

# Commonwealth of the Bahamas

## Independence Message 2018

**Dr. the Hon. Hubert Minnis**

**Prime Minister of the Bahamas**

**on the 44<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Independence**

**10 July 2018**

Today we celebrate with pride the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our country's sovereignty. Our accomplishments have been attained through the collaboration of the public, private and social/nonprofit sectors at home and in the international arena.

In recognition of the stellar contributions of our citizens, this year we are inaugurating a system of national honours, which will be presented for the first time during this year's independence celebrations.

Our journey as a people began in the seventeenth century as a small British colony, long before national independence.

We have endured and demonstrated resilience through the periods of colonialism, slavery and post-emancipation, eventually achieving internal self-government, Majority Rule and the birth of an independent Bahamas on 10 July, 1973.

In the midst of our struggles we have experienced tremendous success, demonstrating an indomitable spirit and a compelling desire to excel against the odds.

The past forty-five years have been marked by numerous accomplishments.

Among these accomplishments are: economic and political stability; advances in education, health, and social services; the creation of a world-renowned national park system; the achievements of world-class athletes at the Olympic Games and in other athletic arenas; public sector reform; and academic, artistic and athletic success by many young people at home and abroad.

Even as we celebrate our accomplishments, we must acknowledge and address our challenges, including confronting crime, mitigating climate change and tackling the rate of non-communicable diseases and obesity.

We must also address the need for more sustained economic development, ongoing public sector reform and Family Island development.

In the years ahead, The Bahamas will experience enhanced social development, with free education for qualified students of the University of the Bahamas and Bahamas Technical and Vocational Institute; an ambitious new affordable home ownership program; revitalization of Over-the-Hill in New Providence; new health initiatives in critical care and improving nutrition; and various citizen safety and social intervention initiatives.

Even though a small number of our young people pursue misguided paths, the majority of young Bahamians desire opportunities to succeed and to contribute to the common good.

Our great national challenge and dedicated task is to provide successive generations with opportunities to develop and to utilize their gifts in the ongoing development of our Commonwealth.

We have been blessed with extraordinary natural beauty - especially our spectacular waters, beaches, and biodiversity - a common heritage, which all of us have a duty to safeguard and preserve.

As in years past, I take this opportunity to make special mention of our diplomatic officers and other representatives overseas, who are to be commended for ably representing the interest of our country in various capacities. I thank them for the essential work they do on behalf of our country.

The theme for this year's independence celebrations, "**Celebrate Bahamas: We've Come This Far By Faith**", reminds that our achievements as a nation are due to our faith in Almighty God and to our abiding faith in our collective ability to meet our challenges with resolve and resilience.

In this spirit, let us always seek God's guidance. May God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas as we continue our national journey.



Hubert A. Minnis  
PRIME MINISTER