes.



IT'S THE PEOPLE'S TIME!



AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Complete the “Ten Year Sports Infrastructure Plan” to construct gyms and relevant athletic facilities throughout the Islands, thereby equalizing opportunities for excellence for athletes on all Islands.
- ✓ Institute a Sports Development Foundation.
- ✓ Complete the development of the Q.E. Sports Centre in accordance with the master plan.
- ✓ Continue the advancement of a state-of-the-art National Sports Academy at the University of The Bahamas.
- ✓ Encourage local participation and international competitiveness in an increasing number of sporting disciplines in compliance with The Free National Movement’s National Sports Policy.
- ✓ Incentivize Bahamian owned stores that sell only Bahamian produced/manufactured cultural



Jonquel Jones



Emily Morley

OUR CULTURE

The **Free National Movement** is aware that the way individuals or groups see and define themselves and others is formed through the socialization process and the influence of social institutions.

The **FNM** firmly believes that it is imperative that developments in the area of culture be done as a means of providing the Bahamian people, particularly young Bahamians, with opportunities for the full and unbridled understanding and expressions of our history and heritage.

The **FNM** therefore considers that it is vital to legislate the establishment of a **Ministry of Culture** to provide a regulatory framework to foster, protect and promote the full cultural expression of our people

AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Identify Crown Land to establish a Junkanoo theme park which will include a cultural village, workshops, shop space for the sale of souvenirs, native food and drinks, IMAX video presentations of past parades, guided tours and a museum.
- ✓ Implement a set of coherent objectives to foster, protect and promote the cultural expression of our people.



AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Expand and encourage the development of the cultural sector to encompass music, film production, visual, performing and literary arts.
- ✓ Establish a National Arts Council.
- ✓ Construct a National Museum of Bahamian History and Culture.
- ✓ Increase funding to the Oral History department at University of Bahamas.
- ✓ Upgrade the National Centre for the Performing Arts.
- ✓ Mandate that Heads of Agreement with Hotel industry partners contain a provision to accommodate local cultural artisans and musicians within their premises.
- ✓ Invest in the restoration and augmentation of public landmarks and monuments.
- ✓ Commit additional resources to the junior and senior Junkanoo parades throughout the country and promote an annual Goombay Summer Festival.
- ✓ Encourage the reopening of the Bahamas Film Studio in East Grand Bahama.



Expand and encourage the development of the cultural sector



ECONOMY



INTRODUCTION

For decades The Bahamas has enjoyed an enviable global position as a strong tourist and banking jurisdiction, relying on, and driven primarily by, outside architects who recognized the value of and potential in our natural and human resources. The economic realities of today's modern Bahamas, however, dictate that we can no longer solely rely on our "outsider in" historical accomplishments to sustain us, and our economy.

Accordingly, your **FNM** Government will seek to UNCAP our human resources as growers and stabilizers of the economy, and UNLEASH the potential ingenuity of The Bahamian entrepreneur to stimulate, expand, and sustain both themselves and our economy going forward.

An **FNM** government will collaborate with Trade Unions, Businesses, and the Chamber of Commerce to review the state of the economy to develop policies to facilitate economic growth

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Free National Movement's Economic Agenda for the 21st Century will be grounded in and driven by the following principles, in which we firmly believe:

- ✓ Creation of a more open, productive, and competitive society and economy is essential to The Bahamas' ability to compete successfully in today's global environment;
- ✓ Sustainable economic growth should be driven primarily by Bahamian investment and creativity, in tandem with strategic foreign direct investment

- ✓ Tax inducements, grants and incentives are necessary tools to spark economic growth
- ✓ Entrepreneurs, not the government, are the primary drivers behind new and expanded businesses;
- ✓ The private sector, in a competitive environment, is better able than the government to deliver goods and services to the public;
- ✓ An efficient public sector is essential to achieving optimal economic growth;
- ✓ Government investments in infrastructure should spur growth that takes advantage of existing human capital, and should stimulate economic growth
- ✓ Individual wealth creation is achieved through consistent savings and investment.

ECONOMIC GOALS

Underpinning our Economic Goals will be the need to increase and sustain economic growth. Therefore, your **FNM** Government's Economic Action Plan will employ a multi-pronged approach to achieve the following goals:

- ✓ Promote Fiscal Discipline,
- ✓ Stimulate Bahamian Ownership,
- ✓ Create Jobs and Reduce Poverty,
- ✓ Progress Public Sector Reform to create an efficient Public Service committed to improving the ease of doing business with the Government.

FISCAL DISCIPLINE

The fiscal management of the Bahamas has been less than desirable as evidenced by an unsustainable ballooning national debt and multiple sovereign credit rating downgrades, despite rising taxes. If left unchecked, this situation could doom future generations to a standard of living well below what is currently enjoyed in our Bahamas. To reverse this trend an **FNM** Government will:

- ✓ Review/improve the budgeting process
- ✓ Provide incentives to encourage efficient revenue collection of all taxes
- ✓ Outsource the maintenance and repair of government office furniture, especially in schools, to reduce annual recurrent expenditure
- ✓ Amend the Business License Act to ensure that businesses are not unduly burdened
- ✓ Employ Public Private Partnership (PPP) to finance capital projects which are economic in nature





BAHAMIAN OWNERSHIP

The **Free National Movement** recognizes that the stability of any economy depends on the strength of its middle class and small and medium sized businesses. As a result, in its next administration, the **FNM** will focus on empowering a new class of entrepreneurs utilizing the buying strength of government and government's influence in the private sector. To this end, an **FNM** government will:

