

*Position Paper for the Economic and Social Council Plenary (ECOSOC)*

The government of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas, as one of the Caribbean's leading democracies, aims to be a role model for all Caribbean and South American countries and declares that the implementation and achievement of the *Millennium Development Goals* by the year 2015 is its major priority. The issues before the Economic and Social Council Plenary are: Evaluating the Progress and Projections of the Millennium Development Goals; The Impact of Sexual and Gender-based Violence on Realizing the Right to Reproductive Health; as well as Environmental Migration and Social Vulnerability as a Result of Climate Change.

**I. Evaluating the Progress and Projections of the Millennium Development Goals**

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas assures its outermost commitment to a pleasing achievement of all eight *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)* by the year 2015. The Bahamas continues its endeavour to fight hunger and poverty, to ameliorate health and access to education, and at last to bring forward lasting peace and environmental sustainability on a national and global stage. In awareness of A/RES/55/2 the country has been able to decrease the amount of undernourished people by more than 55 % over the last few years. We request, that the Caribbean states take more effective measures to reach this goal as by spending more money on eco-agricultural cultivation and new available techniques in this sector. From 2000 throughout 2009 the net enrolment in primary education raised up to 97, 2 %, the highest quote inside of the *Caribbean Community (CARICOM)*. Due to heavy improvements in the health care sector the under-5 mortality rate has fallen under 2 percent. The Bahamas demands that *CARICOM* and the *United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA)* set up more efficient health care for pregnant women and infants in affected regions. Furthermore, the *Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)* states that in the last few years fatal casualties relating to Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS are at a minimum, since establishments like the *Caribbean HIV/AIDS Regional Training Network (CHART)* have been able to achieve a lot of progress. We urge the global community under the supervision of the *World Health Organization (WHO)* to establish even more similar programs to fight HIV and other diseases especially in Africa and Asia. Sexual elucidation, installations of medical and sanitary facilities, more medically trained persons and pharmaceuticals are the key to battle the troubles from within. Bearing in mind E/2010/SR.36, we can and must collaborate to guarantee the economic and ecological sustainability of smaller and poorer states. Having achieved almost every goal and target for 2015, our country still needs to improve and is willing to do so. A major success on our way of achieving the *MDGs* has been the foundation of programs such as *CARICOM* and *ECLAC* leading to regional improvements in the whole Caribbean. On the global level *The United Nations Development Program (UNDP)* has proved a great efficiency in various countries. Nevertheless a lot of countries throughout the world are simply not able to fulfill the targets and *MDGs* by themselves. Seeing the need of help and support for many states, we want to enlarge the *UNDP*. Therefore more financial support and technical assistance from developed states is going to be necessary. These additional expenses should be divided under the supporting states, granting each one of them an adequate involvement due to its size and economic strength. On the basis of a verse of our national anthem we encourage all states to **Press Onward** for a more effective global cooperation and **March Together** to fulfill the *MDGs* and to obtain the **Common Loftier Goal** to make the world a better place.

**II. The Impact of Sexual and Gender-based Violence on Realizing the Right to Reproductive Health**

The Bahamas expresses its support and consent with the remarks of the Executive Director of the *UNFPA*, Babatunde Osotimehin, stating that we need to stop Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) throughout the world. The *UNFPA* and *ECOSOC* have pointed out, that mostly women are the victims of SGBV. Nevertheless its outcome leaves whole countries with tremendous consequences concerning sexual and reproductive health (SRH), which has been identified by the *WHO* as an indispensable necessity for an equal and functioning society. On the basis of the fundamental *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* and the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* the protection, equal treatment and education of girls and women in affected regions need to be established to save the regions themselves. The

Bahamas calls upon every state and society to ban and judge SGBV. In awareness of S/RES/1325, S/RES/1820, S/RES/1888, S/RES/1889 and S/RES/1960 we point out the enormous importance and impacts on women and on society. We urge the governments to take precautions to female fetus abortions by granting women an education and healthcare and by enforcing harsher laws against SGBV. As a small country with a population of 300.000 people, we face challenging demographic diversifications. Therefore, we want to establish more programs like the *UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)*. These programs should collaborate with regional based organizations to battle the problems in the affected countries more effectively. Having achieved the constitution of a strong cooperation between *UNIFEM* and *CARICOM*, we have been able to fight SGBV in the Caribbean area successfully. In the space of the program the Bahamas stands out as a role model for the combat of child marriage and prenatal sex selection. Financial aid of existing programs needs to be controlled by one centralized UN-institution, which will be appointed by all member states at an International Conference, to grant its most helpful and secure provision. Furthermore, we endorse the establishments of more hospitals and women's refugee houses, more schools and more effective reconnaissance about SGBV. We point out the unquestionable coherence between Religion and SGBV. Seeing the need of a respective approach of Religious leaders and preachers towards the government, both groups should participate in the compilation of a Constitution, which fulfills general human rights. The Bahamas requests, that states which apply laws that are based on religious backgrounds modify these towards a standard which grants every human the same rights and chances. The suppression of women and violence against them must not be justified by religion. Intercultural and religious interchange on the base of an expert forum is the solution. At last, the Bahamas repeats, that it is every government's essential task to set up guidelines for social and cultural life. **Press Onward** to convince the population of equality and humanity and **March Together** by granting women the same chances as men have them to fulfill the **Common Loftier Goal** to fight SGBV globally and to grant upcoming generations a functioning society.

### III. Environmental Migration and Social Vulnerability as a Result of Climate Change

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas supports the *ECOSOC* in its mandate to discuss issues of environmental safety and security, as well as the protection of refugees and migrants. In awareness of Article 25 of the *UDHR* the Bahamas affirms its commitment to fight environmental migration and social vulnerability as a result of climate change. Recalling resolutions A/RES/43/53 and A/RES/46/169 we acknowledge that it is of outermost importance to further work on a global framework about climate change. Concerned by the projections of the *International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)* that the globe will have to face extreme weather patterns and rising sea-levels and convinced that climate change affects humanity as a whole and the social vulnerability, the Bahamas sees the urgent need for the international community to make a change and to establish a secure future for upcoming generations. Bearing in mind A/RES/60/1 Nr.51, the Bahamas will further commit to prevent the world and especially the *Small Island Development States (SIDS)* of the results of climate change such as environmental migration and social vulnerability. Having achieved the establishment of the *Caribbean Community on Climate Change (CCCC)*, which is recognized by the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)* and the *United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)*, the Bahamas, together with *CARICOM*, responds to the hazards of climate change by launching regional projects such as the *Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Climate Change Project (CPACC)*. The *CPACC* consists of regional and pilot projects, including the establishment of a sea level/climate monitoring network, a coral reef monitoring for climate change and coastal vulnerability and risk assessment. Seeing the need of the prevention of environmental migration and social vulnerability due to climate change, the Bahamas internationally appeals to the world community that the next *Conference of the Parties (COP)* in 2012 of the *UNFCCC* will lead to a binding extension of the *Kyoto Protocol*. The Bahamas emphasizes the importance of the need of establishing a legally binding framework on climate protection until 2020, as already planned on the *COP* in Durban in 2011. Besides, governments have to make an effort in teaching the civil society about the consequences of climate change due to the fact that they are going to be the victims of environmental migration and social vulnerability if the sea level further rises. Nationally, the Bahamas will commit to the former goals themselves and is willing to support its fellow neighbours in achieving them. **Press Onward** when it comes to fighting climate change and **March Together** in achieving the former set objections to achieve the **Common Loftier Goal** of a secure world with a social stability for future generations.