PM Defends Disaster Ministry

BY BERTHOND MCGIRRINITY
Journal Staff Writer

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis again shot down criticism that the newly minted Ministry for Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction is not another layer of government bureaucracy.

The prime minister’s response came after Opposition Leader Philip Davis said the new ministry is another layer of bureaucracy that will incite more delays and deepen the level of dissatisfaction, anger and frustration among people.

Dr. Minnis yesterday sought to make it clear that the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction has been created to address the needs of the people.

Minister of State for Disaster Preparedness and Reconstruction Irvin Lewis was sworn in as minister of state in the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction under the Office of the Prime Minister, September 23, 2019, at Government House.

Lewis is an engineer by profession and before accepting the new role as minister of state, he served as parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Works.

Following his swearing in, Lewis told reporters that his goal is to get the islands affected by Hurricane Dorian back to some sense of normalcy as soon as possible.

PLP Suggests New Ministry Headed for Disaster

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON
Journal Staff Writer

Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) Chairman Fred Mitchell suggested yesterday that the new Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction is headed for disaster.

“So the lazy, no good, lazy, good for nothing FSM has now opened their sick mouths to blow smoke up the prime minister’s derriere after this useless appointment of a

Minister of State for Disaster Sworn In

BY BERTHOND MCGIRRINITY
Journal Staff Writer

Taking the oath of office before family, friends and new cabinet colleagues yesterday afternoon was Central Grand Bahama MP Irvin Lewis, who was sworn in as minister of state for the new Ministry of Disaster Preparedness, Management and Reconstruction.

Lewis is an engineer by profession and before accepting the new role as minister of state, he served as parliamentary secretary in the Ministry of Works.

Following his swearing in, Lewis told reporters that his goal is to get the islands affected by Hurricane Dorian back to some sense of normalcy as soon as possible.

“Get my full portfolio.”

Bahamas Delegation Attends UNGA

The Cabinet Office announced on Sunday that Minister of Foreign Affairs Darren Henfield is in New York City for the 74th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Minister Henfield

Ministry of Social Services to Review Budget

BY DAVID BOYLE
Journal Staff Writer

Minister of Social Services Frankie Campbell announced on Monday that the Ministry of Social Services will be reviewing its budget.

Campbell maintained

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The Islands Of The Bahamas recently partnered with American Airlines to host a ‘Sip and Paint’ networking opportunity for some of American Airlines’ top travel professionals in the Miami area.

The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism and Aviation’s Director, Marketing Manager, Tim Lee, in brief remarks before the painting started, said, “We (The Bahamas) have been severely impacted by the hurricane (Dorian), but it’s important for us to do these industry events, as well as consumer events, to get the message out there that although two of our islands are down, we still want you to travel to The Bahamas.”

Lee emphasized that “Now, our other Islands need your support more than ever. Nassau and Exuma are great options on American Airlines. We have 14 Islands still open for business and you can really help us by sharing this feedback on our social media channels and sending it out to your clients.”

The tourism executive expressed thanks to the travel professionals in the Miami area, and said, “We are here to have a fun time and enjoy the intimacy of this small group.”

Also encouraging the group to have a fun time, American Airlines’ Sales Manager for the Southeast and Northern United States, Juan Rodriguez, said that the ‘Sip and Paint’ was a fun opportunity to engage with travel agents and to get a deeper connection on a personal level with them as well as to deepen already existing relationships. “Events like this are crucial,” Rodriguez noted. “They provide an opportunity to speak to the agents one on one, and you get to know them in a way that you would not in a dinner presentation or at a trade show.”

Travel agents participating in the event described the fun gathering as interactive and different. They also remarked that they were glad for the opportunity to network with members of The Bahamas sales team and receive an update on the Bahamas in the wake of the category 5 Hurricane Dorian.

Luca Yu of Westchester Travel in Miami said that the event was great and she was mostly glad to hear about The Bahamas. “When people hear about the devastation in The Bahamas they think everything is destroyed, but as we were told earlier, there are 14 other Islands,” Yu said.

“I feel so bad because the Bahamas Islands are all so beautiful. I will tell my clients that only two Islands were affected so you can still go. I will encourage them to go to The Bahamas. I love The Bahamas,” the travel professional shared.

The painting event was organized with a twist. Although it included wine along with instructions for individual masterpieces, a special Bahamian lunch was provided.

The subject selected for the painting activity included conch shell on the beach, and lunch included the special Bahamian delicacy of ‘craquic’ (cracked) and fried conch.