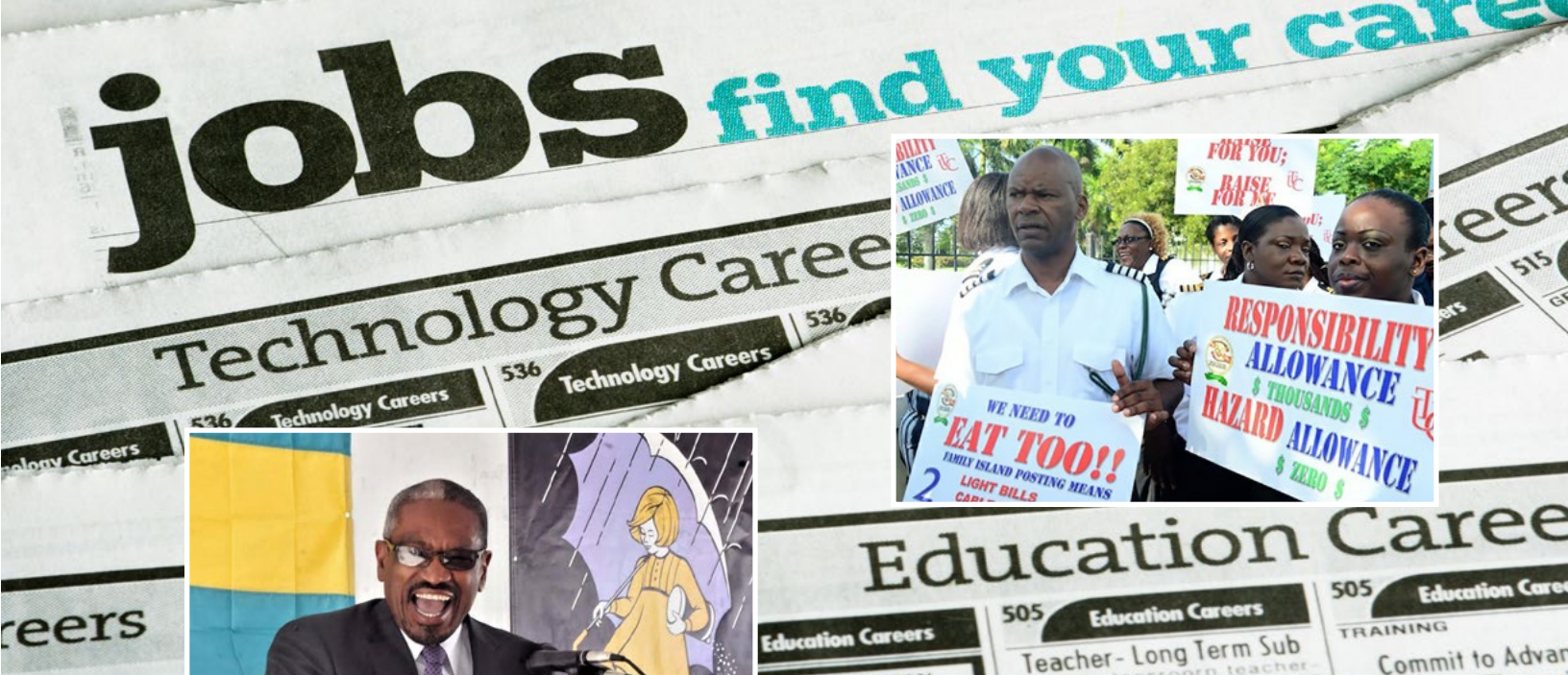
- ✓ Introduce the Small and Medium Enterprise Development agency (SMEDA Programme) to consolidate relevant government agencies, incentives, and services.
- ✓ Amend relevant financial legislation to streamline and standardize the procedure for opening domestic bank accounts.
- ✓ Encourage commercial banks to establish Small Business Units staffed with competent professionals experienced in business incubators, finance and marketing to broaden their risk profile for startups and SMEs. This includes providing mentorship and guidance through the growth stage.
- ✓ Further strengthen the Fresh Start and Jumpstart initiatives established during its last term in office, with emphasis on business ventures aimed at broadening services and products complementary to our economic base.
- ✓ Establish a One-Stop Shop to improve the ease of doing business with the government.
- ✓ Grant tax inducements and incentives comparable to or in line with those given to foreign investors engaged in the same or similar fields/industries.
- ✓ Provide New Business Incentives (NBI's) to businesses that offer the following goods and services: renewable energy, cultural, export, agricultural and fisheries, manufacturing, or authentic Bahamian souvenirs.
- ✓ Grant VAT credits to companies acquiring locally produced goods and services in the arts, entertainment, culture, agricultural, fisheries, or manufacturing industries.
- ✓ Strengthen the existing Bahamas Venture Capital Fund (BVCF) by injecting a one-time contribution of \$5 Million into the FUND.

- ✓ Ensure that more government contracts are awarded to qualified small Bahamian businesses.
- ✓ Modernize the digital infrastructure to allow for the interconnectivity of government agencies involved in providing business startup services.
- ✓ Issue Road Traffic Franchises to persons now leasing taxi plates from franchise holders.
- ✓ Implement policy to prohibit the lease of Road Traffic Franchises, except in instances where a widow/widower applies to maintain and operate the franchise previously held by the deceased spouse.
- ✓ Establish legislation to permit personal and corporate entities to restructure debts and obligations under the court ordered new debtor protection laws.

To reduce our economy's heavy dependence on tourism and banking, an **FNM** Government will:

- ✓ Revolutionize the energy sector
- ✓ Create a cultural renaissance
- ✓ Rejuvenate the tourism sector
- ✓ Enhance the aviation sector
- ✓ Expand the agriculture, fisheries, and marine sector
- ✓ Restore financial services growth
- ✓ Transform "Ova-da-Hill" communities





JOB CREATION, ECONOMIC GROWTH, POVERTY REDUCTION:

A sound infrastructure is critical to synergizing all aspects of society into a well-functioning economy. A Government's investment in infrastructural upgrades can create, drive, and sustain employment by generating jobs in many sectors, including construction and manufacturing, while also addressing socio-economic deficiencies in our Bahamas.

Your next **FNM** government, in collaboration with public/private partnerships, will invest in both new as well as in the upgrade of existing infrastructure throughout the country to bring quality infrastructure to under-served communities to prepare them for development and expansion.

These investments will include: **bridges, docks, roads, administrative complexes, and clinics** and will bring productive returns on investments while providing employment to Bahamians throughout the country. **To meet these goals, your FNM will promote:**

- ✓ Renewable energy and energy conservation to ensure more energy efficient and cost effective society;
- ✓ Inter-island transportation and the upgrading and modernizing of the Family Island airports, docks, and marinas;
- ✓ Information and communications based technology infrastructure to create an enhanced knowledge-based economy.

LABOUR



As a true friend of workers, **The Free National Movement** recognizes that the workers of our country form the bedrock of our economy. The **FNM** has taken note of the many challenges facing workers, the Labour Movement and the resulting negative impact on national productivity and the welfare of workers.

In recognition of the valuable contributions workers and the Labour Movement made and continue to make to the development of the country, our government during its three non-consecutive terms in office, accomplished the following

- ✓ Improved labor legislation resulting in 40 hour work week
- ✓ Introduced minimum wage legislation
- ✓ Increased maternity benefit entitlement
- ✓ Automatic increase of NIB pension benefit every two years
- ✓ Established Unemployment Benefit
- ✓ Mandated safer working environment at the work place.

