

The Bahamas Experience

LDCs/SIDS Trust Fund Workshop

for the Caribbean Region

Presentation of NMIRFs from the Caribbean Region

June 4th 2026

Bridgetown, Barbados

Part One

Conventions Ratified

Status of The Bahamas UN Human Rights Conventions

- *Convention on Elimination of Racial Discrimination* (CERD)-1975;
- *Convention on the Rights of The Child (CRC)* 1990/1991;
- *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) 1993/2003;
- *Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*(ICESC)-2008;

Status of The Bahamas UN Human Rights Conventions

- *Convention on Civil and Political and Rights (ICCPR)-2008;*
- *The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* (CRPD) 2013/2015;
- *The Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child*: *Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, Children in Armed Conflict*-September 2015; and
- The *Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment* (CAT) 2018.

Part Two



Our Experience: The Way We Were

First Cycle of UPR 2008

Appeared before HRC December 1st 2008-HRC 3rd Session

Received 25 Recommendations

- 11-Supported
- 7-To be examined
- 6- Did not support

Reviews on conclusions, recommendations provided at the Outcome held on March 17th 2009 at the 10th Session of the HRC

Recommendations

- What happened to Recommendations?
- Implementation?
- Monitoring?



Part Three

We evaluated our METHOD- Ad Hoc group

Preparing For CEDAW

Report and Review 2011/2012

Led by Ministry of Social Services & Community Development

Inter-Ministerial & Civil Society Ad Hoc Working Group

- ✓ College of The Bahamas
- ✓ Civil Society
- ✓ NGOs
- ✓ Government Ministries

Met for 2 months drafting National Report (Once per week)

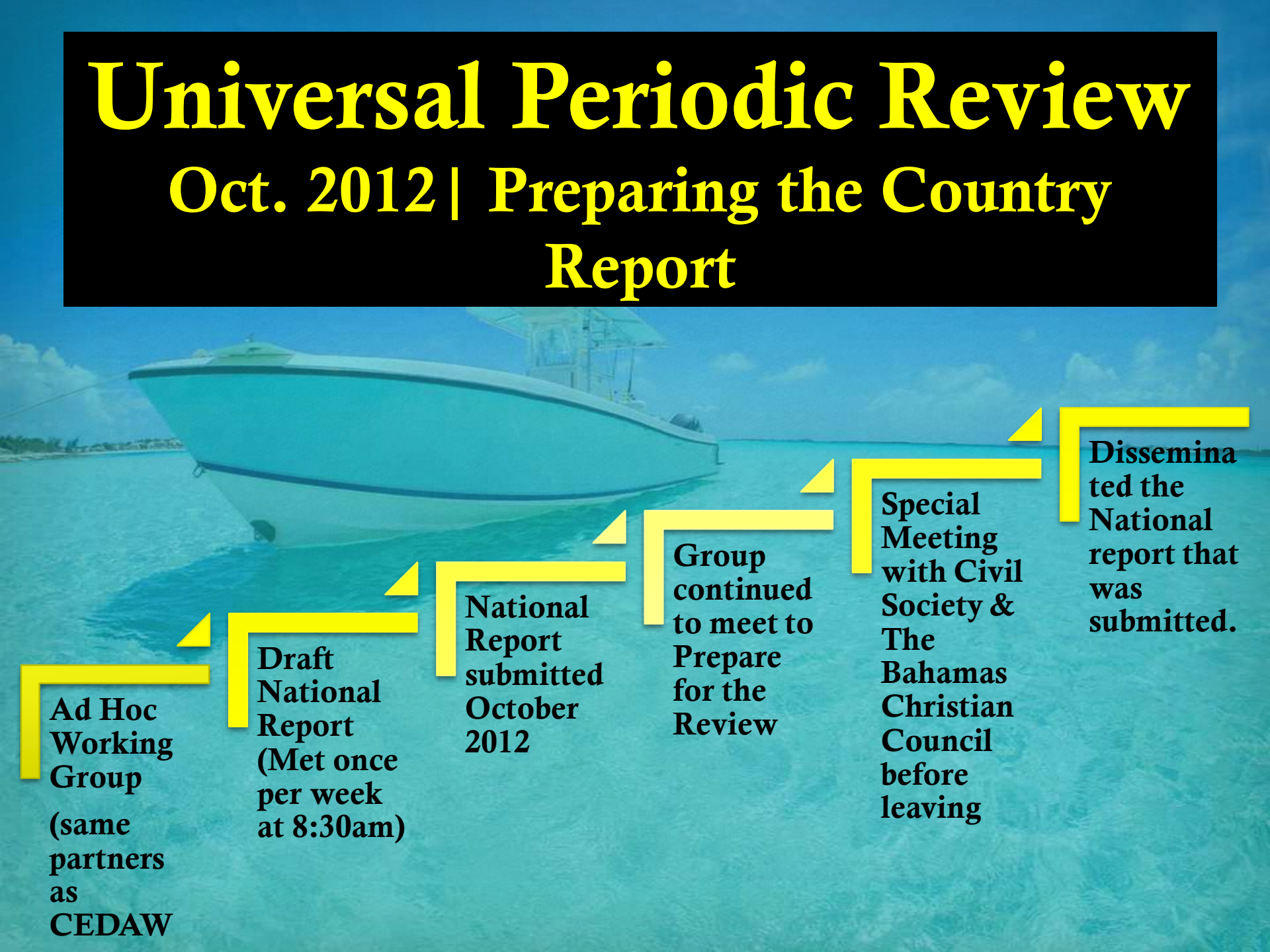
Prepared for UN Review before the CEDAW Committee (Twice per week)

