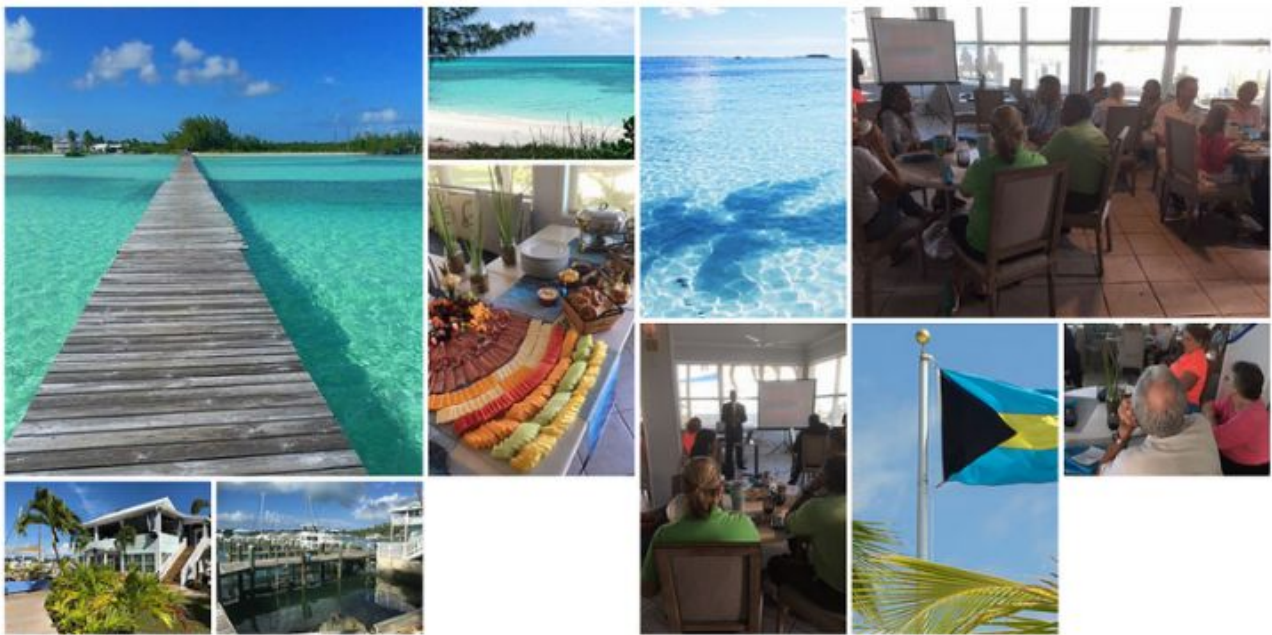




**WORKSHOP ON THE DRAFT CSO BILL AND CIVIL
SOCIETY SELF-REGULATION INITIATIVES TO
STRENGTHEN THE SECTOR**

October 13, 2018



**Venue: Da Blue Hole,
Marsh Harbour, Abaco**

Workshop on the 3 Year Strategic Plan and draft CSO Bill to strengthen the Civil Society sector

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Profound appreciation is due to Mark Palmer, Secretary, Civil Society Bahamas, Vado Bootle Sr., Elder Sarone Kennedy, David and Kathleen Ralph, James Richard and Ken Hutton for their dedication to the coordination of this workshop.

Appreciation is also extended to Dr. Anthony Hamilton who opened the proceedings with a blessing. We thank our facilitator Mark Palmer, as well as Navitite Palmer who produced this report from a recording of the event.

Finally, and with profound gratitude, we thank the participants who made the time to be present and contribute to the collective work of civil society as we progress towards a strengthened sector and increased impact.

Shaun D. Ingraham
President Civil Society Bahamas
October 20, 2018

An electronic version of this document is available online at www.civilsocietybahamas.org

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AG Attorney General

CARICOM Caribbean Community

CS Civil Society

CSB Civil Society Bahamas

CSO Civil Society Organization

CSOs Civil Society Organizations

BOD Board of Directors

HNI High Net Worth Individuals

ICT Information and Communication Technologies

IDB Inter-American Development Bank

ILO International Labour Organization

NPO Non Profit Organisation

ORG Organization for Responsible Governance

YEP Youth Empowerment Program

OPENING PRAYER:

DR. ANTHONY HAMILTON - VICE PRESIDENT, CIVIL SOCIETY BAHAMAS

WELCOME:

DR. ANTHONY HAMILTON - VICE PRESIDENT, CIVIL SOCIETY BAHAMAS

Dr. Hamilton welcomed the participants and advised that unfortunately neither Gevon Moss of the IADB or Shaun Ingraham were able to attend. Even though they were not here, Dr. Anthony felt they were here in spirit. This is not going to be the first or last time that we will be coming to Abaco. He introduced himself as Vice-President of CSB and Mark Palmer, the Secretary of CSB. There is a lot of work to be done by Civil Society. He encouraged all those present to continue making their excellent contribution. CSB is doing its level best to represent the entire Bahamas and not just Nassau, as in the past. All of us must take responsibility for our actions.

He mentioned two words, “resurrection” and “restore”. Many things have been done in the past. There are things that need to be resurrected and restored. He mentioned the Preamble to the Constitution. The Preamble of the Constitution states “***the People of this Family of Islands recognizing that the preservation of their Freedom will be guaranteed by a national commitment to Self-discipline, Industry, Loyalty, Unity and an abiding respect for Christian values and the Rule of Law;***” It is an absolute necessity that all of us take responsibility for National Commitment. Everyone has something to contribute and everyone must take responsibility to make a contribution to our country. He mentioned two more words “sameness” and “differences”. CSB is presently engaging in two particular exercises, mapping of civil society organisations, and determining their impact. There has to be proper recognition of the value that each CSO brings to the table. There is a lot of talk around the world about Civil Society and its inclusion, and its engagement. CARICOM has a Civil Society Charter to which our Government has signed up to. He encouraged the participants to have a look at the Charter. It is important that we also empower the family structure, which is at the cause of many issues affecting our society.

SESSION I PRESENTATION OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY JULY 2018 SURVEY RESULTS

DR. ANTHONY HAMILTON, VICE PRESIDENT, CIVIL SOCIETY BAHAMAS

With respect to the Survey that was done in July, you can find it on our website. The Survey questions were drafted in May & June 2018 with the help of The University of The Bahamas. UB is a major stakeholder in this process. The survey was commissioned on Survey Monkey in July 2018. 220 contacts emailed & links on website site up. 62 responses have been received to date with an average completion rate of 92%. The Survey is still on our website and open for any persons who have not yet had the chance to participate.

He also suggested that the participants go and visit the resource section on the CSB website to familiarise themselves with the many useful documents there.

Dr. Hamilton also mentioned three more simple words as part of our accountability statement. THERE IS A CRY, THERE IS A CALL AND THERE IS A RESPONSE THAT DEMANDS THE ACCOUNTABILITY OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS LEADERSHIP! Something is happening. There is a need. The cry sets off an alarm. There is a call on us to respond to this cry. Each of us has an obligation to respond to the area that each of us has an influence in.

The survey findings were given a weighting. The survey findings are being incorporated into the strategic plan and will be prioritised over three (3) years.

A Government commitment is required for the preparation of and the enactment of Civil Society Draft Bill exploring the following possibilities:

- Creation of an Operational Framework dominated by quality performance.
- Regulatory Framework to ensure transparency, accountability and sustainability through strategic tripartite empowerment.
- Government and Civil Society Partnership Projects Guarantee
- Project Ownership by Civil Society Organizations and Bahamians generally (Government Ministries, Departments & other Agencies)
- Commitment by Individuals, Families and Churches Regionally and Internationally

Mark Palmer then asked how many people worked for a Non Profit Organisation. Most hands went up. How many people worked for a Non Profit Organisation and don't get paid? Most hands went up. How many get

paid for working in a NPO? Four hands went up. How many people here would like to work full time for a Non Profit Organisation and get paid? Almost all the hands went up.

He explained that of the three sectors, the Government and the private sector are well represented. Civil Society is anemic. Yes we contribute a sizeable amount. He asked does anyone know how much Civil Society contributes in the US? Last year 365 Billion dollars was invested by donors into the US non profit sector. How much was being invested in The Bahamas? The answer is that nobody knows. Nobody is tracking this at the moment. Nobody knows what the true impact of our sector is, and that is one of the projects that CSB is undertaking to find out by mapping the sector in the coming year. He explained he is a Director for Youth Empowerment Program (YEP) and we currently have over 120 volunteers who contribute 60 hours a year each. The monetary impact of that contribution could be in excess of \$100k if it was quantified. There is also a social impact that needs to be mapped too. Keeping one child out of the criminal justice system could yield savings of \$20k+ per annum. He asked the participants to image what kind of society we would be living in if our impact had never been made. The work that we do is so important and the Government needs to recognise the contribution that CSOs make to the Bahamas. Can you imagine a Bahamas without a Humane Society or a Bahamas National Trust, or One Eleuthera without OEF?