An **FNM** government will amend/enact legislation to:

- ✓ Remove the redundancy cap of 12 years for worker compensation and dialogue with the Employers' Confederation and the Labour Movement to develop policy for the establishment of a redundancy fund;
- ✓ Increase the redundancy notice period from 30 days to 45 days
- ✓ Implement stiffer penalties for employers failing to give the required notice;
- ✓ Provide for stiffer penalties for unions engaging in unlawful industrial acts;
- ✓ Stipulate a defined period for employers to negotiate with a union once recognition has been granted;
- ✓ Provide for an independent arbitrator;
- ✓ Upgrade the Industrial side of the Supreme Court (in consultation with the Chief Justice);
- ✓ Empower the Industrial Tribunal to enforce its rulings and decisions;
- ✓ Give the Tribunal the discretion to fast-track cases in order to maintain industrial harmony;
- ✓ Amend the Act to effect the grand-fathering of unions not properly registered;
- ✓ Ensure that all Heads of Agreement recognize workers' rights;
- ✓ Eliminate the practice of appointing persons to the post of Director of Labor who served as head of a trade union immediately preceding that appointment;
- ✓ Facilitate dialogue with trade union leadership to promote and implement training and worker education programmes;

SOCIAL AGENDA



he **FNM** is committed to building a society in which those with the greatest need are granted the greatest assistance. Enhanced sensitivity, awareness and support will be given to persons challenged with special needs. To that end, an **FNM** government will:

- ✓ Launch a programme of further Real Property Tax discounts and rebates for all pensioners 65 years and older who pay Real Property Tax and qualify for such a programme;
- ✓ Continue enhanced attention to combating HIV/AIDS;
- ✓ Give heightened attention to reducing infant mortality and maternal mortality rates;
- ✓ Improve the effectiveness of the Disability Register;
- ✓ Ensure the implementation of the provisions of the Disability Equal Opportunity Act;
- ✓ Improve the effectiveness of the National Commission for Persons with Disability

The **Free National Movement** recognizes that “disabilities” covers a broad spectrum of conditions and affects each individual to differing and sometimes multiple degrees. An **FNM** government, in collaboration with all stakeholders and where practicable, will focus on implementing the following:

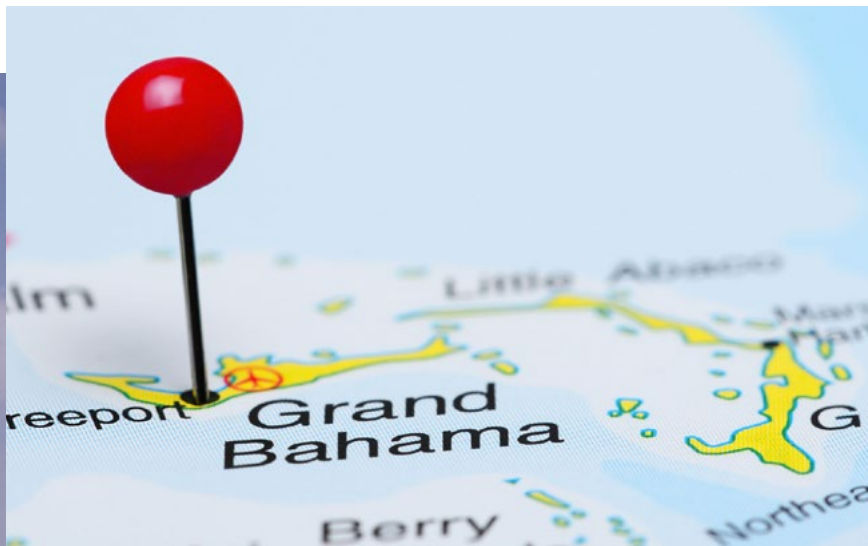
- ✓ Early intervention to provide detection and support therapies to maximize inclusion in mainstream society;
- ✓ International best practices to facilitate equality of opportunity for persons with disabilities;
- ✓ Facilitate provision of specialized equipment, orthotics, etc, up to a certain age;
- ✓ Review of priorities of the Bahamas National Commission for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) to ensure best value added in partnership with existing Non-Government Organizations (NGO's) disabilities network and identify any gaps in services to the wide range of disabilities that exist in the community;
- ✓ Establishing a reporting mechanism across government agencies for the timely delivery of services at each stage of development from diagnosis to independent living as empowered adults in an inclusive society including accessible recreation facilities;
- ✓ Enact legislation to make parking in disabled parking spots an offence punishable by hefty fines;
- ✓ Broaden the commemoration of international day for persons with disabilities through local committees throughout the Bahamas to include a broad range of activities highlighting the abilities;
- ✓ Creating a system of tax relief/credit for persons with disabilities and their families/guardians where appropriate;
- ✓ Consideration of relief from high cost of utilities through a voucher system;
- ✓ Establishing more respite facilities for persons with disabilities so siblings, caregivers, parents can have a reprieve;
- ✓ Regular job training, job fairs and skillset database for disabled persons.

GRAND BAHAMA

The full development of The Bahamas depends on the utilization of all of the natural resources of the country. The **Free National Movement** realizes that the health and strength of Grand Bahama's economy is vital to the growth and development of our Bahamas.

Once in office, The **Free National Movement** will concentrate on the revitalization of Grand Bahama's stagnant, depressed economy and give it renewed energy to restoring and expanding prosperity.

The **Free National Movement** will adopt new measures aimed at accelerating, broadening and sustaining economic development in Freeport and Grand Bahama. In consultation and negotiation with the Grand Bahama community stakeholders including Freeport Licensees, civil society, manufacturers, developers, tourism operators and professionals, we will consider all recommended measures to promote and sustain economic growth in Grand Bahama.



