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PHILIPPINES

Statement by
H.E. Amb. Evan P. Garcia
Permanent Representative of the Philippines
to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva

Human Rights Council
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UPR of BAHAMAS
23 January 2013

Mister President, the Philippine delegation is pleased to welcome the delegation of Bahamas, led by ^{ATTORNEY GENERAL & MINISTER OF LEGAL AFFAIRS} HE Z.C. ALLYSON MAYNARD-GIBSON to the Human Rights Council. My delegation also welcomes the involvement of the various government agencies and the civil society in the preparation of the comprehensive national report of Bahamas. We acknowledge the great importance that Bahamas continues to attach to the UPR process.

The Philippines takes note that the Bahamas constitution guarantees respect for human rights and provides avenues for redress through the judicial process when human rights are violated.

The Philippines lauds Bahamas for ratifying a number of core international human rights conventions, the latest of which are its ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights.

My delegation takes particular note of the recent withdrawal of Bahamas of its reservation on Article 16 (1) (h) of the CEDAW on marriage and family law which allows equal property rights to both spouses.

As pointed out in its national report that the principal constraints impacting human rights in the Bahamas lie with the constitutional requirement for a referendum to amend provisions of Bahamas constitution which discriminates against women, this withdrawal of reservation on Article 16 (1) (h) of the CEDAW is a giant step towards eventual elimination of discrimination against women in its society.

These positive steps made by Bahamas signal its readiness to strengthen the normative framework for human right to flourish in its society as well as its openness in implementing its obligations arising from the international human rights conventions to which Bahamas is party.

Mister President, as stated in its national report, Bahamas has been and is still a receiving country for large number of irregular migrants from its neighboring countries. The Philippines notes while Bahamas is yet to ratify several key conventions relating to migrant workers, Bahamas has been providing and guaranteeing the rights of migrant workers, such as making available free access to education, health, and social services without regard to the migrant workers' immigration status. The Philippines wishes to see Bahamas further strengthen the normative framework for migrants' rights in its society. Hence, the Philippines recommends that Bahamas considers ratifying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families and the ILO Convention 189.

On the matter of trafficking in persons, the Philippines welcomes the intensified efforts of Bahamas in combating human trafficking. My delegation welcomes in particular the establishment of the Inter Ministry Committee on Trafficking in Persons and the Trafficking in Persons Task Force as policy coordination and operational bodies to better address trafficking in persons cases.

In closing, Mr. President, the Philippines joins other states in wishing Bahamas well as it pursues policies and programs to advance and fulfil the human rights of its people. Thank you, Mr President.