The thing is that the members of our Government come out of Civil Society, they go into Government and then they come back into Civil Society. They need to be reminded of their roots.

Mark asked the participants if any of them had heard of Dormant Funds. No hands went up. Mark explained that Dormant funds were unclaimed funds that financial services companies pay to the central bank and after a period of time those funds are remitted to the Treasury and then eventually into the Consolidated Fund. Mark asked the participants if anyone knew what the figure was. He explained that the figure was 95 million dollars in 2016. He added that most developed countries had laws in place that those funds would be reinvested in charitable programs. We would like the CSO Bill to speak to this and CSB is currently advocating for a similar plan to be enacted in The Bahamas. The interest alone each year would make a substantial difference to the sector. If we don't get together and do this, the money is just going to be lost in the Consolidated Fund. This is an example of the type of issue that CSB will be advocating on. When we recently told the Minister of Social Services about the potential impact of the Dormant Fund, his eyes lit up.

Another way things are changing, is that our poverty rates are going up. What is also going up is the numbers of high net worth individuals (HNIs). In a recent survey 66% of those HNIs said they would donate to a non profit. The issue they have is that the level of governance and accountability of Bahamian non profits is not

where it should be. So there exists a great opportunity to strengthen those non profits and connect those HNIs, who live in Albany, Lyford Cay, Old Fort Bay etc. to non profits in The Bahamas.

Donors are also beginning to realise that the executive teams of nonprofits need to be paid. You can't expect them to run as volunteer organisations. Complex problems need complex solutions and to solve them you are going to have to pay the salaries of people to execute the programs. An angel investor wouldn't expect a for-profit company to execute its agenda with unpaid volunteers. Every business that starts has overheads and these overheads need to be paid in the first three years while the business gets off the ground, with the expectation that in year 4, the business is self-sustaining.

Another factor driving donations in other countries is that donors can give a certain amount to charities each year and get a write off in taxes. This does not happen in the Bahamas. There are however many Bahamians that live and pay taxes in other countries who could be persuaded to give to projects in the Bahamas. This is an initiative that CSB is working on.

Every other sector is regulated. For example the Financial Services sector is regulated to create confidence in the sector. The CSO Bill is going to bring similar benefits to the sector. However, if we just leave it to the Government, they will create a bill that will stifle the sector and over-regulate us. So we have to drive this Bill so that it is going to be a bill that stimulates the sector and does not stifle it, and that is why it is so important to get your feedback and input.

Dr. Hamilton resumed and explained the primary resources are Time, Money and Relationships.

The foundation/ Root System was based on two more words "Desire" and "Choice"

DESIRE – WILLINGNESS – INTIMACY – PREGNANCY = GIVING BIRTH / ABORTION

CHOICE – CHALLENGE – DECISION – TEST = GOOD FRUIT / BAD FRUIT

Dr. Hamilton made mention again of the Tripartite Governance System, the relationship between Government, business and civil society, and the need for inclusion and consultation with CSOs, the emerging third sector. Civil Society is at the heart of this relationship and we need to take responsibility to ensure the best environment for maximum return on investment for our third sector on cooperative principles.

DISCUSSIONS FROM THE FLOOR

- A member of the audience stated that in order to get anything done you need to know somebody. Dr. Hamilton said that CSB has a long standing relationship with the AG's office that has been reignited. He also stated that Mr. Henfield in the Senate is also helping with the Bill. Dr. Jacinta Higgs is also a supporter.
- A member asked about co-operatives. Dr. Hamilton explained that co-operatives put you in a good position to benefit collectively. In a cooperative there is the opportunity for you to be owners rather than members, where you have a right to be on the inside, to one man one vote, and you can serve at executive level in the organisation whether in administration or in a committee to influence the decision making process.
- What is a social enterprise? It is a business that is run not for profit. No benefits accrue to shareholders. One of the things OEF is doing is incubating social enterprises. Banks are leaving the family islands. In Rock Sound there is only the Bank of the Bahamas. OEF has created a credit union. When you save \$2k and find a good business opportunity, the OEF Credit Union will give you \$4k towards your business idea, a way of investing in new social enterprises and increasing economic activity.
- Are Credit Unions regulated? Yes they are. They have a self regulation system in place until assets reach \$1 million, after which they are regulated by the Central Bank. They do not have banking licences, so they don't own their own banks, so they have a correspondent banking relationship with a Commercial Bank.
- Who makes up Civil Society? All those people and institutions that don't form part of Government or the Private Sector. The Chamber is a CSO even though it represents businesses. Churches, unions, UB are all part of Civil Society.