TO JUMPSTART AND FIX THE GRAND BAHAMA ECONOMY SO THAT WE MAY MAXIMIZE AND REALIZE NEW, SUBSTANTIAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS, THE *FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT* GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Repeal and replace The Grand Bahama (Port Area) Investment Incentives Act 2016 to ensure that all licensees receive equal treatment under the law.
- ✓ Eliminate all preferential treatment and government bureaucracy that impedes business growth on the island;
- ✓ Relocate The Bahamas Maritime Authority to Grand Bahama, establishing this island as the maritime capital of The Bahamas and leveraging the container port and shipyard infrastructure to attract additional investment in this sector;
- ✓ Expand the Lucaya Campus of the University of The Bahamas to provide dormitory housing;
- ✓ Further develop BTVI and the Hotel Training College to better serve Grand Bahama's industrial and hospitality needs.
- ✓ Promote the air, sea, land Business Park as a logistic hub focused on international air and sea transshipment;
- ✓ Utilize the airport infrastructure to develop the aviation industry and attract overnight courier services to establish airport clearing hubs on Grand Bahama;
- ✓ Revitalize and promote a dynamic investment policy to encourage high net worth persons to buy and develop real estate to critical mass that is so badly needed in Grand Bahama;
- ✓ Focus on the development of Freeport as an offshore technology hub similar to Silicon Valley;
- ✓ Establish a marine research facility in Grand Bahama;
- ✓ Revitalize Grand Bahama tourism by engaging marketing professional to create a destination brand;
- ✓ Facilitate the development of "must see" historical sites in West End, Eight Mile Rock and East Grand Bahama;
- ✓ Promote Grand Bahama as an eco-tourism sanctuary;
- ✓ Facilitate the further development of the medical tourism industry with focus on additional investments in specialty clinics;
- ✓ Construct a new hospital to serve the needs of the Northern Bahamas;
- ✓ Create incentives to establish a financial services sector in Grand Bahama;
- ✓ Encourage and facilitate the development of renewable energy on Grand Bahama;
- ✓ Establish an investment promotions board with participation by the private sector, the government, the Grand Bahama Port Authority Limited and Freeport licensees to promote Grand Bahama as a place for business as well as recreation;
- ✓ Identify Crown Land in east and west Grand Bahama for the creation of a hydro-farm and a Mariculture facility for the production of high demand crops and seafood for export;
- ✓ Promote Grand Bahama as a primary location for the local and international film and television production industries;

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

T

he Free National Movement remains convinced that The Bahamas' interests are best served by its active participation in regional, hemispheric, and international organizations, in addition to promoting and maintaining close relationships with neighboring countries, bilateral and multilateral partners, and the community of nations.



During its three non-consecutive terms in office, the **FNM** government has established a stellar record of promoting, protecting, and advancing the national interest of The Bahamas globally.

The **FNM** remains committed to maintaining and enhancing the stature of The Bahamas on the international stage, and to engage and collaborate with our regional and international partners in addressing issues of mutual interests.

DURING THIS TERM IN OFFICE THE FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Maintain the level of The Bahamas' participation in regional, hemispheric and international organizations such as CARICOM, the Organization of American States (OAS), the United Nations (UN), and the Commonwealth of Nations.
- ✓ Continue in the forefront of initiatives originating with and connected to the international and regional campaigns against the illicit traffic of narcotic drugs, other illegal substances, and firearms.

PROMOTING AND MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES...

- ✓ Strengthen national measures and enhance collaboration with regional and hemispheric partners to counter human trafficking.
- ✓ Conclude outstanding negotiations for the delimitation of our maritime boundaries.
- ✓ Advance discussions leading to The Bahamas' entry into the World Trade Organization.



- ✓ Remain active in regional and international initiatives and discussions on mitigating the impact of climate change and sea level rise, in addition to working in collaboration with the community of nations to ensure the implementation of commitments agreed.
- ✓ Continue to explore opportunities to conclude bilateral agreements for the reciprocal employment of spouses of diplomatic and Consular officers, where The Bahamas maintain resident representation.
- ✓ Adopt and implement initiatives to engage the Bahamian diaspora into our national development
- ✓ Implement a national register of Bahamian nationals overseas by skills to assist with their participation in national development, and for opportunities for engagement in regional and international organizations.
- ✓ Encourage and implement initiatives to enhance the career and professional development of diplomatic and Consular officers through targeted local and international training opportunities.
- ✓ Promote and encourage the appointment of career officials to leadership positions in the Foreign Service.
- ✓ Acquire suitable accommodations to house the permanent home of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- ✓ Review and update the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Legislation.
- ✓ Implement measures to expedite the delivery of passport and Consular services to Bahamians. Special attention will be paid to residents in the Family Islands and overseas.

IMMIGRATION

The Immigration Department is responsible for processing applications for citizenship, permanent residency and annual residency and work permits. Immigration Officers determine whether an arriving passenger meets the criteria to enter the country as a visitor, a work permit holder, or as a temporary/permanent resident.

The FNM's goal is to remove elements which exploit deficiencies in processes, improve fairness for applicants, accommodate the needs of businesses, and address the needs of the Bahamian people and of our economy.

The Department of Immigration is an important part of the law enforcement and national security apparatus of our country, and it is in urgent need of reorganization and modernization so as to improve its capacity and effectiveness in discharging its duties and in protecting our borders.





AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Continue the reorganization and strengthening of the Department's human resources and equipment to improve the Department's capacity and effectiveness in discharging its responsibilities for manning and protecting our borders against illegal immigration and trafficking
- ✓ Introduce the Automated Passport System to all ports of entry in the country
- ✓ Upgrade the technological infrastructure on all islands and ports.
- ✓ Address the longstanding issue of delayed overtime payments and salary anomalies
- ✓ Strengthen coordination between Immigration and Customs to maximize benefits from both uniform services
- ✓ Enhance surveillance and security agencies at ports of entry and at private marinas
- ✓ Reduce illegal immigration through enhanced intelligence gathering and continued conduct of regular and routine apprehension, detention, fingerprinting, and repatriation
- ✓ Legislate stiffer penalties and rigorously enforce laws against trafficking and repeat illegal immigrant offenders, and those who employ illegal labor
- ✓ Continue our cross-border relationships with the U.S. Coast Guard and other international law enforcement agencies
- ✓ Support the Immigration 24-hour Tip Line with appropriate reward
- ✓ Set up an Immigration Council to deal with all matters related to permanent residency, annual residency, and work permits
- ✓ Expedite the naturalization and/or registration of children born to Bahamian women who are married to non-Bahamians
- ✓ Expedite the regularization of the status of long term residents and of persons born and raised in The Bahamas to non-Bahamian parents

TOURISM

As the principal cog in the economic engine of The Bahamas and the source of reliable steady employment and business opportunities for our people, the tourism product comprises a unique blend of human experiences combined with an expansive geographic cornucopia of some of the world's most beautiful beaches, translucent blue waters, natural sites and resources.

The business of tourism in The Bahamas represents the largest percentage of our GDP and is driven by a strong demand from our customers to experience these phenomenal resources. In the face of mounting global and regional competition, it is important therefore, that The Bahamas tourism industry be continuously reinvigorated to maintain its prominence as the premier warm weather destination in our region.

The **Free National Movement** is convinced that The Bahamas' potential to attract major motion picture and television projects has not been aggressively explored so as to further diversify the tourism industry.