- ✓ Gathering Statistics
- ✓ Studies
- ✓ Updates since Report submitted
- ✓ Preparing Address to the Committee

After Appearance before the CEDAW Committee Disseminated the Concluding Observations. Held a meeting with all the groups.

Universal Periodic Review

Oct. 2012 | Preparing the Country Report



Second Cycle of the UPR

January 23rd 2013

Appeared before HRC Jan. 23rd , 2013 during the HRC 14th Session

Received 98 Recommendations

- 48 Accepted
- 20-To be considered
- 30- Not Accepted

Preparation for the Working Group Outcome of the Review adopted at the 23rd Session of the HRC

June 6th 2013

Standing Letter of Invitation – Special Rapporteurs

December 5th, 2013, Trafficking in Persons

Civil Society Meetings

Report on the Review

- Discussion-Recommendations
- Chamber of Commerce
- NGOs

Bahamas Christian Council

Report on the Review

- Discussion-Recommendations

Submit the Conclusion of our Responses to the Recommendations

Dissemination of Addendum to all our partners

Dissemination of the Working Group Report

- Judges
- Magistrates
- The Police
- Made available to the Public
- All the partners in the Ad Hoc group



Game plan changing !

"We WILL no longer operate by forming Ad Hoc Working Groups. This Government will be operating differently by establishing a permanent Working Group."

-Hon. Allyson Maynard Gibson

Attorney-General

January 2013, during the preparation of the second cycle of the UPR



Requested Technical Assistance

January 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland

During a meeting with the representatives from the UPR Branch and the Human rights Treaty Division :

Attorney General Maynard-Gibson sought technical assistance and training to better advance our efforts in the area of Treaty reporting.