A 10 minute break was taken at this time.

SESSION II PRESENTATION OF THE 3 YEAR CSB STRATEGIC PLAN

MARK PALMER, SECRETARY OF CIVIL SOCIETY BAHAMAS

Mark Palmer opened his presentation by asking the participants who had heard of CSB. Not many hands went up. Mark Palmer said that we have been around since 2005 and we have never had a strategic plan. He asked the attendees who had a strategic plan and six hands went up. When asked who has a three year strategic plan, only 2 hands went up. Mark then presented a credentials presentation on CSB.

Introduction

Planning process started in October 2016.

Brainstormings took place in November 2016, February 2017, May 2018, and July 2018.

Survey of CSOs in July 2018 indicated the following priorities for CSB

Survey Priorities

The Survey indicated the following four priorities:

1/ 72.5% Strengthening CSOs through training / capacity building / funding / collaborating / networking / events

2/ 60% Raising the standards of civil society through a self-regulation scheme / CSO Bill / mapping the sector

3/ 51.22% Strengthening collaboration / partnership with Government to input into policy and tap into national development opportunities

4/ 20.93% Create policy and research arm to write position papers on key issues facing CSOs and the civil society

Who We Are

Civil Society Bahamas (CBS) is an umbrella organisation representing the interests of all the non-profit and non-governmental organisations in the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

Civil Society Bahamas is a non-partisan, non-governmental, civil society organization which focuses on the betterment of individuals through improvement of their general social, economic, spiritual and mental welfare.

Our Vision

A Bahamas where civil society is respected and fully engaged in good governance.

Our Mission

As the third pillar of governance, 1/ leading coalition building among members and other CSO partners, 2/ promoting full civil society engagement in national development, and 3/ being the principal national representative of civil society in international fora.

Our Membership

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Civil Society Individuals

The Bahamas Christian Council

The Bahamas Chamber of Commerce and Employers Confederation

The Trade Union Congress

The National Congress of Trade Unions

The University of The Bahamas

CSB Governance

- 1/ Incorporated as a Non Profit Company in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas.
- 2/ Approved Bylaws, which govern its members and regulate its affairs.
- 3/ Board of Directors that meet monthly to determine policy.
- 4/ Members who meet three times a year to give feedback.

CSB Program Areas

1/ Capacity Building - CSOs must develop, implement and sustain their own solutions to problems. We will achieve this by:

- Building the skills and confidence of individuals and CSOs, and expanding the leadership base;
- Creating CSO clusters, incubation and acceleration; and
- Building civil society awareness and education.

2/ Governance & Participation - CSOs must demonstrate their legitimacy by becoming more transparent and accountable. We will achieve this by:

- Enacting a workable, effective and inclusive CSO Bill;
- Implementing a system of self-regulation;
- Establishing a code of conduct and ethics; and
- Establishing principles and standards for CSOs.

3/ Sustainable Development - CSB is committed to national development planning and the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs). We will achieve this by:

- Connecting CSOs to the SDGs;
- Affirming the importance of the National; Development Plan (NDP) as a catalyst for Government to achieve specific development goals; and
- Identifying and suggesting priorities for joint project implementation with Government.

CSB Strategic Focus

1/ To institutionalise and make operational the CARICOM consultative mechanism as enshrined in the Civil Society Charter and the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas.

2/ To be a strategic convenor and coalition builder for trusted national and local CSOs and civil society.

- 3/ To facilitate capacity building and strengthening of CSOs.
- 4/ To be an advocate of civil society views and concerns on key issues and concerns.
- 5/ To build awareness and educate the civil society sector.

Key Objectives

- 1/ To promote an enabling environment for CSO activities and efforts. Please refer to the Presentation for further detail.
- 2/ To strengthen capacitance, collaboration and sustainability among and of members CSOs and other partners. Please refer to the Presentation for further detail.
- 3/ To strengthen capacity of CSB to deliver its objectives. Please refer to the Presentation for further detail.
- 4/ To be the lead negotiating agent for CSOs with the government, the private sector, and international agencies. Please refer to the Presentation for further detail.