TO THIS END, AN *FNM* GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Enact legislation to facilitate the growth and promotion of the film and television industries;
- ✓ Promote Grand Bahama as the leading destination for motion picture and television projects;
- ✓ Encourage and support Bahamian film makers and television producers;
- ✓ In collaboration with the private sector, launch development of the waterfront from Woodes Rogers Wharf eastward to Armstrong Street to create waterfront recreational and commercial space conducive to new retail and restaurant businesses.
- ✓ Promote The Bahamas as comprising a kaleidoscopic region of destinations by showcasing the significant and compelling character peculiar to each island or group of islands;
- ✓ Encourage public/private partnership in the restoration and maintenance of historic sites throughout the country and designate iconic locations as “**must see**” to broaden and enhance the tourism experience, e.g., **Clifton Heritage** in New Providence; **Mount Alvernia** in Cat Island; **Columbus Monument** in San Salvador, etc.
- ✓ Continue support for Family Island Regattas, Home-coming and other traditional festivals by providing proper funding, international marketing and promotion.
- ✓ Strengthen the Heritage Tourism Initiative;
- ✓ Continue the redevelopment of the City of Nassau to include completion of renovations to **Festival Place (Welcome Centre)** and in collaboration with the Downtown Nassau Development Committee to encourage public/private partnership for restoring historic buildings in the city precinct;
- ✓ Develop a hotel and hospitality incentive programme to encourage Bahamian entrepreneurs to engage in meaningful involvement in the industry.
- ✓ Ensure that small hotels and Bonefish Lodges that are 20 rooms or less, are reserved for local ownership only;
- ✓ Encourage/Support high-end sports tourism events like Golf, Speed Week, etc.;
- ✓ Continue the promotion and advocacy of Eco-Tourism;
- ✓ Provide marketing and promotional assistance to small Family Island hotels and Lodges;
- ✓ Work with the transportation industry to resolve the challenges of connecting visitors to the tourism experiences in the islands of The Bahamas.
- ✓ Encourage and support the participation of Bahamian cultural groups in strategic international festivals and events to maximize the promotion of The Bahamas.
- ✓ Promote the utilization of Bahamian produce and products in the hotel and restaurant establishments

HEALTHCARE



BACKGROUND

The state of the nation's public healthcare institutions has deteriorated over the past few years.

In the face of increasing demand and utilization by thousands of newly indigent and working people, quality health care in The Bahamas is all about long lines, overcrowded wards and emergency rooms, shortages of essential drugs, equipment shortages, inconsistent goals and or standards, patient disappointment, and anguish.

In some communities in the Family Islands, there are no resident medical doctors...

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas has been challenged to keep pace with the technological and innovative strategies that have changed the way healthcare services are delivered. Charges for cardiovascular, oncologic, imaging, endoscopic, and other catastrophic services remain high and access to such services is currently inadequate to meet the burgeoning demand.

It is widely acknowledged that during its three non-consecutive terms in office beginning in 1992, successive FNM Government Administrations have established a proud record of healthcare delivery improvements in:

- ✓ The construction, upgrade, and expansion of state-of-the-art facilities and services throughout New Providence and the Family Islands;
- ✓ The conditions of service for all levels of healthcare staff;
- ✓ Reducing treatment costs for chronic and preventative illnesses;
- ✓ Legislating the regulation of healthcare facilities and the employment of appropriately qualified allied health professionals;
- ✓ Expanding training programmes for all categories of healthcare personnel;
- ✓ Implementing incrementally, a progressive National Catastrophic Health Insurance Programme.



We firmly believe that all Bahamians should have easy access to affordable and excellent healthcare, and during our term in office we will as a priority:

1. Upgrade the present health infrastructure (physical, human and administrative).
2. Ensure easy and affordable access by all Bahamians to primary, secondary, and tertiary (advanced) including critical care
3. Provide the patient's right to choose, as one size certainly never fits all.
4. Develop a system that is viable and sustainable
5. Embrace a national healthy lifestyle program to entrench a preventative and wellness strategy to effectively deal with the scourge of the many related lifestyle illness

IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE THE QUALITY OF CARE, AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:



- ✓ Implement a functional NHI plan with a robust catastrophic health-care component;
- ✓ Fund, construct and open a national blood bank to service the blood-banking needs of the entire country;
- ✓ Establish an independent facility for the Coroner;
- ✓ Build an adequate national morgue;
- ✓ Continue its programme of upgrading healthcare facilities across The Bahamas to -provide an ambience and standard of care appropriate for the 21st Century;
- ✓ Construct a new Emergency Room, Step-down Unit, Maternal, and Child Healthcare wings at PMH with the capacity and ambience appropriate to the needs of a modern Bahamas;
- ✓ Provide non-invasive and invasive cardiac care at the Rand Memorial Hospital (RMH) and the Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH);
- ✓ Create new medical wings and a new ICU at the RMH;
- ✓ Initiate the modernization of the medical staff by the hiring of exclusively full-time consultant clinicians in the major disciplines and the migration to a training-track program for all House-staff within Public Hospitals Authority (PHA) facilities;
- ✓ Improve the working conditions and employment of Consultant staff physicians;
- ✓ Upgrade existing/construct new kitchens and cafeterias at all three PHA facilities;
- ✓ Open and maximize the efficiency and impact of the mini-hospitals in the Family Islands (Abaco and Exuma) and construct a new mini hospital in Eleuthera;
- ✓ Review incentives to fully-trained Bahamian clinicians to serve on the Family Islands;
- ✓ Move all Ambulatory Clinics and Outpatient (ambulatory) Dialysis services to off site;
- ✓ Complete the full implementation of an electronic medical record system and digitize all paper records;
- ✓ Create opportunities in healthcare by the outsourcing of services which could be more efficiently handled by qualified vendors;
- ✓ Renegotiate the procurement of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies to ensure patient safety and optimum outcomes;
- ✓ Incentivize and promote a high-end health and wellness industry;
- ✓ Encourage further telemedicine expansion throughout The Bahamas.

CRIME

The **Free National Movement** firmly believes that it is the right of every citizen to live and work in a safe, secure, and prosperous community. We believe also that crime is a societal and not a political problem and hence we are committed to collaborating and working with all community partners: parents, educators, church leaders, youth leaders, social workers, and all relevant agencies of the government. Our strategy will involve the use of the latest, state-of-the-art technology to identify and successfully combat the root causes of crime. Our focus will be on prevention, deterrence, enforcement, rehabilitation, and re-integration.

