



Premier of Bermuda
Ministerial Statement

By

Premier & Minister of National Security
The Hon. Michael H. Dunkley, JP, MP
Hurricane Season
May 29, 2015

Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to highlight the beginning of Hurricane Season, which starts on Monday June 1st.

Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks, in part due to my participation in the Governor's Hurricane Conference in Florida last month, Bermuda's centuries long hurricanes history has been at the fore of our national conversation.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the view however that such a conversation is always timely, because we can never rest on our laurels when it comes to discussing the importance of being prepared for the storm season.

Last year **Mr. Speaker**, Bermuda was severely tested when we were hit by two back to back hurricanes within the span of one week.

Mr. Speaker, particularly following Hurricane Gonzalo, we demonstrated our resilience in recovering relatively quickly in large part because we were well prepared.

So **Mr. Speaker** as we head into the hurricane season, in my capacity as Minister of National Security, I am encouraging residents and businesses to take the familiar steps of preparing for the season.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said in years previously don't wait until the last minute to top up your emergency kits. Ensure you have the staples such as batteries, non perishable food items, fuel for your car or bike and even your generator.

Mr. Speaker, it's important that home owners and businesses ensure that their properties and establishments are secured; check that your insurance is up to date and that any trees are properly trimmed and safely away from power lines.

Last year's October storms resulted in significant damage to marine vessels **Mr. Speaker**. And so I am urging boat owners to ensure their vessels are secured well in advance of any storm. These are just some of the precautions to be taken during this season.

Mr. Speaker I can advise that Emergency Measures Organization met last week and I can confirm that Government agencies as well as our private sector partners are well prepared and in a state of readiness for anything this season might bring. The public can be confident that we have well tested plans and the resources required to meet the challenge in the wake of such an event.

Mr. Speaker, I can also advise this Honorable House that in keeping with this Government's promise in the Throne Speech, the Commissioner of Police has assigned inspector Steve Cosham to the Ministry of National Security as the National disaster coordinator.

He will also have the responsibility for planning, preparedness and other aspects of large scale public events in Bermuda. We are pleased to welcome him to the Ministry and will ensure that he has the tools and resources he needs to carry out his role and responsibilities. **Mr. Speaker**, I just want to emphasize a critical point especially as in this era of rapid communication and modern technology.

In the time preceding a storm and in the aftermath, the EMO, through its spokesperson, is the only official source for storm-related information. This includes things like the closure of the Causeway, adjustments to work hours or school hours and public transportation advisories. **Mr. Speaker**, if you don't hear it from us, it's probably not true.

Mr. Speaker as it relates to communicating to the public during this age of technology we are undertaking to launch a Twitter account so that the public can receive periodic updates in the event of a severe storm. As an added note **Mr. Speaker**, based on the robust public feedback following Hurricane Gonzalo, we will be taking tangible steps to significantly boost the transmission signal of the Emergency Broadcast Station located at 100.1 FM.

And this year, we will also be utilizing the SMS text alert services of Digicel and CellOne as part of the EMO advisory network in hurricane awareness.

Finally **Mr. Speaker**, I wish to extend my thanks to Kimberley Zuill of the Bermuda Weather Service and her team who have been doing their due diligence this week in updating the public regarding the predictions for this season. From all predictions according to the National Hurricane Centre, we are expecting a less active season this year.

But that shouldn't mean that we should be complacent. I cannot stress enough **Mr. Speaker** about the importance of everyone checking their hurricane stores and to make sure that they have ample provisions and essentials in the event of a storm. After all, **Mr. Speaker**, it's better to be safe than sorry.