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Universal Periodic Review Working Group – 15th Session

Universal Periodic Review of the Bahamas

Statement by Australia

Australia commends the Bahamas on its progress since its last review, including ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).

Australia acknowledges developments towards greater equality for, and protection of women, including the submission of a National Gender Policy, and would appreciate further details on its implementation. Australia also commends the Bahamas on its recommitment to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), in particular the withdrawal of its reservation to article 16(1)(h). Nevertheless, Australia is deeply concerned by reports of increased violence against women, including sexual assault. **Australia recommends that the Bahamas accede to the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, to further strengthen its commitment to the equality and protection of women.**

Australia remains concerned that the death penalty continues to be imposed in the Bahamas, but notes that no executions have taken place since 2000. In light of the Bahamas' ratification of the ICCPR, **Australia recommends that the Bahamas establish a moratorium on the death penalty as a first step in acceding to the Second Optional Protocol of the ICCPR.**

Australia understands the particular environment in the Bahamas resulting from continued influxes of migrants, including Haitian nationals following the 2010 earthquake. While acknowledging the right of the Bahamas to manage its own borders, **Australia recommends further legal measures to increase visibility and transparency of asylum applications, which ensure an open process for claimants and consistency with human rights principles.**