



Ministry of Transport & Aviation

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STATEMENT BY THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS ON THE OPENING OF THE 28TH SESSION OF THE IMO ASSEMBLY

TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER, 2013
LONDON, ENGLAND

Mr. President, Secretary General, Distinguished Ministers and Delegates.

It is my distinct privilege to address you on behalf of the People of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. I do so in the year of our 40th Anniversary of National Independence and as a member of this august body for 37 years.

I begin my remarks by congratulating the President and Vice President on your respective elections. You are assured of the full support and cooperation of my Delegation as you steer the work of this 28th Assembly.

I wish to renew our fullest confidence in our Secretary General. He has shown steady and focused leadership even in the face of extraordinary challenge.



One of the most important themes of this past biennium has been his "Review and Reform" initiative and we have been proud to have consistently been in the forefront of efforts to ensure that the work of the Organization is relevant, efficient and cost-effective.

Mr. President, Fellow Delegates,

Maritime shipping which occupies the time and resources of this body is played out daily in the theatre of our planet's oceans and seas.

Our oceans have been described as the "lifeblood" of planet Earth and humankind.

They flow over nearly three-quarters of our planet, and hold 97% of the planet's water.

They produce more than half of the oxygen in the atmosphere, and absorb the most carbon from it.

They contain rich fisheries resources, and facilitate world trade through varied shipping routes.

The preservation and sustained enhancement of our marine environment is, therefore, not only key to a sustainable shipping industry but to life in general and hence a responsibility shared by each of us represented here today



This is why we come together in this place : to deliberate and decide on sound principles based upon a common international approach even when our respective national interests may differ or compete.

The Bahamas, an archipelagic nation of 700 islands, rocks and cays, is one of the Member States most directly affected by such challenges: Our way of life is defined by the sea and our archipelago is dependent upon maritime transport of goods and people for our economic, social and cultural life.

The protection and conservation of the marine environment is, therefore, crucial to the existence of The Bahamas and we are peculiarly cognizant of this responsibility.

We understand that the stewardship of these oceans must be carried out based upon the collective experience, shared knowledge and best practices and expertise of all nation states. In consequence we have acceded to the major international maritime conventions including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of The Sea.

And it is this understanding which undergirds our membership in this Organization and assures that we fully enforce International Maritime Conventions on Bahamas Ships worldwide.



At the same time, however, we also understand the danger of regulatory fatigue which can undermine and counter the shared objectives and this is why we continuously advocate for better, clearer, simpler and more efficient regulations.

The Bahamas is very proud of its fleet as it continues to operate at the very highest levels of quality and regulatory compliance.

We are honoured to have the flag of our country displayed on an array of vessels including some of the world's finest and largest passenger vessels featuring such innovation and cutting edge design and concepts that they challenge current regulatory frameworks.

Our ship registry spans a diverse spectrum from the largest passenger ships to the largest bulk carriers and tankers to the most technologically advanced ships which extract mineral resources from the seabed.

The synergy created by such a dynamic fleet portfolio has led to an enhanced knowledge and understanding of the maritime industries and the associate challenges faced and in particular challenges experienced in difficult economic times.



It is this critical knowledge base and tested experience, combined with our commitment to advocacy for regulation that is timely, proportionate, clear and practical which informs our active membership in this Organization.

We will continue to uphold and emphasise the importance of the guidelines on working practices at the IMO as a vital discipline to achieve our shared objectives in the most timely and efficient fashion.

We are also honoured to be a member of the Steering Group on the Reduction of Administrative Requirements: it is our objective to achieve a reduction of the administrative burdens on ship operators and masters and indeed administrations, particularly those of small island developing states. The measures recommended will be formulated based upon public consultation.

Since becoming a member state of the IMO, The Bahamas has maintained active representation in all committees and sub-committees

We have a proven track record of submitting constructive and technically sound proposals and we strive to work closely and cooperatively with other Delegations to find common ground and collaborations.



We are committed to the goals and objectives of the IMO and its critical role of creating a viable framework for shipping activities while ensuring the highest practicable standards for the protection of the environment, and the procurement of safety and security for all involved.

We Commit to this Organization remaining strong as ever.

We are Proud of our membership in this august body.

We are Honoured to have been entrusted to serve on Council over the past biennium.

We fully Respect the responsibilities and obligations and duties which come with Council membership and we Believe we have made substantive, positive and progressive contribution.

There is more work to do, however, and it is for this reason that we again offer ourselves up for election in Category 'C' of the Council.

We are Hopeful that you will see fit to support a continuing contribution by The Bahamas on the Council and we Pledge that we will continue to contribute to the best of our ability.

In closing I thank you for this time and remind you of our reception in the Delegates Lounge at lunchtime.

I am confident this will be a highly successful and enjoyable 28th Assembly.