Case Study

Participated in April 2013

A research study which purpose was:

TO ASSIST THE STATE AND STAKEHOLDERS

GAIN EXPERIENCE FROM OTHER COUNTRIES

REVIEW CURRENT PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES

The results were published in 2016, *" National Mechanisms for Reporting and Follow-up"*

Part Four

New Approach-Training

Workshop
February,2014





A Workshop and Training on, "The Reporting Process and Implementation of The United Nations Treaty Body System", was conducted on February 27th and 28th, 2014

Workshop
February, 2014





Mr. Bradford Smith

Secretary to the *Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families* from the High Commissioner's Office on Human Rights OHCHR

Topics Covered



- ✓ Overview of the International Human Rights System
- ✓ The Reporting Process
- ✓ The Treaty Bodies-Bringing Human Rights Home
- ✓ Individual complaints and inquiry procedures
- ✓ Treaty Implementation
- ✓ Mapping exercise prioritizing recommendations of treaty bodies, special procedures and UPR

Part Five



Birth of the NRCM

NRCM-MISSION

"Each government agency, a representation from NGOs and Civil Society will be needed to ensure that there is a speedily and readily access to information required for the reports, a swift implementation process of recommendations accepted and first-hand monitoring of those recommendations."

NRCM-Terms of Reference

- Design a master framework for the scheduling, preparation and submission of the required reports for each treaty;
- To design a procedure for the delegation of recommendations forwarded by the Treaty Committees;
- To formulate a strategy for the implementation of the recommendations accepted to the responsible agencies;
- To determine and develop a monitoring device for the recommendations implemented; and
- To keep abreast with any human right violations occurring or that may be perceived to be occurring.

The National Reporting Cooperation Mechanism (NRCM)-2014

The wording in the Memorandum to the Permanent Secretary requesting persons to be assigned to NRCM:

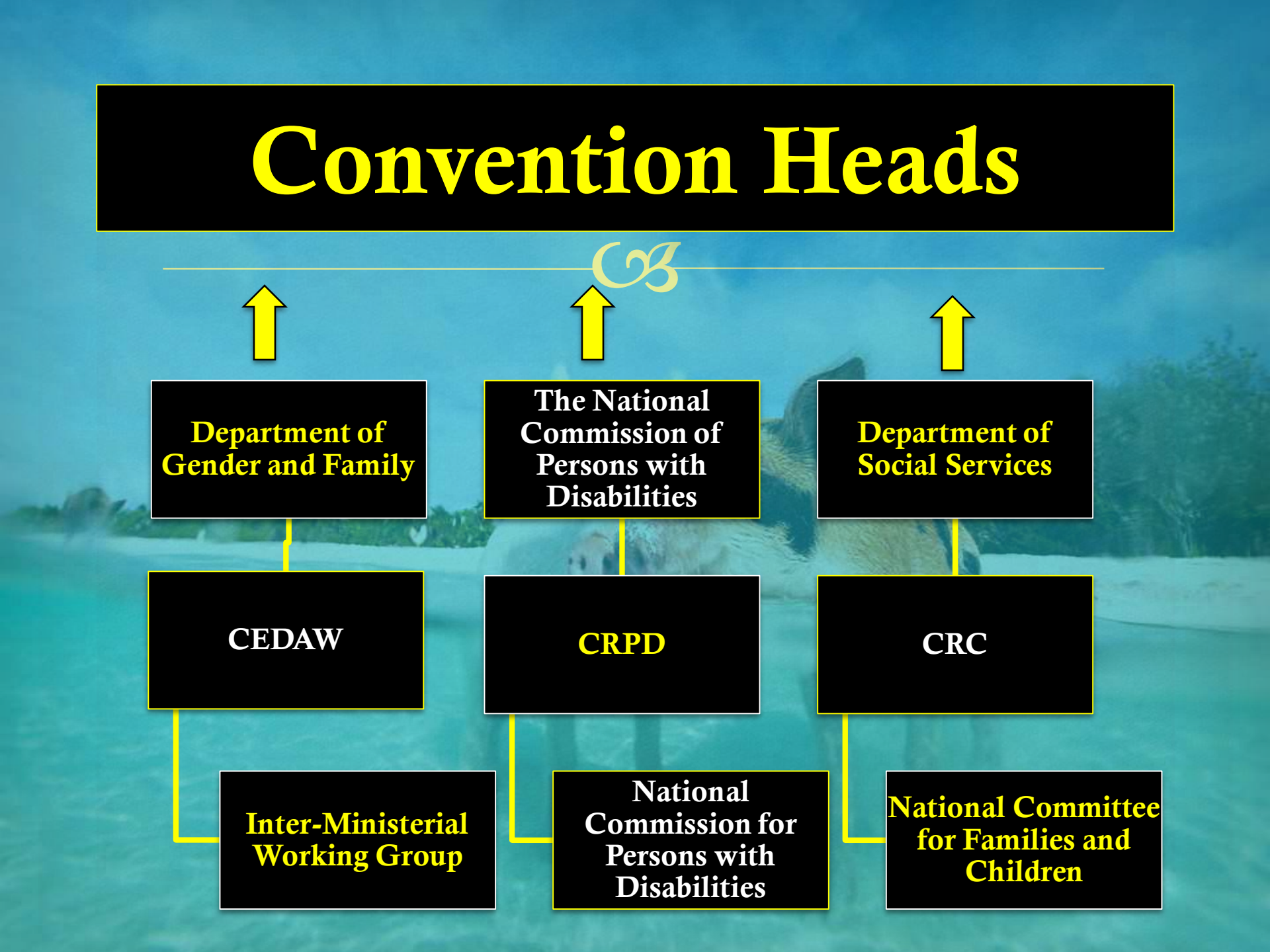
"we would like for you to put forth the names of ***two*** *of your officers to be a part of a National Reporting Mechanism Team, it would be advantageous if the persons you recommend are persons* ***who participated in the training*** *mentioned,* ***have worked on, are working on or will be assigned to work on the preparation of our*** *country reports on one of the Conventions/Treaties that we have signed or ratified."*