Our Budgets

Please refer to the Presentation for further detail.

Going Forward

- 1/ Further input from Family Islands
- 2/ Drafting of Work Plans and Budgets
- 3/ Final draft to be presented in November 2018 to all stakeholders
- 4/ CSB Board approval December Board meeting
- 5/ Fundraising the plan

Participant Feedback

- *Q Great plan. How are you going to do the training?* There are many ways to deliver that resource, but one of the most used concepts now used are webinars which can be done remotely from any location.
- *Q Is there any funding in the budget for family island resources as we need a place like an incudesk where we can meet and use the photocopier?* This is a good question. The budget currently has a budget for 4 workshops in each of the major family islands. It is something we will look at.
- *We are frustrated as we have tried to get our organisation registered for over three years and we have a lawyer who is trying to expedite matters for us.* This is an issue that we have come across in the other family islands and the current process is lengthy and difficult. We have identified a workshop where all the Government Agencies come together to get non profits registered and current. We are trying to arrange our first workshop with the agencies in Nassau, and if it is successful, we will come to Abaco,

Eleuthera, Grand Bahama and Exuma. We hope to be able to get back to you with some news in the next 30 days. Also Davina Blair is going to be coming to Abaco to help small businesses in conjunction with the Chamber, so she would be a great person to advise of current difficulties with registration.

- *Q How do we get the Government to listen?* The important thing is to do your thing well and give your input.

SESSION III PRESENTATION ON THE DRAFT CSO BILL

DR. ANTHONY HAMILTON, VICE PRESIDENT, CIVIL SOCIETY BAHAMAS

Before Dr. Hamilton started his presentation, he asked all those present to introduce themselves, which they did.

The CSO Bill is an interesting idea. The reality is that we need rules and regulations to govern us to allow us to achieve what we want to achieve. There is structure, the act and the regulations. We are working to set standards that are going to be relevant to and invigorate our sector. There are many Clauses in the Bill. The draft Bill is on our website and I would encourage you to look at it and make your suggestions. Many things are going on that we are not aware of. We are now aware of another Bill that has emerged.

The Bill is also coming out of the Anti Money Laundering AML legislation that we as a Country are being asked to comply with.

Remember the cry, the call and the response. We are at the cry element. Something is wrong and needs to be fixed. People are required to respond. It is CSB's aim to create an environment where the appropriate talent comes forward to address strategically those issues that need to be dealt with.

We probably won't get the perfect Bill but with our input the Bill will be much better than it was originally drafted. Mark Palmer advised those present to visit the website, download the document that has all the comments regarding the Bill and to add additional comments either in the document directly, or through the button on the website or to email Mark Palmer. We are planning to have a workshop on the 19 October to review the legal opinion on the Bill. Once that has been reviewed we can meet with the AG's office to draft the various clauses. It is CSB's intention to draft a Bill that is equitable and does not concentrate power in one institution, and doesn't stifle the civil society sector with undue regulation. A comment was made from the floor

that power is often concentrated in the power of the Minister to the detriment of our country. It is a form of dictatorship.

As time was running out, it was decided that the Presentation be deferred and that the participants be guided to view it on the website as follows:

PART 1 PRELIMINARY

CL 2 INTERPRETATION

There is currently no definition of Civil Society

“civil society organisation” means a diverse group of non-governmental, non-profit organisations established for charitable purposes whose aims and objectives manifest the interest and will of the citizens an organisation having the mission and attributes referred to in section 4;

CL 3 PURPOSE

The draft Bill is silent on CSO standards

(d) The Establishment of an Authority and/or Regulator to impose standards and best practices; to evaluate, promote and encourage the development of Civil Society Organisations.

(e) The Regulation of CSOs in order to, inter alia promote the observance and compliance of minimum standards to be observed by Civil Society Organisations in order to create transparency and accountability in their operations.

CL 3 PURPOSE

There is potential for duplication of regulation

There is already some form of regulation of NGOs at the moment (the incorporation and registration of NGOs). Does the draft Bill intend to seek to repeal Part VI of The Bahamas Companies Act 1992 and the Companies (Non-Profit) Regulations 2014, 2017 etc on incorporation and regulation of nonprofits? Or can the draft Bill adopt or be subject to some of regulatory provisions already in existence?