AN FNM GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Enforce a zero tolerance for crime inclusive of minor infractions of the law;
- ✓ Develop a modern, efficient crime fighting machine properly manned, trained, educated, and equipped to prevent crime where possible, detect crime when it occurs and bring those responsible to account before the courts;
- ✓ Establish, build and equip an independent Forensic Lab;
- ✓ Work with community-based partners to change the culture of violence in our communities through neighborhood safety programmes;
- ✓ Eliminate habitats where criminality flourish;
- ✓ Enact legislation to establish the National Intelligence Agency (NIA);
- ✓ Use state-of-the-art technology in our fight against crime including gunshot detection devices, social media exploitation technologies, drones, etc.;
- ✓ Establish a National Neighbourhood Watch Consultative Council to oversee and promote Neighbourhood Watch



- ✓ Establish a Public Sector Anti-Corruption Agency (PSAC);
- ✓ Conduct a comprehensive review of police officers compensation;
- ✓ Reinstitute term limits for the Commissioner of Police, Commodore of the Defense Force and The Commissioner of Corrections;
- ✓ Reorganize the Police Reserves;
- ✓ Strengthen Defense Force satellite base presence/operations in the Northern, Central, Southern and Southeastern Bahamas;
- ✓ Enforce Marco's Law inclusive of the establishment of a Sexual Offenders Register;
- ✓ Implement aggressive measures to arrest the trafficking of narcotics, firearms, trafficking in persons, illegal immigration and poaching;
- ✓ Place emphasis on the detection of financial, commercial, and cyber-crimes;
- ✓ Arrest gang crime and violence with the assistance of all stakeholders in the formulating of effective programmes designed to educate our youth about the dangers of the gang culture and steer them away from gangs;
- ✓ Establish a Guns and Gang Unit whose focus will be on dismantling gangs and disrupting the trafficking in illicit firearms;
- ✓ Undertake a comprehensive manpower audit of the Police Force to determine the appropriate establishment to ensure that our Police Force have the requisite manpower to effectively execute its mandate;
- ✓ Identify an external Inspector for our law enforcement agencies consistent with the 2009 Police Act whose responsibility it will be to review the efficiency and effectiveness of our enforcement agencies as they provide services to our communities.



JUDICIAL REFORM



he proper and efficient functioning of the judiciary is important in the fight against crime and to ensure that aggrieved persons receive justice within a reasonable period. The backlog of cases is well documented as are the issues surrounding the granting of bail to persons who commit serious crimes.

To address those issues, a Free National Movement government will:

DURING ITS 2007 -2012 ADMINISTRATION THE *FNM*:

- ✓ Legislate a Court Services Act to take the Office of the Judiciary out of the Public Service to be administered by an autonomous body similar to the Public Hospital Authority. The newly created Office of the Judiciary will have a Chief Executive Officer whose primary responsibility will be administration and not law thus enabling the Registrar to deal exclusively with matters relating to the work of courts.
- ✓ Provide judges with Clerical assistants to assist them in the preparation of their judgments.
- ✓ Amend the Matrimonial Causes Act to make the problem of divorce and separation less traumatic.
- ✓ Reform the Limitation Act by giving the courts of The Bahamas power to extend the limitation period in personal injury actions or fatal accident claims.
- ✓ Amend the Prevention of Bribery Act
- ✓ Amend the 82 year old Magistrates' Rules of Court 1934 which govern proceedings in that court. Magistrate Court summonses will no longer be served by police officers only.
- ✓ Introduce digital recording to reduce the need for Magistrates to record evidence manually.
- ✓ Change the method of collecting child maintenance support which has been paid into the courts.
- ✓ Strictly follow the Law which governs the independent and transparent determination of salaries and emoluments paid to members of the Judiciary.
- ✓ Require all new Magistrates and Judges to attend the newly created Justice Training Institute.
- ✓ Ensure that the maximum numbers of judges are sitting at any given time and that the requisite facilities are available for them to do so.
- ✓ Increase resources allocated to the entire administration of justice system so that cases are heard more speedily. This will entail the engagement of more judges, attorneys in the AG's office, and contracts with private defense attorneys until the backlog of cases is addressed

AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES

AGRICULTURE

The **Free National Movement** is concerned about both the high level of dependency that Bahamians have on imports to feed themselves as well as the negative impact that this has on the country's balance of payments.

Our long-term goal is to drastically reduce our reliance on imports by growing, processing, marketing, and exporting our own food, thereby simultaneously reducing the country's balance of payment. The **FNM** recognizes that the efficient operation and adequate funding of the Family Islands Packing Houses and Mail Boat services are vital to achieving these goals.



DURING OUR TERM IN OFFICE, YOUR FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Legislate policy to establish, equip, and appropriately staff BAMS I to function as a National Agriculture and Fisheries Research Institute (NAFRI) under the auspices of the University of The Bahamas
- ✓ Implement a strategic plan to enable BAMS I to focus on the production of quality products for the local and export markets
- ✓ Provide tax incentives and concessions to encourage Bahamian farmers and farming cooperatives throughout the country to promote sustained production and packaging to ensure a continuous supply of quality products to customers
- ✓ Privatize The Produce Exchange
- ✓ In collaboration with the Mail Boat Operators, upgrade the mail boat service and packing house operations to facilitate expanded inter-island trade
- ✓ Provide farm land, tractors, refrigerated trailers, computers, and business services to Bahamian farmers to support the industry
- ✓ Provide scientific and training support in the best agricultural practices
- ✓ Improve product development, research, and technology to expand the country's processing capacity
- ✓ Institute a Crop Forecasting System to enable timely planting, harvesting and distribution of produce to prevent waste
- ✓ Strengthen and provide support to the Agricultural Extension Unit to further assist with the modernization of the agricultural sector



IT'S THE PEOPLE'S TIME!

FISHERIES

An **FNM** government proposes to increase both the economic returns and employment opportunities in the fishing industry by pursuing the following strategies:



- ✓ Promote training and skills development in conservation, identification, and exploitation of marine resources
- ✓ Promote investment in aquaculture, mariculture, and modern sea farming strategies
- ✓ Legislate policy to mandate the installation of GPS trackers on all boats granted Fishing Licenses in order to eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing in Bahamian waters
- ✓ Create additional protected marine areas with a view to achieve the stated national goal of protecting 20% of the national seabed by 2020
- ✓ Promote the study of the country's marine resources with a view to create opportunities for the artificial propagation and enhancement of local fishing stocks
- ✓ Seek the assistance of international organizations to provide ongoing technical and financial support to ensure the growth, protection, viability, and sustainability of our marine resources.

LAND & HOUSING

Beginning in 1992, the **FNM** began a programme to systematically reclaim publicly owned lands taking into account construction that had been undertaken and occupation thereon. This resulted in the government making title available to parcels of land to families in long and productive occupation of Government-owned land. At the end of its last administration, as many as some 3,000 individuals around the country received title to property upon which they have lived and worked, in some cases for generations.