The National Reporting Cooperation Mechanism-2015

Chaired by the Office of The Attorney-General and Ministry of Legal Affairs-

Royal Bahamas Police Force	Department of Immigration	Ministry of Social Services and Community Development	Education and Science & Technology Ministry
Ministry of Health	Ministry of Labour	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Department of Statistics
Royal Bahamas Defence Force	Registrar's General's Department	Office of The Attorney-General and Ministry of Legal Affairs	Bahamas Civil Society
	Ministry of Agriculture Marine Resources and Local Government Ministry	National Commission of Persons with Disabilities	

Convention Heads



The NRCM

-Meet twice a month

- OAG Chair and a rotating Co-Chairs (Presently BDOCS)

-Majority of the members of the NRCM have been women.

- There have been and presently are handicapped members

-A young person from Ministry of Youth (below 30) first time in 2022.

- Bahamas Civil Society

- Operate under a Cabinet Conclusion

- The Human Rights and International Humanitarian Unit in the Office of The Attorney-General is the Secretariat for the NRCM

The Seven "E"s of the NRCM

- Enlist
- Educate
- Equip
- Engage
- Empower
- Encourage
- Execute

Enlist

Important that the persons that are going to be members of the team are either already working with the preparation of the Reports; the implementation of the recommendations or have participated in some training.

We took time to write the Permanent Secretaries and the heads of Civil Society/NGOs explaining the terms of reference and the type of persons we were trying to engage.

Equip

Each Team Member received a bundle (tool) which included:

- The Terms of Reference for the NRCM
- The Chart of the Conventions with their reporting Status
- A List of all of the Recommendations from all the Convention Committees
- A copy of all the Conventions
- A Sample of the Reporting Process using the UPR Second Cycle Review
- Copy of relevant sessions of the Constitution
- Relevant Legislation (example for *CRC-Child Protection Act*)
- *Each person was provided with an AGREED Draft Schedule of Sessions*

Educate

Reviewed the Terms of Reference for the NRCM

Conduct a session on the United Nations and the Human Rights Council

Conducted sessions on the Conventions
- Provisions- article by article
- Obligations

Guest Speakers presented on particular issues:
- Department of Immigration
- International Organization for Migration
- United Nations High Commission for Refugees
- Department of Gender- CEDAW
- Social Services-CRC
- Relevant Legislation
- Review of the Constitution

Engage



- Discussions
- Debates
- Assignments- (*example: surf the internet for legislation*)
- Questions and Answers Sessions

Empower



To begin conversations in their communities (workplace, family, friends, church) about the Conventions.

