

**Statement by the Commonwealth of The Bahamas**

**at the 29th Session of the Universal Periodic Working Group**

**Presentation of National Report by the Government of Barbados**

**19th January, 2018**

**Geneva, Switzerland**

Thank you, Mr. Vice President,

The Bahamas extends a warm welcome to the delegation of our sister CARICOM state, Barbados, led by the Hon Steven Blackett, M.P., Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Community Development, to this 29th Session of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group. Barbados, like all small island developing states (SIDS), faces tremendous challenges due to its vulnerability to external shocks. The Bahamas therefore congratulates Barbados on its commitment to the protection and promotion of human rights, and its commitment to this UPR Process.

The Bahamas notes that significant strides continue to be made by Barbados in the protection of human rights, as evidenced by Barbados’ ratification of ***the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*** on 27 February, 2013. Barbados has also made legislative reforms with the promulgation of the ***Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Amendment Act 2016,*** which has made significant positive changes to the protection offered to victims of domestic violence, by broadening the definition of domestic violence; introducing the issue of visiting relationships, which was not previously covered; and expanding police powers in domestic violence cases. There is also the ***Employment Sexual Harassment (Prevention) Act, 2017*,** which seeks to provide conditions that promote workplaces that are free of sexual harassment; and the ***Draft Juvenile Justice Bill*** that seeks to provide for the establishment of a new Juvenile Justice System.

The Bahamas **recommends** that Barbados:

(i) Move forward with the enactment and Implementation of the Juvenile Justice Bill;

(ii) Advance the finalization of the National Policy on Gender;

(iii) Make statutory provision for the Child Abuse Draft Mandatory Reporting Protocol.

We wish Barbados every success in this UPR Process.

I thank you.