

**REMARKS FOR SWEARING IN CEREMONY
CHESTER COOPER, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
SEPTEMBER 18, 2021**

Your Excellency Governor General & Lady Smith

Prime Minister Hon. Philip Davis & Mrs. Davis

Distinguished Guests, already recognized.

Family including dear wife, and my siblings who have travelled from near and far.

Friends, Ladies & Gentlemen

Your excellencies let me first thank you for your hospitality and well wishes.

Prime Minister Davis, I am honored to serve with you and thank you for the confidence bestowed in me.

I publicly thank my beloved wife Cecillia and our three children Chelsea, Izak and Chloe for their sacrifices and for embarking on this journey with me to serve our beloved country.

I would like to thank the many members of the Progressive Liberal Party who have embraced me, guided me and supported me.

I thank the most magnificent people of Exuma, Exuma Cays and Ragged Island for reposing their faith in me once again, to represent them in our Parliament and to serve my country.

I thank the Bahamian people for exercising their democratic right on Election Day and doing so in an orderly and peaceful manner.

Most of all I thank Almighty God for blessing my life and leading me toward my purpose.

I am honored and humbled to stand before you today as your Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Tourism, Aviation & Investments. [I kind like the sound of that].

I assure you I have no delusions about the enormity of the task before us and what it entails.

We are beset with a raging pandemic that must be brought under control.

We are in perilous waters as our economy is depressed and we have major financial commitments to fulfill.

And we confront that without a clear understanding yet, of the state of government finances.

Businesses are on life support.

And Bahamians from all walks of life are crying out for change and hope.

We still have a deep level of inequality that has left too many in need.

Government relations with many in our business and investment community have frayed.

There is a sense of fear about the way forward, and we need to guide the country with steady hands.

In my role, I will be resolutely focused on creating an investment friendly environment, growing our industries and our economy to create jobs and opportunities for our people.

We have to work to make sure people do not go hungry, that people are safe within their communities and that the wealth of The Bahamas becomes more common.

There is no shortage of work to do, but we are well positioned and well equipped to do it, with your help.

I will work diligently as deputy prime minister to support our prime minister and bring everything in my disposition to the Cabinet and Parliament of The Bahamas.

As I said, these are trying times in our country and we have found ourselves swept into power with a great majority.

We will not forget that our predecessors had an even greater majority, yet they were rejected by the Bahamian people.

We will learn from their example.

We must be gracious in victory.

We must not become distracted by the trappings of office.

We must not seek to punish those who did not support us.

We must commit ourselves to service.

We are here to serve the people, they are not here to serve us.

We must commit to being efficient, attentive and result-oriented.

We must listen to the will of the people and adjust our own agenda accordingly.

We must be honest and transparent with the people's business.

We must not say one thing and do another.

We must try with all our might to fulfill what we have promised.

We must be candid with one another and the Bahamian people.

Realizing that a large portion of the electorate did not participate in the last election, we must work to restore their faith in good governance and our democracy.

We must bring focused energy and pool our strengths.

As a boy from Forbes Hill, Little Exuma of very humble beginning I have overcome many obstacles.

I know what can be achieved in our country.

We must work with all Bahamians to build a better future.

We must make these things our commitment to the Bahamian people.

This is a great country, a resilient country of faithful, hardworking people.

There is nothing we cannot achieve, together.

I thank you once again for this honor.

May God bless the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.