

**Statement by Ms. Sasha Dixon, Second Secretary,
Permanent Mission of The Bahamas to the United Nations Office and Other International Organisations in Geneva
31st Session of the Universal Periodic Review Working Group**

**Presentation of National Report by the Government of Belize**
**12 November 2018**

Thank you, Mr. [Vice] President.

The Bahamas extends a warm welcome to the delegation of its sister CARICOM State of Belize, led by H.E Mr. Patrick Andrews, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and we commend the country for its demonstrated commitment to this important UPR process.

We congratulate Belize on the significant strides made in the promotion and protection of human rights, despite the challenges of limited human and financial resources as well as vulnerability to the effects of climate change and natural disasters. Noteworthy areas of progress include accession to additional core international human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) as well as efforts in the area of anti-trafficking in persons, including extensive public awareness promotion and training conducted on victim identification, reporting and referral for officials from key sectors of government and the judiciary. Moreover, efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, the reduction of barriers to healthcare in rural and poor communities, decreases in maternal mortality as well as the quantifiable results achieved through the Educational Quality Improvement Programme are indeed laudable.

In this same spirit and recognizing that some areas of challenge remain, The Bahamas respectfully **recommends** that Belize:

1. considers establishing or strengthening a national process to assist in coordinating its reporting under various human rights instruments, such as a National Mechanism for Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF)

1. considers extending a standing invitation to all special procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and
2. increases opportunities within the school system for pregnant adolescents to return to school post-delivery and intensifies efforts to stem the premature departure of young males from the school system.

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We wish Belize every success in this UPR process.

I thank you.