PART II MISSION, ATTRIBUTES AND TYPES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

CL 4 CSO MISSION

Mission should be expanded

There should be a statement about the promotion of inclusion and equality.

Will Religious institutions also be included? If so, then maybe something that acknowledges a focus on spirituality and moral values.

CL 5 CSO ATTRIBUTES

Attributes could be dealt with elsewhere

The attributes of the CSO (Clause 5) should be removed from the body of the Bill and transposed to a Schedule (as Schedules are appropriately used in legislations for details, lists, forms etc.)

A civil society organisation may apply for registration in accordance with this Act and the regulations

What will be the relationship between CSO registration and NPO registration?

It seems unfair to require both if they are similar.

Can organizations achieve both with one registration?

The attributes of a CSO are too specific

This detracts from the overall provision and appears to be restrictive.

A general approach should be taken in defining the Attributes or alternatively include the phrase 'includes but is not limited to'.

Problematic attribute that allows CSOs to distribute surpluses

(e) where it engages in revenue generating activities, uses revenue generated principally in pursuit of its aims, objects and purposes and distributes profit or surplus to its founders, donors, directors, trustees, shareholders or members only incidentally as a by-product of its activities;

CL 6 CSO ATTRIBUTES

Types of registered civil society organisations

This is a good inclusive list and demonstrates the need for standards and criteria. How does this relate to entities that are already regulated? (schools, churches, foundations, NPOs, etc.) Do those regulations and registrations supersede these? Could CSO registration come automatically, once an organization is registered in another area?

PART III REGISTRATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

CL 7 Registrar

The purpose and function of Registrar are not defined

It is recommended to add a clause defining the roles of the Registrar and Deputy Registrar including their powers and functions in relation to the applications for registration (as submitted by the CSO).

CL 8 CSO REGISTRATION

There is no code of governance

There should be a requisite submission of a declaration or certification that pursuant to the Code of Governance of the CSOs the Board of Directors are fit and proper persons (certification/confirmation should include proof of background check, police record, cause list search

CL 9 REGISTRATION OF CSOs

The procedure for approval/rejection is sketchy

A further clause should be created to supplement Clause 9 outlining the manner in which the registration process is to be carried out; more specifically identifying timelines for the processing of registration applications and giving notification of refusal etc. (or e.g. 14 (days) to review and advise of objections or lack thereof) . This may encourage efficiency in the processing of applications at the very least.

The appeals process is through the Supreme Court

The draft Bill should include the establishment of an Appeals Board or Tribunal and its legal jurisdiction to address the concerns related to issues and grievances within the CSO sector. It is important, however, that the legal jurisdiction of this Board/Tribunal be established within the draft Bill and further particularizing the binding effect of its decisions.

CL 9 DUTIES OF CSOs

A CSO has no duties and obligations in relation to being a registered body or maintaining its registered status.

(i) MUST implement appropriate standards, policies and procedures internally governing and evaluating Legal and Public Disclosure responsibilities; Financial Control and Oversight; Responsible fundraising methods and Good Governance

(ii) MAY implement other appropriate policies and procedures giving consideration to the size and complexity of the organisations, but at all times MUST be adequate for the proper administration of the CSO.

(iii) Must submit to on-site examinations

(iv) Must appoint a compliance officer to oversee compliance.

PART IV MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

CL 17 ROLE OF MINISTER

The Minister may limit access to Government

I think it, in best case, limits CSO's voice and access to other areas of Govt and in worst, puts us at the mercy of one public servant. I would recommend that the CSO act mandate that all areas of the government must effectively engage CSOs in key points of decision or legislation. This should have prescribed process and vetting procedure for selection of CSO participants. This is what is contained in the FOIA and gives maximum control and power to the public. This should be the case for CSOs.

The Minister's role is too wide

The Minister's role in relation to the subject clause should be limited and / or restricted to that which is listed in Clause 17 (6) and what should be listed as Clause 17 (7). There should be an independent body established by the Bill that deals with the internal management and administration of the CSOs.

CL 18 CIVIL SOCIETY SECRETARIAT

The role and function of the Secretariat is insufficiently defined

That in order to achieve a harmonious, effective and efficient relationship between the Authority for the CSO and the Minister; details concerning the Secretariat's role and function in relation to both parties should be sufficiently particularized.

