

SIXTH SESSION

OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN,

MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY, 18TH – 20TH AUGUST 2026,

Statement by the Commonwealth of The Bahamas

Jose Manuel Salazo Xiriimachs, Executive Secretary of ECLAC

Mr. Simone Cechini, Chair of the Latin America and Caribbean Demographic Centre-Population Division of ECLAC,

Ministers and high-level officials of the Government of Uruguay;

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to be attending this Sixth Session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Montevideo. Uruguay, thirteen years after the historic launching of the blueprint document, the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development.

At this juncture, my delegation wishes to express profound appreciation to the host country, the Government of Uruguay for its warm hospitality. Sincere appreciation is also extended to the organisers of the conference, the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

The Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas also joins with the international community in forwarding heartfelt thoughts and prayers to the Governments of Columbia and Venezuela, in the aftermath of the earthquakes that occurred in those countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development contributes to laying the foundations for people-centred sustainable development with equality as well as perspectives for human rights, gender, race and ethnicity, disability and an inter-cultural agenda. We have no doubt, that a full effective, rapid and resourced implementation of the Montevideo Consensus will contribute significantly to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

As a small island developing state of more than 700 islands and cays, the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial and synonymous with the implementation of our national blueprint of developmental policies. The Bahamas knows that sustainable urbanization and effective community-building strategies are essential for demographic

resilience. It is to be noted that nearly eight-nine per cent of our population live in urban communities in The Bahamas.

The Bahamas has made significant progress by integrating climate resilience into urban planning, strengthening sustainable building standards and promoting renewable energy and water-efficient infrastructure. The establishment of the Urban Renewal Authority via the enactment of the Urban Renewal Authority Act 2024 provides for a whole of government and whole of society approach. There is an amalgamation of government agencies, local authorities, civil society, faith-based organisations and the private sector. The Urban Renewal Centres in the various constituencies facilitates a hands-on direct approach to learning of the needs and priorities of each community and subsequently addressing those matters identified.

These innovative policies ensure that seniors and persons with disabilities can live safely and independently. There are free of cost small homes repair programmes and the assessment of homes with an end plan to erect ramps and railings for the disabled persons. It is to be noted that with the aid of international technical assistance, a Disability App was created for the disabled community that helps our citizens to be informed about employment opportunities, local news and bus transportation movements. A recent Disabilities Job Fair provided a lot of support and opportunities for our citizens.

The Conference Document pertaining to the *Impact of Demographic Change in Latin America and the Caribbean*, speaks about the ageing of ageing. This demographic group in The Bahamas is referred to as our precious pearls

and a lot of institutional attention is directed to ensuring that this special demographic group is not left behind or marginalized.

As the Bahamas is an archipelago, our solutions must reflect the realities and needs of each island and settlement. The Government has provided a number of affordable housing programmes and is committed to launching additional housing programmes in the most needed areas. The Government is also committed to addressing the issue of access to housing finance for those in the lower economic brackets. We affirm that planned communities provide greater safety and support, particularly for women, children and senior citizens as well as the fostering of a community spirit.

In the field of education, tertiary education is free for Bahamian citizens via enrolment at the University of The Bahamas thereby providing more capacity building paths for young persons. Pre-school care up to high school education is also free and mandatory.

In the field of health, the formation of the National Health Insurance Programme (NHI) provides a wider net of free primary health care and preventive health strategies in The Bahamas. This is in addition to the plethora of government health clinics and the two main hospitals. Plans are in train for the construction of a specialty hospital.

Mr Chairman,

As an active member of the initiatives of the International Organisation of Migration, The Bahamas promulgates safe, orderly migration policies within a human rights framework.

Mr. Chairman,

Partnerships remain essential. We therefore reaffirm our commitment to working with the UN Agencies, CARICOM, development banks and other developmental agencies in these pivotal thematic areas in order to mobilise technical expertise, innovative financing, and knowledge sharing in order to respond to the unique realties of Small Island Developing States.

The Bahamas therefore, looks forward to participating in these next two days of discussion on the Montevideo Consensus as we engage on best modalities for the full implementation of the Montevideo Consensus in our jurisdictions,

I thank you.