



SPEECH

BY

**SENATOR THE HONOURABLE ALLYSON MAYNARD GIBSON
ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

AT A

SPECIAL SITTING OF THE COURT OF APPEAL

THURSDAY 31 JANUARY, 2013

Madam President, may I begin by thanking God for Forefathers and Foremothers who fought and sacrificed for us to live in and be citizens of this sovereign nation, The Bahamas, where we openly proclaim in our Constitution that our freedom will be maintained by an abiding respect of Christian values and the Rule of Law. Protection of the Rule of Law was so important that a separate branch of government was created to protect our democracy. Today, by this ceremony, that branch, the Judicial Branch, again openly celebrates and affirms democracy (or freedom) protected by the Rule of Law.

Earlier this month I stated that our, in the Executive, vision is to have the most efficient justice system in the Region. Madam President, I thank you for your vision and deep seated passion about efficiency in the administration of justice. I speak from first hand knowledge gained when you sat with distinction in that other place and from my regular dialogue with you as President as we both carry out our Constitutional responsibilities.

May I speak of how this Court has excelled, using some of the yardsticks internationally acknowledged as measuring efficiency?

Courtesy, cooperation and respect between Judges and between Bench and Bar indubitably exists and are flourishing. This is essential for open and clear dialogue as all stakeholders in the administration of justice pursue the people's business.

This Court is well known for its use of modern technology which continues to blaze new trails in The Bahamas. The Court of Appeal's website is user friendly, its calendar is posted so that everyone knows the business being conducted, and its judgments and rulings are posted in a timely fashion. We are most grateful for the timely and clear judgments rendered by this Court. These matters were recently addressed by Lord Neuberger, President of the UK Supreme Court, in the November 2012 Bailii Lecture, "No Judgment, No Justice".

This Court's full and complete 2012 Annual Report demonstrates the Court's determination that it should be seen to be open, accessible and transparent. May I say that its determination to be seen as accessible is also demonstrated by its community outreach as outlined in the Report?

Madam President, the continuing dialogue about efficiency is perhaps one of the most important conversations that we will have during this year of celebration and deliberation. As previously announced, weekly, starting in February the Office of the Attorney General will post online parts of its calendar. This means that the public will be able to see online our calendar in relation to matters in which we will be appearing each week and the outcomes of those matters. Making our calendar available to the public is our invitation to the public to join us in the journey to becoming the most efficient justice system in the Region.

Madam President, Justice Neville Adderley has joined this Honourable Court. We warmly welcome him. He was an outstanding judge when he sat in that other place, where his intellect, qualifications and practice as an economist and humour served him and The Bahamas well. We wish him well in his service in this place and thank him for his patriotism.

Thank you also to all of the honourable judges who sit in this place, demonstrating their commitment to The Bahamas and the Rule of Law, as they work hard, ensuring that justice is seen to be done. Madam President, again thank you for your stellar leadership in this and other matters.

In all of the capacities that I serve as Attorney General, you have my total support and the support of my Office.

Madam President, My Lords, as the world marks the manner of your bearing, may God continue to richly bless all of the Bench with the gifts of wisdom, discernment and good health, during this legal year 2013.

