



**77th OPENING SESSION (PLENARY)
OF THE
WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY
THEME**

REMARKS

By

**THE HONOURABLE DR. MICHAEL R. DARVILLE, M.P.
MINISTER OF HEALTH & WELLNESS**

COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

Tuesday 29th, May 2024

6:00PM

**Palais des Nations
Geneva, Switzerland**

Mr. President,

Dr Tedros

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates

Good evening

The Bahamas is a small island developing state made up of 700 islands and cays spanning over 100,000 square miles of pristine ocean from the coast of Florida to the islands of Hispaniola and Cuba. Our population is

dispersed over more than 30 islands which presents significant challenges for us regarding accessibility and health equity. Despite this reality, we are doing our utmost to ensure our citizens have full access to the essential healthcare services they truly deserve. Since the 76th Assembly, we have made significant progress in addressing the devastation left by the category 5

hurricane Dorian and the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic but much work remains to be done. The mental, social and economic fallout left in the wake of these devastating natural disasters reinforces my country's commitment to WHO's global agenda to promote economic recovery and revitalize health care delivery systems through universal health care coverage. Our

journey towards universal health coverage began almost a decade ago with the launch of universal primary healthcare coverage and I am pleased to report that we are well on our way towards meeting WHO's goal of universal health coverage before 2030 by way of national health insurance.

Mr. President

Over the last two years we have completed major infrastructural upgrades to our clinics and hospitals and to prepare for possible future pandemics, we have begun the construction of climate resilient hospitals. We are also modernizing existing healthcare legislation and recently enacted a new and progressive Mental Health bill aimed at

modernizing mental health protocols,
improving access to quality
psychological and psychiatric care,
while protecting the constitutional
rights of patients suffering from mental
health issues.

Mr. President

Given the high socio-economic costs
associated with NCDs, we launched a
Wellness Unit and implemented a

number of physical and nutritional programs that we expect will harvest better health outcomes across the country.

Finally

While we strive to improve and upgrade our health delivery systems, we remain very vulnerable to the destruction brought on by climate change which places us in the

repetitive pattern of borrowing to repair and rebuild our health infrastructure after each hurricane.

Reducing carbon footprints is therefore critical to healthcare delivery in small island developing states like ours.

I extend congratulations to you Mr. President, Director General Dr. Tedros and his team for your warm reception.

Bahamas support the theme 'ALL FOR

HEALTH AND HEALTH FOR ALL'. **I thank
you.**

