



**Statement by Ms. Sasha Dixon, Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas to the United Nations
Office and Other International Organisations in Geneva
at the 25th Session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group
Presentation of National Report by the Government of Antigua and Barbuda**

**9 May, 2016
Geneva, Switzerland**

Thank you, Mr. Vice President.

The Bahamas extends a warm welcome to the delegation of our sister CARICOM state, Antigua and Barbuda. We welcome the submission of the country's national report and the delegation's informative update.

The Bahamas notes, with satisfaction, the considerable strides made by Antigua and Barbuda in the promotion and protection of human rights. Particularly commendable are the recent legislative reforms enacted by virtue of the Trafficking in Persons Amendment Act (2015); the Migrant Smuggling (Prevention) Amendment Act (2015); the Defamation Act (2015) and the Immigration and Passport Amendment Act (2015), which strengthen legal protections in a number of critical areas. The Bahamas also notes efforts to protect the rights of children, the rights of older persons and the rights of persons with disabilities. The significant roles of civil society and key bilateral partnerships, in contributing to some of these social protection efforts are also exemplary.

In addition, the passage of a new Domestic Violence Bill by the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, which strengthens the Act of 1992, represents an important step forward. It is especially noteworthy that the Bill broadens the definitions of the domestic relationship and domestic violence; enhances protections for victims and children and protects against newer forms of harassment such as cyberstalking.

The experience of a 5.2 magnitude earthquake in Antigua and Barbuda yesterday, during which, thankfully, no injuries or deaths were reported, serves as a sobering reminder of the vulnerabilities faced by the countries of our Caribbean region, and as Small Island Developing States, to natural disasters and to external shocks, which continue to pose significant challenges.

Nevertheless The Bahamas recognizes the progress that continues to be made by Antigua and Barbuda and, in this same spirit, **recommends** that Antigua and Barbuda:

- (i) Works toward enacting legislation to incorporate the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in its national law and
- (ii) Seeks and avails itself of technical assistance opportunities for training of personnel in international human rights treaty monitoring and reporting.

We wish Antigua and Barbuda every success in this UPR process.

I thank you, Mr. Vice President.