

## **World Harmony Run Opening Ceremony, 12 April 2012**

### ***Introduction by Salil Wilson, Executive Director WHR of Ambassador Davidson Hepburn.***

We are Delighted to have with us today a very dear friend and brother. Someone who has dedicated his life to international service.

He served for a long time as the Ambassador (and Permanent Representative) of the Bahamas to the United Nations. He most recently served as the President (2009 – 2011) of the General Conference of (UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) UNESCO. He was kind enough to offer us a message congratulating us on our twenty fifth Anniversary, which has been translated so far into 25 languages.

But someone, most importantly, who is a real brother. And a person who provides inspiration in the way he decides to live his life.

I now welcome Davidson Hepburn to come up and share a few words.

### ***Remarks by Ambassador Davidson Hepburn:***

Thank you very much Salil for those wonderful comments, some of which I don't think I deserve.

I am very happy to have this occasion to be here for the celebration of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Harmony - Peace Run.

Salil mentioned my work with UNESCO. I would like to say that UNESCO has a motto:

*“Since wars begin in the minds of men,  
it is in the minds of men that  
the defenses of peace must be constructed”*

And that is what this group is all about. They are coming from all of these countries in the world in order to show their desire to make us all live together in peace as one.

Twenty-five years ago, Sri Chinmoy, who was a very dear friend – breathed life and action into the simple idea that we are a oneness-world-family.

The global run, known then as the “Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home Peace Run,” powerfully demonstrates this blossoming truth.

I must say that it was a great joy for me as a Bahamian, when the Peace Run came to the Bahamas., ran around the island and took the torch to many different islands. And it left a strong impression which I think will grow forever from strength to strength.

I think Sri Chinmoy was searching for a way to bring the essential spirit of the United Nations, an organization he dearly loved, to people all over the world.

He wonderfully succeeded in doing this and in an accessible and tangible fashion. As you can see

from the representation here..

By **carrying the torch from one city to the next**, one country to the next, with joyful reception all along the route, the run highlights the fact that there is **far more that unites us** than divides us.

And one part of my philosophy is that we should **make our differences work for us** and not against us. I was very happy to have the opportunity to organize a **conference in the Bahamas on Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**. We were quite concerned that small islands within the United Nations, within UNESCO, could not have a voice. And by **combining all these countries together we were able to come up with a resolution** that is going to make the Small Island Developing States very strong indeed.

**By visiting schools**, you are enabling children and young adults to **experience a real feeling of peace** as well as to take an **active role in celebrating world unity**.

The other fact though, that is extremely important is **by linking different religions**, you are highlighting our **unity in diversity**.

**By encouraging musical and poetic expression**, you are showing creative ways to experience and share harmony.

I was **deeply moved by the choir that sang here**, before we began, they were simply excellent. They touched my heart. (*Spontaneous audience applause*). I hope they will be doing another one as we leave here today.

And as we will see later in this programme – the “*Torch-Bearer Award*” recognizes and **celebrates peace-building pioneers in communities** everywhere who are dedicated to serve this world-family.

It’s a pleasure for me to be here and I must say something briefly about Sri Chinmoy. And to do that I stole a verse from Longfellow’s poem : ***A Psalm of Life***

*Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sand of time;*

Thank you very much.

**Salil Wilson:** Thank you so much Dr. Hepburn. One of the things I find remarkable about Dr. Hepburn is - he manages to live a full life of service in the international community, and still manages to look younger than I am.