



PALAIS DES NATIONS – 1211, GENEVA 10, SWITZERLAND

19 January 2024

Sir,

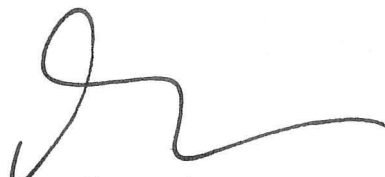
I have the honour to refer to the fourth cycle review of the Bahamas by the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) Working Group at its 43rd session in May 2023. The constructive engagement between your Government, my Office, and the UPR mechanism is warmly welcome. As the final outcome report on the review of the Bahamas was recently adopted by the Human Rights Council at its 54th session, I have also taken note of the efforts of your Government to implement specific recommendations since the previous review.

A matrix of thematically clustered recommendations, starting with those supported by your Government, is available at OHCHR's website (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/bs-index>) and should be considered as part of this letter. The matrix indicates the recommending State and links each recommendation to relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In annex, I have also attached my Office's observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the UPR. In line with previous practice, I will be sending similar observations to all Member States once their fourth cycle UPR outcome is adopted by the Human Rights Council, with a view to follow-up action in close cooperation with national entities and other stakeholders.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to the support available through the Voluntary Fund for UPR Implementation, which may be activated at the request and with the consent of a concerned State, along with tools such as the "UPR practical guidance" and the "UN good practices" repository on how the UPR process supports sustainable development, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/upr-main>, with a view to facilitating efforts to implement UPR recommendations in line with the SDGs.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Volker Türk

His Excellency
Mr. Frederick Audley Mitchell
Minister for Foreign Affairs
and the Public Service of the Bahamas



Observations in light of the outcome of the fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review

The ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in 2018 is welcome. The Bahamas is encouraged to continue ratifying international human rights instruments, in particular the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. Authorities are also encouraged to promote human rights-based approaches in national migration policies.

Steps taken to advance the human rights architecture, including the establishment of a Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights, are welcome. The Bahamas is encouraged to pursue its efforts to establish a national human rights institution in compliance with the Principles Relating to the Status of National Human Rights Institutions (The Paris Principles). OHCHR stands ready to support the Bahamas in seeking accreditation from the Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions.

The on-going implementation of the National Strategic Plan to address Gender-Based Violence and the Family Island Coordination Councils is welcome. The Bahamas is encouraged to pursue efforts towards the adoption of legislation aligned with international human rights standards to address domestic violence and gender-based violence, including ensuring the criminalization of marital rape.

Progress made to strengthen the administration of justice, including the creation of the Family Law Committee or the digital case management system for the judiciary, is noted, as well as the launching of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Hotline. The Bahamas is encouraged to enforce the minimum age of marriage at 18 in law and practice, as well as to intensify the efforts to prevent and eradicate trafficking in persons and provide assistance to the victims.

The Bahamas is also encouraged to develop an implementation plan in follow up to the UPR outcome, in close consultation and cooperation with all stakeholders, in particular the House of Assembly and the Senate, the judiciary, local and regional governments, and civil society organizations. The matrix referred in the letter may be of use in the development of such an implementation plan. The Government is encouraged to explicitly link each UPR recommendation to corresponding recommendations from other international and regional human rights mechanisms and to the relevant SDG and its targets. This will, in turn, facilitate the creation of synergies between UPR implementation and SDG-related actions and reporting within the context of the Voluntary National Review (VNR).



The Government is also encouraged to further strengthen the National Reporting Cooperation Mechanism, with the aim of ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to reporting to international human rights mechanisms, and to implementing the recommendations, in line with the guidance provided by OHCHR following regional consultations and the High Commissioner's report to the Human Rights Council ([A/HRC/50/64](#)).

Further, an important measure that could positively contribute to follow-up action is voluntary mid-term UPR reporting. All Member States are encouraged to submit a voluntary mid-term UPR report some two years after the adoption of the UPR outcome. In this regard, the Government of the Bahamas may wish to consider submitting a mid-term report on follow-up to the fourth cycle UPR recommendations by 2025, detailing both implementation efforts as well as challenges to implementation, including the possible need for technical or capacity-building assistance.

OHCHR
19 January 2024