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# The Bahama Journal

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# Cooper Wants VAT-Free Zones

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON  
Journal Staff Writer

**P**rogressive Liberal Party (PLP) Deputy Leader Chester Cooper said the government made a "tragic mistake" by only declaring East Grand Bahama as an economic recovery zone and urged the government to make Abaco and Grand Bahama VAT-free zones.

According to Cooper, while he surveyed the government's short-term economic plan for Grand Bahama and Abaco, there are some elements "that make good sense, such as special recovery zones,"

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► PLP Deputy Leader Chester Cooper

## 'Persons with Legal Status Should Rebuild Abaco'

BY DEANDRE WILLIAMSON  
Journal Staff Writer

Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) Deputy Leader Chester Cooper urged persons living in The Bahamas with legal status to move to Abaco to assist with rebuilding and recovery efforts.

"It is the PLP's policy that you should have legal status if you want to live and work in The Bahamas. We do not see

any reason to distinguish or discriminate based on nationality either. The same law must apply to all," Cooper said yesterday during the PLP's Marathon Branch Meeting.

Since the passage of Hurricane Dorian, many Bahamians questioned whether undocumented migrants would be repatriated or allowed to work in The Bahamas.

Cooper said, "There

are thousands of young, able-bodied Bahamian men and women and people with status looking for work who cannot find it. They must be given the first opportunity to rebuild Abaco and Grand Bahama. They must be first considered for jobs that will arise in the recovery and rebuilding effort."

He added, "It is not

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## BPL Connects Four Engines

BY EARYEL BOWLEG  
Journal Staff Writer

Bahamas Power and Light (BPL) has connected four of the seven engines at its Clifton Pier plant.

BPL Executive Director Patrick Rollins

said on Monday that BPL is in the process of connecting the other three. The engines need to be tested, which is scheduled for mid-October.

He added that the

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## DPM Urges GB Business Owners to Return Home

BY BERTHONY McDERMOTT  
Journal Staff Writer

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest stressed the need for Grand Bahama and Abaco business owners to return home if the hurricane bruised economies are to fully rebound.

Following Hurricane Dorian, Grand Bahama and Abaco business owners have created serious concern for the government, as some of them are not willing to return home to rebuild their businesses post Hurricane Dorian.

Addressing the issue

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## GOV'T ACCESSES \$100 MILLION IDB LOAN

**T**he government has accessed the Inter-American Development Bank's (IDB) \$100 million contingent loan for natural disasters and according to Minister of Finance Peter Turnquest, it will be used to restore public utilities and to provide shelter.

"We're also using some of that money to provide temporary shelter for residents as we try to encourage them to go back to these islands and help in their reconstruction. Some of it will be used in the immediate emergency relief that's necessary in order to support them during this upscale cycle where we get people back and commerce started," Minister

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► Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis met with Luis Alberto Moreno, president of the Inter-American Development Bank, yesterday to discuss how best the IDB can help in the Abaco and Grand Bahama rebuilding effort in the wake of Hurricane Dorian. A 20-member team from the IDB is expected to arrive in The Bahamas today to begin a damage assessment exercise. The prime minister and Mr. Moreno also discussed a \$180 million energy project and coordinating hurricane recovery efforts. (BIS/Yontalay Bowe)

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ALL THE NEWS YOU NEED TO READ IN THE MORNING



# UNDP to Contribute \$1 Million for Hurricane Recovery

Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis welcomed an announcement by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that it will contribute \$1 million for Hurricane Dorian recovery efforts in The Bahamas.

During his address to the United Nations General Assembly last Friday 27, Prime Minister Minnis encouraged the UNDP to expand its network, which is already working with St. Lucia, Dominica, and Antigua and Barbuda, to include The Bahamas.

"I was very pleased to learn of the UNDP's contribution to Hurricane Dorian recovery efforts," Prime Minister Minnis said.

"We will rebuild stronger and better than before and with more resilience. But we cannot do it on our own. We also need assistance from our international allies and partners to confront the challenges we face as a country as a result of Hurricane Dorian."