PART V RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

CL 21 CSO PARTICIPATION

The CSO participation with Government takes place through the Minister.

This should be mandated for each section of government to have meaningful consultation and engagement of CSOs in key decisions, large contract decisions and legislation. There should be some funds allocated to support this effort. A more direct path for dialogue is simpler. CSOs need direct access to each relevant part of government and to be supported by the weight and number of the CSO sector or sub-sector

(3) A registered civil society organisation aggrieved by an act or omission by a Government entity in the participation procedure may challenge the legality of the act, omission or decision of the Government entity by way of judicial review to the Supreme Court.

This is an expensive process. Very few CSOs will have the capacity to do this.

PART VI ESTABLISHMENT OF BAHAMAS CIVIL SOCIETY UNITED AND CIVIL SOCIETY SECRETARIAT

CL 25 ESTABLISHMENT OF BCSU

The limitations of BCSU being a quasi-governmental entity

CSB maintains its primary effectiveness as an independent body. They could serve most of the described functions, but avoid the limitations of a quasi-governmental entity. I understand the value of a consistent budget and the structure to communicate with government. Government compliance with the act and CSO involvement can still be maintained with an independent sector effort and international pressure.

CL 25 ESTABLISHMENT OF BCSU

There is an existing apex body in CSB

CSB should be established as the Authority and be authorized by the Act to implement and impose standards on member CSOs. Therefore, the function of creating standards, a Code of Governance and a Code of Accountability and the overall regulation of the sector should be added to the functions of CSB. Where compliant CSB can issue Certificates of Good Standing or Certificates of Compliance. With these powers it would then create a self-regulating element and remain in the spirit of autonomy as envisioned. CSB can also implement a system of ongoing monitoring and conduct on-site visits and assessments to ensure continued compliance, advancement and development among the member CSOs.

CL 29 FUNCTION OF BCSU

BCSU to (d) as competent authority, be the clearinghouse for information passing from the Government and foreign nations, international organisations and foundations to civil society organisations in The Bahamas; and I think this role is well intended, but could be used to restrict access for CSOs and prevents CSOs from being able to directly advocate and dialogue with relevant parts of government.

There is no role for BCSU implementing standards and guidelines for the sector

- (f) supervise compliance with the provisions of this Act;
- (g) to maintain surveillance over the civil society members and conduct on-site examinations;
- (h) to promote and encourage sound and prudent business practices;
- (i) to advise the Minister responsible for civil society matters;
- (j) to ensure that the provisions of the Financial Transactions Reporting Act, and other anti- money laundering legislation are being complied with; and
- (k) to do such other things as may be prescribed by this Act or any other written law.

PART VII MISCELLANEOUS

CL 31 POWER OF MINISTER

The Power of Minister to make regulations.

Regulations should be made by a task force comprised of government and independent representatives.

Standards should be based on CSB's independent efforts and the collective support of its membership.

CL 32 TRANSITIONAL PROVISIONS

The Registrar General shall act as the Registrar of Civil Society Organisations until such time as a Registrar is appointed in accordance with this Act.

The registrar general should maintain this role. It would ensure greater integration with the current registry of NGOs and businesses.

The Registrar General shall act as the Registrar of Civil Society Organisations until such time as a Registrar is appointed in accordance with this Act.

(2) The members of the first Board of Directors of BCSU shall —

(a) consist of the members of the board of Civil Society Bahamas, a non-governmental organisation incorporated under the laws of The Bahamas; and

(b) hold office for a period of one year, commencing from the date of the first general meeting of BCSU, and shall be eligible for re- election in accordance with section 26(1).

NEXT STEPS

- CONSULTATION - Data Collection from CSO sector
- SURVEY CSOs - WITH THE AMENDMENTS To Ascertain The Wishes Of The Sector
- GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TO DRAFT CLAUSES To Present To The AG

SESSION IV - WRAP UP AND NEXT STEPS

Dr. Hamilton reminded those present that there are two exercises in front of us, the mapping exercise and the determining of impact of Civil Society. He saw something immediately connecting Abaco and Eleuthera. So the clustering will bring out the synergies between the islands.

Each of us must take responsibility as a mother and as a father. How each of us can make a meaningful difference. What is happening in your household? How aware is your family of the things that you are dealing with? How aware are your churches aware of your work? We are ambassadors.

