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## Breaking News: Bay St. Fire: Police looking at the possibility of arson

## Bahamas to host oil disaster contingency meeting

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Representatives of several nations will convene in The Bahamas next month with contingency planning for a cross-border, oil-spill event on their agenda, *Guardian Business* understands.

Potential attendees would include representatives from the United States, Cuba, Mexico, and Jamaica — all countries either drilling or preparing to drill in offshore waters soon.

Minster of the Environment Earl Deveaux told this newspaper that a meeting was planned but he was not in a position to give full details at this time.

"There will be a meeting in The Bahamas, sponsored by the International Maritime Organization (IMO)," Deveaux said in an interview yesterday. "A number of countries are expected to be coming."

With ocean currents capable of delivering one nation's oil spill to another nation's shores, countries that make up the Straits of Florida/Gulf of Mexico Basin, including The Bahamas, Cuba, Mexico and the United States, have a collective interest in ensuring a plan is in place that addresses how an oil spill would be contained.

*Guardian Business* approached Paul Gucwa, chief operating officer at Bahamas Petroleum Company (BPC), about the meeting. With exploration licenses covering 3.87 million acres in Bahamian waters and promising preliminary research, the company has announced its intention to drill exploratory wells next year the only way to know for certain if there are recoverable reserves in the southern Bahamas license areas.

While not confirming that the meeting would take place, Gucwa acknowledged that proper contingency planning for an oil-spill event that would impact on a number of nations was in order.

"I think it's very important that there be in place an adequate cross-country response mechanism," he told said yesterday.

In September, *Guardian Business* was told by industry expert Jorge Pinon that the United States, Cuba, The Bahamas and Mexico had a common interest in forging a cross-border, oil-spill management agreement.

Pinon, a Research Fellow for the Latin American and Caribbean Center at Florida International University (FIU), said The Bahamas was a signatory to a United Nations 1990 pollution control agreement that, along with treaties the U.S. has with Canada and Mexico, formed an ideal umbrella for a U.S./Bahamas/Cuba agreement.

Containing large spills may be a task beyond any single government or corporation, Pinon said. In the case of a Cuban offshore oil spill, the U.S.'s trade embargo against that nation could dramatically slow the containment process as oil pours, potentially, into Bahamian waters.



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## THE NASSAU Guardian

### Christie: Road project costs 'scandalous'

Former PM says cost overruns in worst interest of Bahamas

Prime Minister Dean Christy has accused the government of spending too much on a road project, saying the project is a waste of money and that the government should be more transparent in its spending.

### Man convicted of raping daughter

A man has been convicted of raping his daughter, a case that has shocked the community.

The man, 35, was found guilty of the crime after a trial that lasted several weeks. The victim is now recovering from the trauma of the incident.

### Three suspects in Burger King armed robbery charged

Three suspects in a recent armed robbery at a Burger King restaurant have been charged with the crime.

The robbery occurred last week, and the suspects were identified through a combination of surveillance footage and witness testimony.

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The Scarabeo 9, a semi-submersible deep-water rig, is now making its way towards the Jaguey Prospect off Cuba's northwest coast. Weather has slowed its progress, with Pinon saying it's now off the coast of Brazil headed for Trinidad and Tobago where it will be inspected by the United States Coast Guard before heading to Cuba.

In an earlier interview, he said that rig was expected to drill some 5,600 feet in a fast-flowing area of the Gulfstream. Even if a single drop of oil is never recovered from Bahamian waters, the country could still suffer an environmental catastrophe as a result of an oil spill there.

Bahamians would not have forgotten their concerns over a local environmental disaster after the Deepwater Horizon spill in the Gulf of Mexico last year, which is considerably further away than the Jaguey Prospect.

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