



**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 St. Vincent and the Grenadines**

**2 May, 2016
Geneva, Switzerland**

Thank you, Mr. President.

The Bahamas extends a warm welcome to the delegation of our sister CARICOM state, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, led by Her Excellency Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of St. Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations.

We thank Ambassador King for her comprehensive presentation and commend the delegation for its active and constructive engagement in this important process.

In spite of the inherent capacity constraints faced by the nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, a fellow Small Island Developing State, the efforts of the country in promoting and protecting the rights of its people are indeed commendable. The Bahamas considers to be particularly noteworthy, the extensive and progressive efforts toward ensuring the right to education for all, including through the School Feeding Programme, Book Loan Scheme and Tertiary-Level Student Loan Programme. Further, the success of the programme to re-integrate teenage mothers into the school system, recognized as a regional best practice, is certainly laudable. The Bahamas is also encouraged by achievements such as the enactment of comprehensive domestic violence legislation; inclusion of training in human rights in general, and gender-based violence in particular, in the curriculum of the Vincentian Royal Police Force; the construction of a new correctional facility which is in conformity with the Mandela Rules; the priority accorded to poverty eradication through the 'Zero-hunger challenge initiative' and the resilience evinced in efforts to ensure adequate housing, despite the impacts brought about by natural disasters.

The Bahamas **recommends** that St. Vincent:

- (i) promotes public awareness and education on provisions under the new Domestic Violence Act (2015) and
- (ii) seeks and avails itself of international technical assistance opportunities in training, data collection and analysis, to support national reporting under the international human rights instruments.

The Bahamas wishes St. Vincent and the Grenadines every success in this UPR process.

I thank you.