



## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

2015 FLORIDA GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE

THE HON. MICHAEL H. DUNKLEY JP MP

PREMIER & MINISTER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015

**Mr. Speaker**, throughout Bermuda's history we have been recognized as skilled craftsmen, productive farmers and innovative business- people. Our leadership in these various areas has caused us to be modelled by other jurisdictions and over time we have had the opportunity to share our best practice with the world.

**Mr. Speaker**, I am pleased to advise this Honourable House of one such opportunity this week where I was invited to share Bermuda's story about our resilience as a community in the wake of hurricanes.

On Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> May I addressed the 2015 Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference in Orlando, Florida. The theme of the conference was ***“Rethink Resilience- Connecting Capabilities for Stronger Communities”***. The invitation to Bermuda came as a result of the record recovery this community achieved in the wake of Hurricanes Fay and Gonzalo. Our return to normality was the subject of discussion outside our shores and it was an honour to set out for the hundreds of attendees just how we work together around events like these.

**Mr. Speaker**, I chose as my title: “Bermuda: Ready, Recovered, Resilient”. I took the opportunity to highlight our level of preparedness and community awareness around what needs to be done to secure our property and to keep each other safe. The role of the EMO was emphasized both as a directing organization in advance of and following any storm.

**Mr. Speaker,** I was especially proud to discuss our resilience as a community and to outline how our onshore business activity in insurance and reinsurance connects us to the US and the state of Florida in particular. Honourable Members will be aware that between 2001 and 2012, estimates indicate that Bermuda companies paid \$37 billion dollars in catastrophe claims in the USA. This included such terrible storms as Katrina, Wilma and Rita.

**Mr. Speaker,** the speech was well received and it was an honour to represent Bermuda at this important event.

**Mr. Speaker** while at the conference, I had the good fortune to chat with Florida Governor, Rick Scott. The Governor is a very progressive individual who has great ambitions for his state. He too is committed to making Florida a leader for business and job creation.

**Mr. Speaker,** I also had an opportunity to meet with Dr. Richard Knabb, the Director of NOAA's National Hurricane Centre. He is a tremendous supporter of Bermuda and is very familiar with the team at the Bermuda Weather Service, and had nothing but positive things to share about the BWS, Kimberley Zuill and her colleagues. He also indicated some of the new services and products that the NHC will be announcing this year in the lead up to the start hurricane season and he feels the new tools will assist disaster managers and coordinators in better understanding a storm's projected path.

Rounding out my meetings at the conference, **Mr. Speaker,** I met with Bryan Koon, the Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management. He shared some of his best practices with me regarding emergency management and was very keen to develop and nurture a partnership with Bermuda.

**Mr. Speaker,** as I reflect on this Conference and the positive reception received when sharing how Bermuda manages natural disasters, I am reminded of the professionalism and dedication of the men and women of our uniformed services, throughout Public Works and at all levels within the Public Service and the private sector who regularly

come together and work exceptionally hard to return our communities to normality after every storm. Their work and commitment makes the story I was privileged to tell in Florida possible.

**Thank you, Mr. Speaker.**