In addition to conch, the event’s twist of The Bahamas featured Bahamian fruit punch and deserts including coconut and pineapple tarts as well as miniature guava duff. Songs from The Bahamas and the Caribbean dating back to the 1960s and early seventies comprised the soundtrack for the event.

The Team from the Bahamas Tourism Office (BTO) at the event included Lee; Adrian Kemp and Phyla Shivers, Senior Marketing Representatives; Elke Pettiford, Marketing Coordinator and Jeanne Gibson, Manager, Global Communications.

The Ministry of Tourism plans to host a similar networking event again, stressing that the task of rebuilding those islands badly damaged by Hurricane Dorian will take time.

He added that the government will report regularly on its progress.

During his press conference on Sunday, the prime minister said in restructur- ing NEMA the government will work with disaster pre- paration, recovery and management experts from around the world, includ- ing the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) of the United States.

“We must be clear, it cannot be business as usual in government,” Dr. Minnis said.

“We have to break down the silos. There is no time for territorial or turf battles. Egos must be put aside in the interest of the common good.”

The prime minister expressed that this new ministry will accelerate the process of disaster preparedness.

“The authority is so that professional individuals who would know how to manage, make decisions and the best decisions that is applicable for what’s happening today,” the prime minister said.

“We would be able to combine and make these decisions very quickly as opposed to the processes of bureaucracy and red tape.”

Additionally, the prime minister said NEMA is being restructured to be better than before, but noted that the agency will play the same role.

“We’ve learned a lot from this disaster. We’ve learned a lot from the international agencies that were here,” Dr. Minnis said.

“They were very impressed with our organization, but still we will take it to another level because the storms we saw yesterday will not be the storms we see tomorrow.”

To the criticism that the government did not respond fast enough post Hurricane Dorian, Dr. Minnis said supplies and helicopter support from the United States was in Andros and Exuma awaiting the all clear to move in.

“We were delayed in getting that support because the storm unfortunately sat over Grand Bahama and the feeder bans were still in place. We didn’t get supplies and helicopter support from the United States was in Andros and Exuma awaiting the all clear to move in.”

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Volunteers Help to Rebuild GBCH

Volunteers from across North America, including Florida, Colombia, Mexico and Trinidad converged on the home’s back-of-town site to assist with the mammoth cleanup effort.

(Photo GBCH/Barefoot Marketing)
Bahamas Delegation Attends UNGA

Minister of Foreign Affairs Darryl Hendfield attended a High-Level Luncheon on September 22 at the United Nations co-hosted by the prime ministers of Norway and Jamaica on the theme, “An Urgent Call to Countries to Partner for Climate Action — A Race We Can Win.”

Meeting with United States President Donald Trump to discuss the democratic nation of Venezuela.

Minister Hendfield’s credentials as head of delegation will expire on September 26, when Prime Minister Minnis will arrive in New York to deliver the Bahamas’ National Statement at the UNGA on September 27. Minister Hendfield will return to The Bahamas on Saturday.

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Get a clear understanding and assemble my team. There will be an office in Grand Bahama and in Nassau and one in Abaco for operational purposes so I can stay on top of what’s going on,” he said.

We’re going to have a board that’s going to be very active, very focused and we will be reporting on a regular basis to the Bahamian public as to what we are doing.”

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) has faced past hurricanes. Lewis said there will be many places, but those who mean well, must remain positive.

We need to have a focus to see how we can work hard and be in a position to see that the numbers will increase. We could not provide a solid figure, but Campbell could confirm the number of missing persons have gone down as more people are being reunited. He added that the number of persons in the shelters have reduced.

The Ministry wants to help those displaced by Hurricane Dorian by helping with cleaning and the restoration of Abaco and Grand Bahama. That’s why, according to Campbell, assessments are being done.

The assessments are geared towards identifying persons who, based on minimal damage of their own houses equipped with small assistance, go back to their houses and start to seek some form of normality and then the second stage will be persons who need greater assistance be it labour etc. The central government has set aside arrangements to cause those things to happen while we continue to work with our international partners for the long term,” Campbell said.

Social Services to Review Budget

that the budget will not impact housing and uniform assistance for displaced persons.

During the budget, we’ve found that personal emoluments would have been set aside for persons who are no longer there. Those personal emoluments would have been moved,” Campbell said.

“Nothing else was decreased in the budget as it relates to social services. Mindful of the aftermath of Dorian we now have to review these very same services that we would’ve been giving because we now realize that the numbers will increase.

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