To inquire within their various ministries or organizations how recommendations are being implemented and monitored.

To prepare reports for the Working Group.

Make a positive contribution to the Human Rights Development for their Nation.

Encourage

The working group members were encouraged because they each realized that even though most of them had no experience in the area of Treaty reporting, they each had a vital role to play in the development of this mechanism.

Execute

Due to the previous Six "E"s we should began a journey of reporting on time and ensuring that the agreed recommendations are implemented and monitored.

Sample of NRCM Workings: The CERD Report -2021

Ratified: 1975

Last Universal Periodic Reports Submitted in 2003 was the combined 5th-14th

15th -21st Periodic Reports due

Reviewed Convention together (article by article);

Reviewed the previous Universal Periodic Reports and Working Group Reports:

- **1982**
- **2003**

Reviewed recommendations made in 2003

Reviewed relevant Legislation

Interacted with migrant communities

Sample of NRCM Workings- Preparing the CERD Report

Core Common Document	The CERD Specific Articles	The Recommendations
• Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture	• Ministry of Education	• The Office of The Attorney-General and Ministry of Legal Affairs
• Ministry of Foreign Affairs	• Civil Society	• Registrar's Department
• Ministry of Health	• Ministry of Agriculture	
• Royal Bahamas Defence Force	• Department of Gender and Family	
• Department of Statistics	• Royal Bahamas Police Force	
• The Bahamas Red Cross	• Department of Immigration	
	• Department of Labour	

Step Six

Present NRCM
Good Practices and Challenges -2026

The National Reporting Cooperation Mechanism

Chaired by the Office of The Attorney-General and Ministry of Legal Affairs

- Bahamas Department of Correctional Services
- Department of Immigration
- Ministry of Health and Wellness
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Social Services and Urban Development
- Department of Labour
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Bahamas National Institute of Statistics
- Royal Bahamas Defence Force
- Ministry of Tourism
- Office of The Attorney-General and Ministry of Legal Affairs
- Bahamas Civil Society
- Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture
- Department of Gender and Family
- The Royal Bahamas Police Force
- Trafficking In Persons Task Force (TIPPS)
- The Strategic Goals Development Unit-OPM
- The Department of Environmental Health
- The Climate Change and Environment Unit -OPM
- BAMSI-Bahamas Agriculture, Marine Science Institute
- National Commission of Persons with Disabilities
- The Bahamas Development Plan

Convention Heads



NRCM- Working Groups

CRC/CRPD Working Group

Ministry of Social Services, Department of Labour, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth, Consultant Disabilities, Office of The Attorney-General

UNCAT Working Group

Bahamas Police Force, Royal Bahamas Defence Force, Department of Immigration, Bahamas Department of Correctional Services. OAG

Political & Civil, CERD Working Group-

Bahamas Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trafficking In Persons, Ministry of Health, Bahamas Civil Society, Office of the Attorney-General

Social, Economic, Culture Working Group-

BAMSI, Climate Change, Ministry of Tourism, Department of Gender and Family, Registrar General Office , Office of The Attorney-General

Good Practices

- Broad Inter-ministerial representation and Civil Society.

-Members of NRCM appear before treaty Committees and Universal Periodic Review.

-Interaction with the Community (University of The Bahamas-host the 'mock' sessions for those appearing before the Treaty Bodies).

-Conduct Trainings: Judiciary, Civil Society, Permanent Secretaries and Directors, Local Government and the Ministry of Education.