Each of our family islands are unique. Yet we are one nation and we need to be concerned about what happens in all the family islands. He mentioned that he was heavily involved in aviation and they are now

talking about drafting a national plan for aviation that incorporates the needs of all the islands of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas.

The other issue is the drafting of the National Development Plan. One of the major challenges is that we are not focused in our country. We waste resources. It is important we get behind the NDP and advocate for its enactment.

Participant Feedback

- *Q Where was the money coming from to fund CSB over the next three years, as the membership fees are so low?* Our funding is going to come from donors, angel investors and overseas foundations. There are donors that specialise in funding the operating costs, some to fund projects and some to fund physical assets such as buildings and vehicles.
- *Q How would CSB help us in advocating for our issues? I can have the Chamber to support me, I can have my representative to support me.* The answer will be found in the three programmatic areas. We encourage you to look at them and if your issue falls within those three areas, then we would be happy to consider advocating on them. CSB's focus is strengthening the sector and improving the governance of the sector and we are going to advocate on economic development. Issues like WTO, the dormant funds, the sovereign fund etc. are clearly issues that fall within that gambit. The broader the issue the better. The Government prefers to talk to one representative on the big issues and so on the bigger issues we are the ideal partner to engage with Government.
- *Q Is the issue of slow registration process something that CSB will advocate on?* Absolutely.
- *The plan is very ambitious and we wish you all the best with it.*

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dr. Hamilton concluded. I trust what has been shared has not only stimulated you, but also energised you and encouraged you to review and make a commitment, heightening the commitment that you have already made. I hope today has been a catalyst to spur you on in your good work, so collectively across the nation we see demonstrable achievement.

We would like to thank James Richard for his help and the lend of his projector, Elder Serone Kennedy, The Ralph's and Ken Hutton for helping us organise this event.

CSB is extremely grateful for the input received from the participants of the workshop. It is important to keep the momentum going and it is CSB's intention to set up a steering committee in Abaco to be the eyes and ears of CSB on the ground.

We are committed to the Family Islands and It is CSB's intention to return to Abaco soon to hold a workshop on registration as a non profit, VAT, TIN and obtaining Certificates of Good Standing. We will continue to help strengthen the local Civil Society sector and do what we can to encourage economic development on the island.

APPENDICES

I. Agenda

II. Participating Organizations

I. AGENDA



AGENDA

Workshop on the 3 Year Strategic Plan and draft CSO Bill to strengthen the Civil Society sector
 Saturday 13 October, 2018
 Da Blue Hole Restaurant Meeting Room, Marsh Harbour, Abaco, The Bahamas

ITEM	
9:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.	Registration and Breakfast
9:30 a.m. - 9:35 a.m.	Welcome: Gevon Moss - IADB
9:35 a.m. - 9:50 a.m.	Introduction: Shaun Ingraham, President, Civil Society Bahamas and CEO, One Eleuthera Foundation
9:50 a.m. – 10:15 a.m. SESSION I – Presentation of the Civil Society July 2018 Survey Results	Presentation: Dr. Anthony Hamilton - Vice President, Civil Society Bahamas
10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m. BREAK	
10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Session II - Presentation of the 3 Year CSB Strategic Plan	Presenter: Mark Palmer - Secretary, Civil Society Bahamas
11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Session III - Presentation on the draft CSO Bill	Presenter: Dr. Anthony Hamilton - Vice President, Civil Society Bahamas
12:00 p.m. - 12:30 p.m. Session IV - Wrap up and next steps	Facilitator: Shaun Ingraham, President, Civil Society Bahamas and CEO, One Eleuthera Foundation
12:30 p.m - 1:00 p.m. LIGHT LUNCH, FELLOWSHIP and NETWORKING	

II. PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

Name	Organisation	Telephone	Email
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Mark Palmer	Agape Foundation	465-6763	markalexpalmer@gmail.com
Dr. Anthony Hamilton	Civil Society Bahamas	429-4760	aknhlaw@yahoo.com

Milanne Rehor	Wild Horses of Abaco Preservation Society	577-4573	arkwild@abacoinet.com
Veronica Saunders	Abaco Cancer Society	473-8553	abacocancersociety@gmail.com
Marjolein Scott	Abaco Cancer Society	367-3744	abacocancersociety@gmail.com
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Ken Hutton	Abaco Chamber of Commerce	455-1444	ken@abacochamber.org

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NASSAU, BAHAMAS

An electronic version of this document is available online at www.civilsocietybahamas.org/13-october-2018