



**Statement by**

**Her Excellency Rhoda M. Jackson  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of The Bahamas to the United Nations Office  
and Other International Organisations in Geneva**

**at the**

**106<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration**

**26 November, 2015  
Geneva, Switzerland**

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Bahamas is pleased to participate in this 106<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration and extends congratulations to you and the bureau on being elected to steward the work of this august body. The Bahamas assures you of its full cooperation and support in the fulfilment of your mandate.

At the outset, my delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished Ambassador of Brazil, H.E. Ms. Regina Cordeiro, on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States.

The Bahamas also takes this opportunity to warmly welcome and congratulate the newest members and observers of the IOM, including two sister countries from the Caribbean region, St. Kitts and Nevis and St. Lucia and two of our regional organisations. The addition of these Member States and Observers serves to further strengthen the involvement of the Caribbean sub-region in the work of the IOM and will meaningfully contribute to our collective efforts in migration management at the regional and international levels.

Recalling the Joint IOM-UNHCR meeting held in The Bahamas, in June of this year, The Bahamas underscores the interest expressed in the establishment of a Regional Consultative Process for the Caribbean to facilitate dialogue and cooperation on migration policy issues.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Bahamas wishes to express its appreciation to the Director-General for his comprehensive Report on the work of the organisation for the year 2014. The growing scope and reach of the organisation's portfolio and activities, as reflected in the Report, is commendable. It clearly demonstrates the commitment and efficacy of the IOM in responding to the humanitarian needs of migrants as well as in promoting partnerships and international cooperation in the area of migration.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Against a backdrop of unparalleled global crises, our collective struggle to counter forces that will act outside the rule of law to achieve political and economic objectives compels us to continuously renew our respective commitments to protecting the rights and freedoms deserved by all those who call our countries home.

In keeping with this commitment, H.E. Frederick A. Mitchell, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Immigration of The Bahamas, during his address in the High-level segment of the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council reaffirmed the clear priority being accorded to the issue of migration by the Government of The Bahamas. Similarly, during the General Debate of the 69<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the United Nations General Assembly, he affirmed that "The Bahamas is resolute in its task of ensuring that migration is lawful, safe and orderly and that it involves increased dialogue and greater participation in the process by all countries of origin, transit and destination." The Bahamas is equally mindful of its international obligations, in tandem with its sovereign right to protect its borders, and strives to ensure that human rights is integral to its migration policies.

As cited in the 2015 World Migration Report on 'Migrants and Cities', "the fast rate of urbanization and rising migration to cities, brings with it both risks and opportunities...". For The Bahamas, the emphasis on both the opportunities *and* challenges, posed by migration, is an important one. Further, the need to address the root causes of irregular migration, through promoting sustained economic development, poverty eradication and improved standards of living, for all, cannot be overstated. Evidently, we are also faced with the need to establish an effective means by which to balance supply of migration flows with demands for labour within safe, legal, humane and orderly structures. This would serve to both maximise the human development potential offered by global labour mobility and to save lives. Dialogue among countries of origin, transit and destination is critical to the success of managing this process. No one country can face the challenge alone. For this reason, The Bahamas looks forward to the convening of the 2016 Conference on Counter-Smuggling and Saving Lives, as part of the IOM's ongoing efforts to facilitate and promote migration dialogue.

For its part, The Bahamas recognises the important references on migration included in the Sustainable Development Goal targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The Bahamas will work toward their full implementation of the Agenda and fully supports the important role of the IOM in contributing to these international efforts.

Regarding the ongoing dialogue on IOM-UN relations, The Bahamas appreciates the significant progress made in these discussions and underscores the need to ensure that, in any new structures, the Organisation can continue to provide its critical support to the world's migrants.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The Bahamas expresses gratitude to the IOM for its continued support and cooperation, in areas of mutual concern, in relation to migration management in The Bahamas. Building on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Government of The Bahamas and the IOM in 2014 and the visit of Deputy Director General, Laura Thompson to The Bahamas, last December, we look forward to continuing to collaborate with the IOM in this regard and commend the Organisation for the important work undertaken around the world to assist countries in their efforts to manage migration.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In closing, the task before us is great but The Bahamas attaches much value to the strength which lies in collective capacity and a firm stance on common principles which promote our shared objectives. We are therefore encouraged that our coming together to support and advance the important work of this Organisation, even amidst the mounting challenges contributes to harnessing our collective strength to overcome them.

I thank you.