NATIONAL STATEMENT
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS TO THE UNITED NATIONS

CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS CLUSTER

25 OCTOBER, 2019

FIRST COMMITTEE
SEVENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Mr. Chair,

As this is my first address, allow me to extend my congratulations and support to you and the members of the Bureau as you steer the important work of the First Committee. I also take this opportunity to align The Bahamas with the statements delivered by CARICOM and NAM under this cluster.

Like many other Member States within and outside our region, the realities of the illicit trade, diversion and use of small arms and light weapons persist as linked challenges that threaten peace, security, development, and the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms. As a Small Island Developing State geographically located in a strategic route for the transshipment of conventional arms and related trans-organised criminal activity, The Bahamas continues to divert human, technical and financial resources away from critical social and economic development to address these issues. Such activities fuel violence and frustrate the Government’s effort to reduce poverty, leaving our most vulnerable, especially women and children in vulnerable situations, more exposed to the dangers created by the illicit use of small arms and light weapons. With the unprecedented disastrous impact of Hurricane Dorian, The Bahamas needs now more than ever to funnel resources to rebuilding.

Domestically, The Bahamas continues to safeguard national arms regulations, including several measures to ensure that the limited scope for SALW ownership is effectively implemented, such as background checks, strict enforcement of arm-type availability and limits on quantities of guns and ammunitions per license. As a State Party to international, regional and bilateral conventional arms treaties, protocols and other formalised agreements, The Bahamas reaffirms its commitment to combating this issue, understanding that threats to private and national security also represent threats to sustainable development. The Bahamas expresses its strong support for the outcomes of the 3rd Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the ATT Conference of States Parties, held last summer. In this regard, The Bahamas particularly welcomes the recognition of the gendered dimension of illicit SALW. We look forward to active engagement at BMS7 next year, noting with appreciation proposed recommendations on PoA implementation as contained in the SG’s report on the illicit use of small arms and light weapons.

At the regional level, The Bahamas continues to engage with CARICOM and other partners to harness synergies within existing mechanisms to strengthen peace and security within the region. A recent example of this was the regional workshop held in Antigua and Barbuda, supported by the ATT Voluntary Trust Fund, to assist CARICOM States with implementation of the Treaty.

Mr. Chair,

While The Bahamas continues to fight against illicit small arms and light weapons, more is still required to effectively combat these challenges to ensure a safe and peaceful world. The Bahamas remains steadfast in its commitment to support the international community in pursuit of this goal and calls for the same of its counterparts.