DURING ITS 2007 -2012 ADMINISTRATION THE *FNM*:

- ✓ Launched a \$75 Million government initiated housing program to assist Bahamians with home ownership;
- ✓ Increased first time Home-owners' Stamp Tax exemption to \$500,000;
- ✓ Reduced the down-payment required for persons applying for low-income government houses from 10 to 5 percent to extend the opportunity for home ownership to more Bahamians.

IN ITS 2012 MANIFESTO, THE *FNM* PLEDGED TO:

- ✓ Continue the regularization of long-term unauthorized occupation of Crown Lands for individuals and families;
- ✓ Continue the development of new government housing subdivisions to address the unmet demand for affordable housing;
- ✓ Put in place arrangements to provide assistance to homeowners threatened with foreclosure on their homes who but for unemployment, illness or loss of income had maintained good credit histories with their lenders.

THE *FNM* HAS ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT HOME OWNERSHIP IS ESSENTIAL TO UPLIFT OUR PEOPLE AND BUILD OUR NATION AND ACCORDINGLY, REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO ITS 2012 PLEDGES.

ADDITIONALLY, AN *FNM* GOVERNMENT WILL:

- ✓ Enact legislation to provide for a "rent-to-own" programme to facilitate home ownership;
- ✓ Review legislation to ensure that adequate provisions exist for the protection of home owners with respect to foreclosures and mortgage protection.

ENVIRONMENT

Protection, Preservation, Resilience

Meeting the needs of today without compromising the needs of future generations.

Like many Small Island Nations, the Islands of The Bahamas are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts, with many being threatened in recent times by rising sea levels and an increasing number and severity of extreme weather events. As The Bahamas has witnessed in the past two years alone, the impact of climate change in terms of damage to property and infrastructure can easily cripple a small island economy such as ours.

By contrast, it has been globally recognized that Small Island Nations are among the least responsible for climate change. Consequently, during the **FNM** Government's three non-consecutive terms in office, The Bahamas took seriously the need to ensure that significant action was taken to reverse and/or mitigate natural as well as man-made environmental decline particularly that resulting from poorly functioning and managed dump sites throughout the islands. The Free National Movement remains committed to ensuring that the work undertaken under its previous administrations in implementing and managing properly engineered land fill sites in New Providence and the Family Islands to prevent and mitigate the negative impact on residents and the environment is completed.

The Bahamas also participated in many International meetings on these subjects and worked assiduously with the international community to advance the process for securing global environmental protection and sustainability. Following a number of agreements reached by the global community over the years, The Bahamas became a signatory to and ratified the United Nations' "**Framework Convention on Climate Change**" on 4th November, 2016.

The **Free National Movement** believes that the integration of environmental, economic and social priorities into policies and programmes requires the action of all stakeholders - citizens, industry, Government – hence remains committed to using responsibly, the natural resources of The Bahamas to ensure the conservation and protection of its biodiversity.



The **FNM** remains committed to ensuring that the work commenced under its previous administration in implementing properly engineered land fill sites in New Providence and the Family Islands to prevent and mitigate the negative impact on residents and the environment is completed.

An **FNM** Government will continue in its commitment not only to support directly, the process of environmental sustainability, but also to fight for proper international action to be taken to limit emissions of green-house gases and to adapt to climate change. Your **re-elected FNM Government will:**

Create a Ministry of the Environment by enacting legislation to incorporate existing strands of environment-related policies currently embodied in legislation governing various Ministries/Departments/Agencies to bring more focused attention on those policies applicable to the following, *inter alia*:

- ✓ The Department of Environmental Health Services;
- ✓ “The Bahamas Environment, Science and Technology Commission” (BEST) as a Body Corporate;
- ✓ “The Bahamas Protected Areas Fund” (BPAF);
- ✓ Development of National Parks, Beaches, Marine & Wetlands Protected areas;
- ✓ Wildlife conservation;
- ✓ Land Use.

Additionally, an FNM government will:

- ✓ Enact legislation for the creation of an Environment Authority;
- ✓ Review and re-engineer the operations of the New Providence and Family Islands Land-fills by strengthening institutional capacity to provide effective management and maintenance of these sites;
- ✓ Implement a **Waste-to-Energy** programme to provide electricity to the land fill site and adjacent properties;
- ✓ Inaugurate a National Clean-up Day;
- ✓ Phase out the use of plastic bags by 2020;
- ✓ Upgrade the country’s capacity to properly test emissions that impact the environment;
- ✓ Establish an organized National Abatement Programme to deal with the infestation of flies and rodents;
- ✓ Provide the frame-work for provision of mandatory and immediate release of information in cases of environmental incidents.

TRANSFORMING “OVA-DA-HILL”



For many years those inner city areas of New Providence that are bounded on the west by Nassau Street, on the north by Meeting Street, on the east by Collins Wall and on the south by Wulff Road & Poinciana Drive and known as “Ova-Da-Hill”, have not received the kind of attention that is required to transform its businesses, residences and overall environs.

The **Free National Movement** has a vision for the future of “Ova-Da-Hill” as well as for other similarly economically and socially depressed areas – a vision that will transform lives for the better by declaring war on poverty and by implementing creative programmes to transform these communities into vibrant economic jewels.

Accordingly, an **FNM** government will enact legislation to establish **economic enterprise zones** in New Providence to encourage the revitalization of these areas by providing Bahamian entrepreneurs and investors with certain tax exemptions and fiscal incentives similar to those currently available under the CITY OF NASSAU REVITALIZATION ACT, THE FAMILY ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT (ENCOURAGEMENT) ACT and THE FAMILY ISLANDS ECONOMIC ENTERPRISE ZONES ACT.

The FNM is convinced that by utilizing these and similar models to create tax-free economic zones in these neighbourhoods is the right path for reinvigorating and transforming our “Ova-Da-Hill” areas. To this end, an FNM Government will:

- ✓ Encourage the promotion of small and medium sized businesses by providing them the incentives and assistance needed to survive and thrive;
- ✓ Make provision of potable water, sewer and sanitation services and electricity throughout the “Ova-Da-Hill” area and other similarly identified communities;
- ✓ Encourage and empower absentee landowners to re-develop their ancestral lands and abandoned buildings;
- ✓ Create tax-free economic zones in these areas to encourage business growth and spur job creation in the redevelopment phase and beyond;
- ✓ Enact legislation which allows duty free concessions on all construction materials and building supplies used in the construction of business premises and new and/or refurbished owner-occupied homes;
- ✓ Operate these Tax-Free Economic Zones within a safe and clean environment with each zone addressing the socio-economic situation of the area through tripartite arrangements with landlords, government agencies and Bahamian investors;
- ✓ Establish multi-purpose community centers with amenities to provide supervised activities designed to promote and strengthen family and social cohesion for the youth and the elderly;
- ✓ Subject to annual review for renewal, exempt zoned businesses with aggregate gross sales of \$5 - 7 million dollars from paying a business license tax and grant VAT credits based upon their VAT output.