The UNDP funding will guarantee technical assistance in early recovery interventions for crucial areas, according to the programme. It will also help promote environmentally sustainable resilient infrastructure, develop national and local capacities for disaster-risk reduction and recovery and support livelihoods and economic recovery of the most vulnerable communities.

Since the passage of Hurricane Dorian, the UNDP has been working alongside other UN agencies to support the affected islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama to address both immediate and long-term recovery needs.

Recovery experts have already been deployed to rapid recovery assessments and to support the organization of the recovery efforts.

The UNDP helps countries to address diverse development challenges related to building resilience to crisis and shocks.

The programme also supports efforts to eradicate poverty and accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development.

# Testimony in Gibson's Trial Delayed



► Former Cabinet Minister Shane Gibson

BY BERTHONY MCDERMOTT  
Journal Staff Writer

Testimony was delayed yesterday in the high profile bribery trial of former Cabinet Minister Shane Gibson.

The delay came as a result of some issues that would have to be sorted out.

However, the trial is expected to continue today.

If all goes as planned, Sergeant Dale Strachan

will return to the witness box with a report indicating whether the interview at the Central Detective Unit with Jonathan Ash and Deborah Bastian was recorded as requested by the defense.

Last August, Gibson was charged with two counts of conspiracy to commit extortion, another two counts of conspiracy to commit bribery, 15 counts of extortion, 16 counts of bribery and

one count of misconduct in public office.

Those charges were later reduced to 15 counts of bribery. The charges stemmed from the allegation that the former Cabinet minister received \$610,000 from Ash post Hurricane Matthew.

So far, the court has heard from police witnesses and former National Recovery and Reconstruction Unit Director Jack Thompson.

# 'No One Owns Pigeon Peas'

BY EARYEL BOWLEG  
Journal Staff Writer

Persons who squatted on land in the Pigeon Peas shantytown may have a hard time fighting the government's building ban to sell and do business in the area.

According to Coldwell Banker Lightbourn Realty President and former South Abaco Member of Parliament Mike Lightbourn no one owns Pigeon Peas.

"Pigeon Peas is on a parcel of land granted in Nathan Key a couple of hundred years ago and he didn't leave any direct line of decent for as who owned it on his death. As a result, over the years, Key tract,

which includes as far as I know most of Pigeon Peas if not all of it, that tract of land is what we call generation property. There's no one owner," Lightbourn explained.

Abaco resident farmer Ricky Albury told a local daily last Friday that he wanted to sell his five-and-a-half-acre property in Pigeon Peas.

Albury claimed that he attempted to remove people living on his property, but was told by government representatives that he could not do anything until the government found accommodations for those residents.

Lightbourn noted that court action or government decision has

prevented the removal of people living on the land.

"Every now and then, there's a spurt of activity at the court trying to bring the matter to a conclusion and there has been a recent spurt of activities," Lightbourn said.

"There are many advice claims. In other words, people who occupied this land for many years, what happens, by the way, when a quieting petition is filed time stops running as far as adverse possession is concerned.

"So anyone who was on the Key tract in 1965, if they've been on it for 10 years, let's say, their adverse time of

■ See page 4...

# Legal Notice

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** to the public that **Zeneta Archer-Deveaux**, the heiress-at-law of the estate of the late Pearl Tucker, who died on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of September, 1980, is the legal fee simple owner of the property described herein. Any person or persons claiming any right, benefit or interest in the same, must present his or her claim, in writing, along with the appropriate documentation, to the aforementioned Zeneta Archer-Deveaux, within twenty-one (21) days of the publication of this notice at the expiration of which time, no further claim will be entertained.

The plot referred to comprise six thousand six hundred and eight (6,608.00) square feet on the southern side of Laird Street two hundred and sixty seven feet east of Blue Hill road in the southern district of New Providence **bounded on the north** by Laird Street and running thereon fifty two and thirty three (52.33) hundredths feet **on the south** by property of various owners and running thereon fifty-eight and sixty nine hundredths (58.69) feet, **on the east** by property of Sadie Curtis and running thereon one hundred and eighteen and twenty seven hundredths (118.27) feet, and **on the west** by property of one Dorsette and running thereon one hundred and twenty and forty four (120.44) hundredths feet.

