

**Delegation from
The Commonwealth of the Bahamas**

**Represented by the
University of Heidelberg**

Position Paper for the General Assembly Third Committee

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas salutes the *Charter of the United Nations* and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and desires to act in the light of the *United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000*. In this regard, the Commonwealth of the Bahamas works towards peace and prosperity, especially through combating human trafficking. The issues before the General Assembly Third Committee are: Combating Human Trafficking; Development and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; as well as Transnational Organized Crime. The Bahamas applauds the ongoing cooperation between Member States to solve pressing world issues.

I. Combating Human Trafficking

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas believes that combating human trafficking is essential for the social cohesion and the promotion of the universal human rights. The Bahamas approves of A/RES/55/25, which provides the fundament for the creation of the *United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)*. By signing and ratifying this document, the Bahamas commits itself to taking series of measures against human trafficking. The Bahamas strongly supports the supplement of the *UNTOC*, referred to as the three *Protocols of Palermo*. Keeping this in mind, the Bahamas draws attention to the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, which is the first Palermo Protocol and of utmost significance for banishing human trafficking. The Bahamas is dedicated to the main intention of the first Protocol to facilitate convergence in national approaches with regard to the establishment of domestic criminal offences. Additionally, the Bahamas welcomes the implementation of the *United Nations Global Plan of Action to combat Trafficking in Persons*, adopted in A/RES/64/293. The Bahamas recommends the *United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN-GIFT)* being a support platform for the implementation of the *Global Plan of Action* and expresses its appreciation for the tools developed by the *United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)* and the cooperation between the governments and the *UNODC*. In a **global perspective**, the Bahamas notes with deep concern the few attempts by certain member states to combat human trafficking. Therefore, the Bahamas recommends the need of a global supervising system called *United Nations World Association in Combating Human Trafficking (UNWATCH)*, to observe the process of signing, ratifying and implementing international treaties and creating efficient legislation against human trafficking. The Bahamas encourages the exchange of good practices and gather data on the crime in human trafficking in order to develop knowledge-based responses. Since still being a destination country for trafficking persons, **regionally**, the Bahamas recognizes the need of strengthening border control between neighbouring countries. As a member of the *Organization of American States (OAS)*, the development of bilateral and regional agreements should be taken into consideration. **Locally**, the Bahamas has taken important steps by creating an anti-trafficking law in 2008. The Bahamas urges the implementation of a plan to provide appropriate services to victims and to prosecute human trafficking offenders in cooperation with the *Red Cross*, *Amnesty International* and the *National Organization of Women's Association of the Bahamas (NOWAB)* and the tools provided by the *UNODC*. The Bahamas strongly promotes official awareness of, and coordination on trafficking issues within the country through mechanisms such as multi-agency Trafficking in Persons Working Groups. Being one of the most underresearched countries, the Bahamas feels the need to strengthen the coordination of efforts at all levels, within and between states and among all relevant stakeholders.

II. Development and the Rights of Indigenous People

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas is concerned that through the technological and industrial development, issues of self-determination, autonomy, structural discrimination and exclusion continue to create strife between indigenous groups and the political structures. The Bahamas acknowledges the *Declaration on the Rights on Indigenous Peoples*, which guarantees rights specifically to indigenous peoples, including the right to self-

determination, protection from forced assimilation and other forms of discrimination as the main legal instrument for the Development and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Additionally, the Bahamas recognizes the UN's work, especially by the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* related to decolonization, being evidence of their support for the rights of the indigenous peoples. Furthermore, the Bahamas appreciates that the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* and the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, supported notably by different working groups of the *Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)*, such as the *Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP)*, also protect Indigenous Peoples. Despite all these efforts, the few existing international legal instruments guaranteeing collective ownership of land or resources to indigenous groups alarm the Bahamas. **Globally**, the Bahamas promotes the *United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII)* as a first platform for ambassadors by the Indigenous Peoples, which provides an equal face-to-face communication. The Bahamas asks for further action by the *United Nations Indigenous Peoples Partnership (UNIPP)* to realize the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* through the mobilization of financial cooperation and technical assistance. **Regionally**, the Bahamas arrogates the OAS to resume working efficiently on its own Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Therefore, new negotiation dates must be set and working groups have to be encouraged to cooperate. **Locally**, the Bahamas asks the other Nations to follow its idea of working on a *United Nations People-to-People-Programme (UNPPP)*, where Indigenous People and the nation's society come together to go in for activities and exchange experiences and values. The Bahamas recognizes that in order to achieve a better understanding between the Indigenous People and the Governmental society volunteers must be trained to grant the Indigenous tribes access to the society and vice versa.

III. Transnational Organized Crime

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas stands firmly in its belief that the implementation of the legal instruments provided by the UN must play a crucial role in combating Transnational Organized Crime to preserve human rights amongst all Member States. The Bahamas is greatly concerned by the rise of new and emerging forms of transnational crime which are carried out with a ruthless disregard of the law and the Rights of the People. The Bahamas acknowledges the early initiatives of the UN combating Transnational Organized Crime in 1989 by adopting A/RES/44/71. Furthermore, the Bahamas fully supports the 1994 *Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational Crime* annexed to A/RES/49/159. This declaration allocated as the foundation for the *UNCTOC*, since it contained a global action plan dedicated to the control and prevention of organized crime. The Bahamas welcomes the counsels by the Conference of the Parties to the *UNCTOC* in 2010 made on the implementation of the adopted Palermo Protocols, especially the strengthening of national legislation. Bearing in mind being both, a transit and destination country for Transnational Organized Crime, the Bahamas turns its attention to the *Salvador Declaration* adopted by the *UN Crime Congress* in 2010 and endorses its main request of adapting criminal justice systems to changing times. **Internationally**, the Bahamas expresses regret that the total number of ratifications of the *Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition* remained low compared with the *UNCTOC* and the other two Protocols. Therefore, the Bahamas urges all Member States to ratify and implement the Firearms Protocol. Additionally, the Bahamas asks for the full implementation of the Protocols and for greater international cooperation, in particular among countries of origin, transit and destination and international organizations. The Bahamas promotes the idea of an *United Nations Partnership Programme (UNPP)* by creating a country review in which each State party shall be reviewed by two other States parties. **Regionally**, the Bahamas recognizes that border controls between States are insufficient to prevent Transnational Organized Crime, in particular the smuggling of migrants, and that a balanced approach that also addresses the push factors of migrants is needed. Thereby, particular attention has to be devoted not only on international country reviews, but also on country reviews on a regional basis. **Locally**, the Bahamas promotes the implementation of national plans and strategies with the help of the valuable technical assistance, training and policy development tools of the *UNODC*. Finally, the Bahamas stresses the importance of monitoring the flow of drugs, firearms, weapons, money and humans, including through adequate transfer controls, and of strengthening national legislation to prevent and combat such trafficking.