



**Universal Periodic Review of the BAHAMAS, 23 January 2013
Intervention by the delegation of Estonia**

Estonia warmly welcomes the high level delegation of the Bahamas to the 15th session of the UPR and appreciates its engagement in the process.

First, we congratulate the Bahamas for their Constitution, which guarantees respect for fundamental human rights by including several provisions to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals. We welcome the recently reinstated Constitutional Reform Commission to work out recommendations for reform and we hope to see stronger commitment to the protection of human rights in the Constitution.

Second, we would like to commend the Government of the Bahamas for having taken into consideration the recommendations received during the previous UPR cycle and for having signed and ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) as the core international instruments. We would like to highlight that the implementation of covenants remains always the key.

Third, Estonia is very pleased to note that the Government has withdrawn its reservations on article 16 (1) (h) of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) regarding the marriage and family law that calls for equal property rights for both spouses. This step will also assist in achieving further gender balance in society. We are glad that women have often held important high level posts in the country, as this shows the Government's intention to develop and implement gender-neutral policies. We invite the Bahamas continue making further efforts to reduce discrimination and to protect the rights of the women.

We commend the Bahamas for their active engagement in regional cooperation mechanisms as several workshops and programmes trying to tackle Caribbean-centric issues.

Estonia would like to make the following **recommendations**:

- We recommend that the Bahamas become part of the Convention against Torture (CAT) as well as to the Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture (OPCAT).
- We recommend that the Bahamas ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and to accede to the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the ICC.
- We recommend to the Government of the Bahamas to fully abolish the death penalty.

We would like to wish to the delegation of the Bahamas a successful review meeting.

Thank you!