*Zeneta Archer-Deveaux*

ZENETA ARCHER-DEVEAUX  
Phone No. 242-818-7911

**GOT NEWS?**  
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# WHO Director General and Delegation Visit Hurricane Dorian-Impacted Abaco and GB



► Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus toured Hurricane Dorian ravaged Grand Bahama and Abaco on Friday, September 27, 2019 accompanied by Minister of Health Dr. Duane Sands, and PAHO and Ministry of Health officials. (BIS Photo)

Minister of Health, the Hon. Dr. Duane Sands, accompanied Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and delegations from PAHO and the Ministry of Health, on a tour of Abaco and Grand Bahama, September 27, 2019.

Arriving in Grand

Bahama by charter plane on Friday afternoon, the group viewed first-hand, the devastation from Hurricane Dorian some four weeks ago. They were able to view the residential community of Lady Lake, the University of The Bahamas and the High Rock Government Complex, as well as Samaritan's Purse

International Relief.

Though pressed for time due to lighting restraints with no power restored at the airport, Dr. Sands noted, "This expression of solidarity with the people of The Bahamas is unprecedented. This is the first time that a sitting Director General (of WHO) has visited The Bahamas, albeit under terrible cir-

cumstances."

He added, "In addition, we had the opportunity to see first-hand the devastation brought on by Dorian and the impact of climate change on small island development states. It is the same message the Prime Minister would have delivered to the United Nations.

"We believe The Bahamas is now a victim

of the dramatic changes brought on by the warming of the seas, increased cyclonic activity, rising sea levels; and to have the Director General here -- to have the Pan American Health Organization represented, in real time, gives some substance to our standing and our mission to get the world to understand that we can no

longer just talk about this, but it's time for action."

Accompanying the delegation on the tour were Minister of State for Grand Bahama in the Office of the Prime Minister, Senator the Hon. J. Kwasi Thompson and Permanent Secretary in the Office of the Prime Minister, Mr. Harcourt Brown.

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# Cooper Wants VAT-Free Zones

■ Continued from / PAGE 1...

but there are other elements that “do not make sense.”

“While East Grand Bahama was severely impacted, from what I am told more than two thirds of the homes and businesses on Grand Bahama sustained damage from the storm. Most people on the island lost vehicles, well outside of East Grand Bahama,” Cooper said during yesterday during the PLP’s Marathon Branch Meeting.

“Freeport, the island’s economic engine, needs restarting. Downtown Freeport was badly flooded with many businesses losing all their inventory, suffering mold infestation and remain without power in many areas.”

Last week, Prime Minister Dr. Hubert Minnis declared East Grand Bahama, Abaco and the Abaco Cays as special economic recovery zones for three years.

As part of the special economic recovery zone, the government will also establish a \$10 million loan guarantee and equity financing program.

However, Cooper said, “Even with the government promising \$10 million in government guaranteed loans, a sum that the government will shortly realize is far too low, most people won’t be able to access that capital in a timely manner or access enough to adequately rebuild and resupply. Yes, these people can take advantage of the exigency order, but the order is only good for 90 days.”

Cooper added that living in Freeport does not automatically mean that residents can import goods duty free and insisted that Grand Bahama and Abaco be made “VAT-free zones for the next three years.”

“This would aid in the rebuilding and incentivize people to move to the islands,” he said.

Cooper, who is also the Member of Parliament for Ragged Island, also urged the government to ensure that Ragged Island has access to these same incentives.

“For over two years I have been agitating for this government to address the concerns of Ragged Island, and to no

avail,” Cooper said. “We have gotten minimal assistance and more big promises that have yet to come to fruition. We are still awaiting government buildings and proper infrastructure. We are still awaiting the promised solarization of the island.

“They say that will happen before the end of the year, but they didn’t say which year. Two years later and the government continues to fail Ragged Island. Still no school, no police, no nurse and no sense of normalcy. Still the minister says the government is waiting on the plan.

“If it takes two plus years for the government to even approve a plan for an island with a population of less than a hundred, then I think it is fair to be concerned about how long it will take for the plan of island with over 20,000 people to emerge.

I say all this tonight to tell you that we cannot let serious question go unanswered and serious concerns go unaddressed because we do not want to be seen as political.”

