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**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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**UN Human Rights Council
Twenty-third session, 27 May – 14 June 2013**

**Item 6
Consideration of UPR reports**

BAHAMAS

Mr. President,

Amnesty International welcomes the Bahamas' commitment to ratify the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.¹ We are disappointed, however, that the Bahamas has rejected a recommendation to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers,² having stated it would consider doing so during its first UPR in 2008.

Amnesty International welcomes the support of a recommendation to establish a fully independent oversight body to investigate complaints of police misconduct.³ The deaths in suspicious circumstances of two men in police custody in February underline the urgent need for greater accountability for police abuses and for investigations to be carried out in a thorough, independent, and timely manner.

Mr. President,

Amnesty International deeply regrets that the Bahamas has rejected recommendations from 12 states regarding the death penalty.⁴ This is particularly disappointing in view of the fact that there have been no executions in the Bahamas since 2000, that no death sentences were handed down in 2012, and that only one person is currently on death row. We wholly reject the government's view that there is "no international consensus on the issue of the

¹ A/HRC/23/8, paragraph 92.3 (Portugal)

² *Ibid*, paragraph 92.8 (Indonesia, Philippines)

³ *Ibid*, paragraph 92.75. (Canada)

⁴ A/HRC/23/8, paragraphs 92.45-92.53 (Italy; Norway; Slovakia; Portugal; Estonia; Spain; Uruguay; Chile; Australia; France; Ecuador; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

death penalty".⁵ Rather we recall that only 39 out of 185 states voted against the UN moratorium on executions in November 2012. And in response to the claim that the death penalty must be retained to deter violent crime,⁶ we stress that a more effective strategy would be to enhance the criminal justice system and tackling the root causes of crime and violence more effectively. We continue to urge the Bahamas to establish an official moratorium on executions, to commute all death sentences to prison sentences, and to abolish the death penalty in law.

Finally Mr. President,

We welcome the Bahamas' support of recommendations to combat violence against women and girls.⁷ We also note that the Bahamas will continue to consider recommendations to criminalize marital rape,⁸ having previously rejected these during its 2008 UPR. We hope this will lead to necessary reform of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act.

Thank you, Mr. President.

⁵ A/HRC/23/8/Add.1, comment on paragraph 92.45

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid*, paragraph 92.26 (Viet Nam), 92.56 (Turkey), 92.59 - 92.62 (Chile, Algeria, France, Mexico)

⁸ *Ibid*, paragraph 92.35-92.36 (Norway, Ireland) and 92.61 (France)