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GIRL POWER! – Members of the All-Woman Panel at the 10th Annual International Black Women’s Public Policy Institute Policy. Among them are: Hon. Paula Cox, Former Premier of Bermuda (seated 3rd from left); Princess Dr. Moradeun Ogunlana, CEO, Innovative Global Consulting (seated 2nd from right); Dr. Julianne Malveaux, Founder & President, Economic Education (seated at right) and President of the Bahamas Senate, The Hon. Katherine B. Smith (centre in green).



Board members Gloria Dill, Secretary (2nd from left) and Lisa D. Cagnolatti, 2nd Vice President (right) all smiles with featured panelists.

THE BAHAMAS SHINES IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AT 10TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL BLACK WOMEN'S POLICY FORUM

Freeport, Grand Bahama – The International Black Women's Public Policy Institute (IBWPPI) celebrated its 10th Annual Policy Forum from September 12th to the 16th, during the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's Annual Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

This year's theme was "Leadership in a Global Women's Movement and the Critical Issues that Connect Women Globally".

The forum commenced with a Gala & Awards Reception on September 12th at the Embassy of The Republic of Haiti, which featured three honorees; His Excellency, Paul G. Altidor, Ambassador of Haiti; Albert (AL) Smith, Jr., Group Vice President and Chief Social Innovation Officer, Toyota Motor North America; and Cathy Hughes, Entrepreneur and Media Maven.

Following the Gala, on September 13th, was the forum's conference where a panel of global women leaders, including The Bahamas' very own, President of the Senate, The Hon. Katherine B. Smith, discussed issues affecting women in their own country and around the world.

"I'm very disappointed in where we are personally as a country in terms of women's participation in politics", stated Smith. "Women represent more than 50% of the electorate of The Bahamas, yet there are only four Members of Parliament who are female, one female Cabinet Minister, and approximately an even number of women in the Senate. The problem is that you have to fight through your political party structure to be serious about what women can do."

Joining Smith were fellow women global leaders: The Hon. Paula Cox, Former Premier of Bermuda; Her Excellency Audrey Marks, Ambassador of Jamaica to the United States; Princess Dr. Moradeun Ogunlana, CEO of Innovative Global Consulting; and Dr. Julianne Malveaux, Founder & President of Economic Education, among other distinguished guests.

Despite her concerns, Smith admitted that women are doing well in The Bahamas as CEOs and leaders, even though the position of Prime Minister has eluded them.

"There's no question about what women can do, but it's the politics. Until we remove some of the inequality that still exists in our Constitution and until women themselves

accept that it's okay for women to lead and to be a Prime Minister, I think we're going to have some difficulties.”

The organization remains dedicated to four core initiatives; Human Trafficking, addressing the problem of trafficking, and providing solutions for supporting victims; Health and Wellness globally, particularly in countries where poor water quality is a challenge; Economic Security and the right for women to enjoy equal pay for equal work; as well as supporting education and literacy.

“I think that generally women need to want to support women in leadership roles”, explains Smith. “It is really organizations like the IBWPPI and many other women’s organizations that help us with this, and that’s why I think this global movement is so very important.”

The IBWPPI is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that was built upon the legacy of Dorothy I. Height, Chair Emeritus, by Barbara A. Perkins and Ka Flewellen in 1994 and 1995, and continues to be led by a collective of inter-generational women leaders who represent the interests of women in countries throughout the African Diaspora. It is also the only global organization focused solely on policies that are the priority of black women.