# ‘Persons with Legal Status Should Rebuild Abaco’

■ Continued from / PAGE 1...

xenophobia to ask that people come into your country the legal way and abide by your laws while they are here.”

Yesterday, the Department of Immigration issued a statement advising that the government is obliged to follow the law as outlined in The Bahamas Immigration Act.

“The public is further advised that non-nationals seeking employment in The Bahamas must be approved by the Immigration Department and that applications for the issuance of the first work permit will not be accepted or considered unless the individual is physically present and resident in his or her country of origin at the time that the first application is made,” the statement said.

“It is a criminal offense to harbor a person in contravention to the Immigration Act, which may result in a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or a prison sentence of up to five years or both.”

The statement added

that “the applicant for a new work permit, or the renewal of an existing work permit, by a prospective employer of a non-Bahamian worker, will be required to satisfy immigration officials that satisfactory living accommodations have been arranged by that employer on behalf of the prospective worker, and that the said worker will not become a charge on the state or be permitted to live in sub-standard housing.”

“Any person found in The Bahamas in contravention of the immigration laws will be subject to arrest, criminal proceedings, and, where applicable, detention and deportation,” the statement said.

Also agreeing with the immigration laws was PLP Chairman Senator Fred Mitchell, who believes the laws must be obeyed by all and strictly enforced by the government.

“There is no reason or set of extenuating circumstances that we see to justify any deviation from standard operating procedures to deal with any ille-

gal immigrant. Further, there is no reason in immigration enforcement to discriminate against or distinguish between nationalities. The enforcement regime must be applied evenly and fairly across the board,” Mitchell said yesterday.

“The only qualifying question is whether or not a migrant has the legal right to reside and or work in The Bahamas. If he or she does not, then under Bahamian law they are required to return home or be repatriated by the state.”

While many migrants affected by Hurricane Dorian resided in The Mudd and Pigeon Peas shantytowns in Abaco, Cooper said Bahamians should never allow a shantytown to exist in the country.

“They are not humane or fit for humans to live and be socialized. For far too long we’ve allowed our immigrant brothers and sisters to live in wretched conditions. This must end. As must this blatant disregard for the law,” he said.

# Pigeon Peas

■ Continued from / PAGE 2...

possession stopped running. So even if its 50 odd years later, they still only got the 10 years that they can count towards the occupation of the property.”

Lightbourn claimed that he heard of solutions to provide cheap housing on the island in the early 2000s.

“That was the idea, to relocate to a new community. People could build and have all utilities and

be less dangerous for as disease is concerned,” he said.

“It sits there and nothing has happened. At some point, we have to do something, but money is a problem.”



## PUBLIC NOTICE

### MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL PLANNING

The public is hereby notified that an application for Building Permit Approval (BL # 126731) on behalf of Michael Carey is presently being reviewed by The Department of Physical Planning for presentation to the Town Planning Committee.

The applicant proposes the development of a commercial building in Joan’s Heights Subdivision in Block 3 on Lots 101-104. Lots 102 and 104 are located along East Street, south of Starkist Lane. Lots 101 and 103 are located directed behind along New Hope Drive. Therefore, the applicant requests rezoning of lots 101 and 103 from duplex to commercial land use. The proposed development consists of a two-unit commercial building with drive-through facilities.

A public meeting will be held on October 3, 2019 at 7pm at C.V Bethel Senior High School for all interested parties to discuss and address planning issues related to the proposed commercial development.

The building permit application for the proposed development is available for viewing at The Department of Physical Planning, located in the Aventura Plaza on John F. Kennedy Drive, during working hours of 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Interested persons and organizations are invited to review the information on file and provide written comments prior to the meeting. Comments should be directed to the Acting Director of Physical Planning. Submissions can be made via P.O Box N-1611, Nassau Bahamas or fax (242) 328-3206. Further inquiries can be made to the Acting Director via Tel. (242) 322-7550/1/1 OR (242) 328- 3202 or [CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS](mailto:CHARLESZONICLE@BAHAMAS.GOV.BS)

Signed  
Charles B. Zonicle  
Acting Director of Physical Planning

## KEY MAP