-Meet with international Bodies: IOM, UNHCR, Special Rapporteur for Domestic Violence 2017, Trafficking In Persons 2018, Foreign Debt and Human Rights 2023, 2024 Special Rapporteur Arbitrary Detention.

-Sponsored Training with UNCAT Initiative and Training in Statelessness with UNHCR.

- NRCM Members are able to provide training on the UN Human Rights System, Constitutional and legislation

Good Practices continue

- -Review the recommendations from the UPR, Treaty Committee recommendations, Independent Experts recommendations every three months, and members provide updates on their implementation

- Participate in field visits (Detention Centre, Correctional Services etc.

Sought Advice On

-Ombudsman Act 2024

-Amendments to the Persons with Disabilities Act 2025

-Protection Against Violence 2023 Act

-Protection and Care of Older Persons Bill

-The Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights

-The Patients Rights Bill

- Amendments to the Education Act

- Review “attempted suicide” as an offence

Trainings

Sponsored Zoom Training with the UN Treaty Body representatives on the CRC, CEDAW and the CRPD

NRCM conducted training sessions for the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities

Ministry of Education Educators/Administrators at their annual training sessions

Training with UN Women and UN Representatives for the NRCM, Parliamentarians and Bahamas Civil Society.

Training for Women United and Other NGOs on the Treaties, Constitution and relevant legislations.

Annual Trainings

Social Workers

Social Workers from the Family Islands

Senior Correctional Officers

The Judiciary

The Correctional Services Cadets

Immigration Cadets

NRCM's Role in recent UPR Fourth Cycle Review May 3rd, 2023

Assist with the drafting of the National Report

Assist with drafting the "Opening Statement"

Provided four (4) Interventions for the Review

Five Ministries represented on the NRCM were a part of the Delegation- Health, Education, Youth, Department Gender and the National Commission for Persons with Disabilities. And two members provided interventions.

Bilateral meetings with CRC,UNCAT and CRPD

NRCM disseminated the recommendations and the Working Group Report.

An example of NRCM's interaction with International Human Rights Mechanism- **UNHCR**

The Issue of Statelessness--Partnered with UNHCR:

-Seminars for Permanent Secretaries, Directors, Department of Immigration, Citizen Commission, Civil Society. Parliament planned but postponed.

-Review of Refugee legislation

- The drafting of Standard Operation Procedures for the Protection of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

An example of NRCM's interaction with International Human Rights Mechanism- **UNCAT**

The Bahamas signed UNCAT in 2008

-April 2017- Attended a training in CHILE on UNCAT

-**October 2017-** UNCAT Initiative conducted a workshop in The Bahamas (NRCM, Civil Society, Uniform Branches, National Development Plan Team)

-May 31st, 2018- ratified the UNCAT Convention

- 2019- Commissioner of Police guest speaker in Europe

-December 2020- One of the UNCAT's expert speakers and a facilitator at their virtual regional workshop

- 2021, **2024 and 2025** Members of NRCM participated in their Workshops as speakers and facilitators.

-December 2024- Became a member of the CTI Core Group

Challenges

Small Island Nation issues, being an archipelago Nation, and having ratified 9 Core UN Treaties:

-No human rights or reporting designated office, writing reports not a priority;

-Person's responsible have multiple responsibilities;

-Interruption of natural disasters; and

-The lack of recording the implementations of the recommendations, as a result not included in the reports.

-Lack of statistics

OUR REPORTING

Drafts completed:

-CERD

-CRPD

-ICPCR

Working on with a September deadline

- ISECR

-UNCAT (all information completed now drafting)

December 2026- All outstanding reports completed!

Step Seven

The Way Forward

We continue to strive to be a well functioning and effective Mechanism for Reporting, Implementation and Monitoring.

Way Forward 2026-2027

-New Member – The Bahamas National Development Plan

-Install a Tracking Data Software-had first training session. National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD).

-Outstanding Reports submitted(CRPD,CRC,CERD)

-Ensure that the UN Human Rights Treaties are included in the curriculum for the uniformed branches.

