



*The*  
*Bahamas*

**59<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**THIRD COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA ITEM 94 – SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, INCLUDING  
QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE WORLD SOCIAL SITUATION AND  
TO YOUTH, AGEING, DISABLED PERSONS AND THE FAMILY**

**STATEMENT BY GRANVILLE BUTLER**

**YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS**

**6 OCTOBER, 2004**

Please check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to address this committee in my capacity as youth representative of the Bahamas to the 59<sup>th</sup> session. I am indeed honoured to serve as the Bahamas first youth representative to this committee. The issue of youth is a matter that every country will always have to face and the manner in which it is approached can set the course for the future of a country.

Mr. Chairman,

I wish to address issues that are of critical importance to youth in my country and throughout the world, including the issue of narcotic drugs. As has been pointed out in several fora by the Government of the Bahamas, we are in the transshipment lanes for illegal narcotics and although we are not the final destination, it does not change the fact that we become a market and are adversely affected. The effects of drugs are felt by the youth in the Bahamas due to a rise in crime, particularly violent crime, which cuts short the potential and lives of so many of our young people. The transshipment of drugs and its association with the illicit trade in weapons also threatens the social and economic development of our country, which poses a challenge to the prospects for our youth to lead productive lives. Too many of our young people have fallen prey to the notion that the selling of narcotics is an easy alternative to hard work. I am convinced that we as young people must do our best to stand up against these dangerous notions. The Bahamas is committed to fighting this scourge and the youth in the Bahamas will remain a prime focus in our fight.

Mr. Chairman,

One of the tools in the fight against drugs is education. The international community has agreed that every young person has the right to a quality education. The Bahamas government is making every effort to live up to this obligation and the youth in the Bahamas are committed to taking advantage of the opportunities provided. Young persons in the Bahamas are seeking to expand and maximize their educational opportunities with a view to becoming full and productive members of Bahamian society and the international community as a whole. An old proverb states, give a man a fish and he will eat for a day, but teach a man to fish and he will never go hungry again. Give our young people the necessary tools to take their rightful place in society and we will all benefit.

Mr. Chairman,

HIV/AIDS is one of the single most important issues of our time as it poses a grave threat to our continued human, social and economic development. One of the greatest tragedies of this epidemic has been its impact on young people. The government has made great strides in tackling the pandemic particularly with respect to reducing mother-to-child transmission. However much remains to be done. I believe that, for our part, the young people in the Bahamas must commit themselves to healthy lifestyles that will enable us to play our part in the fight and eradicate this disease.

Mr. Chairman,

Without greater youth participation none of the issues that affect our world including drugs, HIV/AIDS and other diseases will ever truly be solved. It is vitally important that young people are able and given the opportunity to be involved in planning and decision making about issues that will affect their future. Issues such as terrorism, poverty, armed conflict, HIV/AIDS and the need to ensure sustainable development have a direct and immediate impact on our youth. Greater youth participation in discussions on these issues at the national and international levels will allow us to benefit from a new perspective and enable us to truly build sustainable communities for the future.

Mr. Chairman,

Everyone in this room is aware that the youth are our future. That knowledge should guide our deliberations on all issues on the agenda of this organization as we seek to preserve the world's natural and human resources and pass them on to the next generation. We the youth are counting on it.

Thank you Mr. Chairman