ENERGY

Recognizing the importance of a robust Energy Sector to the future development of our economy and the preservation of our pristine environment, the **FNM** will ignite a comprehensive energy revolution designed to assure reliability and reduce costs to the consumer, while simultaneously preserving our environment.

The goal is to reduce our dependence on fossil fuel by aggressively utilizing renewable sources of energy including solar, wind, wave, LNG, Methane, waste-to-energy and bio-diesel.

Our key initiative will be aimed at both improving and modernizing our current energy procurement, production, and distribution methods.



YOUR FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT GOVERNMENT WILL REVOLUTIONIZE THE ENERGY SECTOR BY:

- ✓ Privatizing The Bahamas Electricity Corporation (BEC) to ensure Bahamian ownership through majority shareholding
- ✓ Providing incentives and tax concessions to:
 - Local private companies for the production and supply of alternate fuel sources including: waste-to-energy, bio-diesel, methane, LNG, and wind and solar energy in New Providence and the Family Islands
 - Publicly traded alternative energy companies (AECs) that provide services in areas of assembly, installation, and maintenance of renewable energy sources
- ✓ Introducing pre-paid “smart metering”/Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) as an option for consumers
- ✓ Creating a renewable energy economy by supporting and promoting a National Solarization Programme
- ✓ Reducing the cost of energy by modernizing the electricity generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure





FAMILY ISLAND DEVELOPMENT

The **Free National Movement** firmly believes that the key to the sustainable economic growth of The Bahamas is dependent upon the exploration and development of the untapped resources of the Family Islands. In this regard the FNM has also taken note of today's increased need globally for maritime transportation services and in collaboration the private sector, will undertake a feasibility study for establishing a container port at a suitable location in the South Eastern Bahamas.

Additionally, an **FNM** government's Family Island economic growth strategy will focus on the following major considerations:

1. Improved and Empowered Local Government
2. Economic Empowerment of Family Islands
3. Provision of Essential Services and Access to quality Education.

1. IMPROVED AND EMPOWERED LOCAL GOVERNMENT

THE FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT COMMITS TO THE FOLLOWING:

- ✓ Amend existing legislation and policies to enhance/increase the authority of Family Islands Local Government to:
 - Enable Bahamians greater opportunities to make crucial decisions related to the overall economic growth, development and governance of their islands;
 - Raise capital for specific pre-approved, strategic projects for advancing the island's economic development;

- Ensure that a proportionate amount of resources generated within each island is allocated to that island for its own development.
- Encourage each island to establish an Economic Council
- Empower each island to establish Boards and Committees to draft their own overall development plan in the context of the Bahamas National Development Plan
- Establish local “townships” where necessary.

2. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF THE FAMILY ISLANDS—

An FNM government commits to providing incentives to encourage descendants to return and invest in their islands. Subject to prescribed criteria and periodic review, these incentives include the following and apply to all The Islands:

- Government grant of Crown Land;
- Tax exemption for specific periods;
- Technical and marketing assistance;

ISLAND SPECIFIC INCENTIVES

Based on the approval of the Island’s overall development plan, our government will provide incentives specific to industries identified as part of an island’s economic development mode:

- ✓ Renew The Family Island Development Act;
 - Our government will extend The Family Island Development Act to specific islands. This Act will remain in place for these islands with annual reviews to determine further use.
- ✓ Foster an Authentic Bahamian Tourism Industry;
- ✓ Promote and encourage the development of additional Bahamian-owned tourism facilities;
- ✓ Incentivize the development of small, environmentally friendly boutique hotels, bone- fish lodges and other small quality resorts through marketing and promotional support;



INTER-ISLAND LINKAGES

- ✓ Encourage greater inter-island linkages to accommodate the further development and economic growth of our Family Islands;
- ✓ Ensure that family island airports and docks are modernized to facilitate these linkages;
- ✓ Encourage the growth of fast and efficient sea transportation to encourage trade of goods and services between islands as well as inter-island cruises;
- ✓ Promote and incentivize locally owned airlines to establish local hubs through strategic partnerships with international airlines to encourage and facilitate greater inter-island air transportation for our people and tourists;

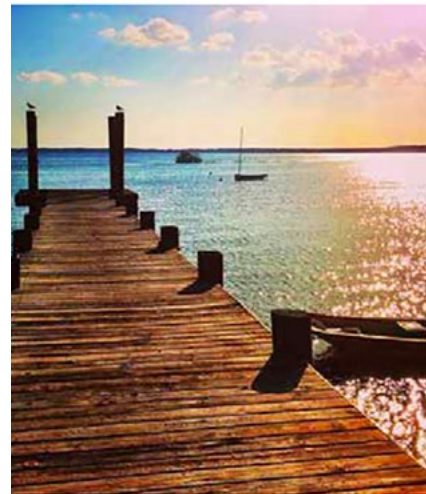
GOVERNMENT JUMP START ECONOMIES

Our less developed and under-served islands will qualify to receive government incentives to jump-start their economies. These initiatives will represent our affirmative economic actions to directly contribute to the growth of these specific Islands.

Based on the approval of the island's overall development plan, an **FNM** Government will provide incentives specific to industries identified as part of an island's economic development model.

An **FNM** Government will promote a more diversified Family Island economy to include:

- ✓ Growth in agriculture, fisheries and manufacturing
- ✓ Diversification in agricultural produce among the Family Islands to enhance inter-island trade
- ✓ Diversification in tourism and banking and creating more Bahamian ownership of these industries
- ✓ To include the purchase of locally manufactured goods and services and other supplies
- ✓ Renew The Family Island Development Act to promote:
 - Growth in agriculture, fisheries and manufacturing.
 - Diversification in growing agricultural produce among the Family Islands to enhance inter-island trade



3. PROVISION OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES AND ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

Our Government will be committed to ensuring that all of our Family Islands have the following essential services necessary for survival, development, growth and sustainability:

- ✓ Quality potable Water
- ✓ Proper Dock and Airport facilities
- ✓ Modern Health Care facilities
- ✓ Functioning fire-fighting equipment together with locally trained volunteer firemen
- ✓ Telecommunications
- ✓ Functioning hurricane shelters
- ✓ Energy

Access to quality education will continue to be our priority focus as we continue our programme of upgrading, maintaining and properly staffing our educational facilities throughout our archipelago to ensure that they provide the best quality education to meet the needs of this 21st century.



FREE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

FNM



IT'S THE PEOPLE'S TIME

ourfnm.org