-Partner with the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee and provide training for Parliamentarians

-Prepare for 5th UPR last quarter of 2027







Above: NRCM's Annual Retreat January 2025, at Le Chateau where issues are discussed in depth and work for the year ahead are planned. Assistant Counsel Jeron O'Brien from OAG, Cypreana Winters from National Institute of Statistics and Dr. Hamilton from Bahamas Civil Society making presentations.







The NRCM members met with the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee (PHRC), in March 2025, at Le Chateau to have dialogue on the work of the NRCM and how the mechanism can assist with the work of the PHRC.

















The members of the NRCM reviewing the proposed Care and Protection of Older Persons Bill







In 2024, Dr. Rhianna Neely, Director of Environment Planning and Protection Department, made a presentation On the how climate change is affecting our sea-level and the right to development





Dr. Anthony Hamilton, president of Bahamas Civil Society and a member of NRCM makes a presentation to the work of the Bahamas Civil Society.





Officer Kendra Whyms, from the Domestic Violence Unit of the Royal Bahamas Police Force shares the work of the Unit including trends and statistics.



NRCM Member Assistant Commissioner Janet McKenzie, provides an update on Police matters.









The Attorney-General meets with the NRCM to discuss Human Rights matters.









NRCM member Principal Corrections Officer Alfreda Skinner-Rolle attended and spoke at the Convention Against Torture Initiative (CTI). An event titled "States Supporting States" -promoting universal ratification and improve implementation of the United Nations Convention Against Torture.



Mr. Rashad Ritchie, of the Ministry of Youth and Ms. Beijing Rodgers (NRCM representing the Ministry of Youth Advisory Committee) makes a presentation on the National Youth Policy for The Bahamas, to NRCM members.

NRCM member Assistant Commissioner Janet McKenzie spoke at the United Nationals Convention Against Torture, Inhumane of Degrading Treatment or Punishment- CTI Forum on November 19th-20th 2024-Geneva, Switzerland. Here she gave a presentation on the National Reporting Cooperation Mechanism (NRCM)







In June 2023, Mr. Crispin Hall, local UNHCR Protection Officer shared with the NRCM the history and goals of World Refugee Day.

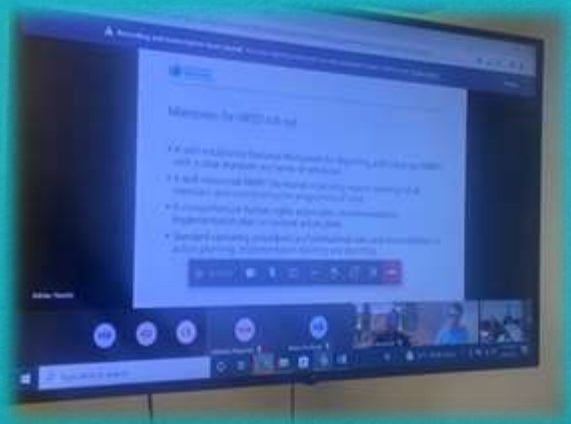






In March 2022, the Human Rights Unit sponsored a zoom training for the NRCM partnering with the UN Local office on the Convention on the Right of the Child, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the National Recommendations Tracking Database (NRTD).







In April 2023, five members of the NRCM accompanied the Attorney-General and his team to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva, to appear before the Human Right Council at its fourth Universal Periodic Review (UPR). Members attending were Education, Health, National Commission for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Gender, and Youth Advisory Committee. Here they are preparing at home in The Bahamas, at the Hotel in Geneva and The Bahamas Mission in Genève.





















The Team at the UN Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (OHCHR) getting ready to participate in their review. And, a few photos taken after the Review. The team was well pleased. They received raving reviews.











In January 2026, the NRCM held its Annual Retreat at Le Chateau where it discussed the proposed Education Bill, Witness Impact Statements, drafted the work schedule for 2026 and much more.







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