STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. ELLISTON RAHMING, AMBASSADOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS TO THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE OCCASION OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES OF THE ARMS TRADE TREATY,

CANCUN, MEXICO, AUGUST 24, 2015

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On September 25, 2014, The Bahamas stood proudly with seven (7) other States to trigger the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty on December 24, 2014.

By making our contribution towards the fifty (50) ratifications required for the entry into force of the ATT, The Bahamas officially and openly demonstrated its commitment towards fostering peace and security by strengthening the control of weapons transfer.

The participation of The Bahamas at this First Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty serves to underscore the commitment and the level of importance attached to the objectives and purpose of the Arms Trade Treaty in tandem with national security challenges that impact the peace and security of The Bahamas.
The Bahamas believes that illicit weapons brokering increases global insecurity. Moreover, we believe that advancing legislation and regulatory frameworks through a global, harmonised approach, will enhance international efforts to combat and eradicate illicit weapons trafficking.

The constraints of The Bahamas, while many, and notable, are not a deterrent to the efforts of the Government of The Bahamas to tackle the issue of small arms, light weapons, and ammunition trafficking. To this end, a formal Inter-Agency Working Group was appointed in February, 2015, to coordinate policy initiatives relative to the ATT; oversee its implementation and generate reports. Further steps being undertaken include training for the Inter-Agency Working Group, in terms of seeking to address the reporting aspect and the update of the regulatory framework of The Bahamas.

In pursuit of the full implementation of the Treaty, The Bahamas will continue to draw on the expertise of technical assistance programmes to develop and undergird local programmes as well as deepen collaboration with the regional and international community for the cross exchange of best practices that would be beneficial to the interests of The Bahamas.
The Bahamas reaffirms its endorsement of Trinidad and Tobago, as the seat of the Secretariat for the ATT. Key to this endorsement has been the influential role that CARICOM States have played toward the ATT process. CARICOM States do not manufacture weapons. We import modest volumes of conventional arms, however we are acutely cognizant of the profoundly negative social and economic impact that an unabated proliferation of small arms and light weapons have had and continues to have on our respective communities.

As the driving force behind the implementation of the ATT and considering what is at stake for the Region most notably drug trafficking and its resultant criminal activities, the Secretariat of ATT would be well placed in the Region.

We anticipate, Mr. Chairman, that the ATT will address, in a systematic manner, the issue of diversion of small arms, light weapons and ammunition through the establishment of international standards and regulations that harmonize international trade in conventional arms.

We also expect, that as a result of what we do this week, we can encourage partnerships, through ongoing dialogue, exchanges and cooperation.
The Bahamas considers this First Conference of States Parties of the Arms Trade Treaty, a landmark accomplishment of the United Nations and this week’s event will undoubtedly contribute not only to peace and security in The Bahamas, but it will also ensure a higher level of safety and security for mankind everywhere.

I thank you