

'Bahamas' problems not of its own making'

■ UNITED NATIONS/CMC

BAHAMIAN Prime Minister Philip Davis on Saturday declared that the challenges and crises facing the country are external.

'For countries like The Bahamas, the biggest challenges and crises we face are not of our making,' said Davis in addressing the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Debate. 'And yet, we are the ones who feel the impacts the most.'

'Our independent Bahamas has never fought a war: and yet, conflicts in faraway places cause severe economic shocks, with Bahamians forced to pay higher prices and suffer from unreliable supply chains.'

Above all, Davis said it is the physical changes relating to climate that are causing crises, 'which are critical, urgent and existential.'

Over the past few years, he said many Bahamian voices have raised the alarm in many international forums about the risks the country faces from threats of climate change.

'We do not have the luxury of re-starting an esoteric conversation about the causes of climate change,' the prime minister said. 'Our living reality means that we simply do not have the time.'

'As I speak to you today, right now, right now a Tropical Storm is moving up our chain of Islands,' he added. 'We hope, we pray that we are lucky. But can we remain lucky every season, every single year?'

'We know what we need to do,' he continued. 'We need to adapt and to make ourselves more resilient,' Davis continued.

But even with the best intentions, he said a Small Island State, like the Bahamas, with a population of around 400,000 people and an economy of approximately US\$12 billion, do not have the resources.

Davis said The Bahamas has 'the cleanest air in the world, and emit far less than 1% of carbon generated by human activity, so we have to rely on others to also adapt.'

'Is it really too much to ask of those most responsible, to change their behaviour so that the rest of us might have a better chance at survival?' he asked.

Along with climate change, Davis said the Bahamas' closest neighbours also suffer from several of

external threats. He noted that the Bahamas' neighbours in Cuba have suffered for decades under an embargo, 'which has caused suffering without delivering justice'.

'The embargo has punished ordinary people without changing policy,' he said, stating that 'engagement, not isolation, is the only path forward.'

'And so, the Bahamas will continue to add its voice to the many who say: 'The time has come. Lift the embargo',' the Bahamian leader said.