



*The  
Bahamas*

**60<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS  
GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**THIRD COMMITTEE**

**AGENDA ITEM 108 – INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. PAULETTE BETHEL  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF  
THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**10 OCTOBER, 2005**

Please check against delivery

Mr. Chairman,

As this is the first time that my delegation has taken the floor in this Committee at this session, allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau, on your election to guide the work of this most challenging and important committee. My delegation is confident that you will guide our work to a successful conclusion, and pledges its full support and cooperation to this end.

My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for his introduction of the reports presented to the Committee under this item, and for the sterling work his Office continues to undertake in this most challenging and vital field of international drug control.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Jamaica, speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community; however, I wish to highlight a few issues of critical national importance.

Mr. Chairman,

The Bahamas remains fully committed to the fight against narcotic drugs. As the international community has acknowledged, this is a fight that involves all of us, and will require the concerted and unswerving action of all States. The Bahamas has consistently played its role in confronting this global menace and will not falter in its commitment. As we have consistently stated in numerous fora, The Bahamas is neither a producer of narcotic drugs nor a major destination for them. However, by virtue of geographical location, The Bahamas has unwittingly become a transit point in this nefarious trade. The Bahamas lies in the transshipment routes of narcotic drugs from sources of supply in the South to the demand markets of the North, with the result that drug traffickers and associated criminals have sought to use The Bahamas as a way station in smuggling drugs from source to destination countries.

As a result, The Bahamas has experienced the fallout from the drug trade, including a rise in crime, particularly violent crime, in our society, as drug trafficking throughout the Caribbean has increasingly been accompanied by the trade in illicit small arms and light weapons. This deadly nexus threatens our national security, our continued social and economic development and our very way of life. As recognized by our Heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit, transnational crime, including drug trafficking and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, poses a grave threat to development, peace and security and human rights, and requires a collective response.

For its part, The Bahamas has responded with robust action at all levels, and is fully engaged in the international fight against narcotic drugs. The Bahamas is party to all of the major international drug conventions, and is committed to their full implementation, as well as the implementation of the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly. International cooperation remains one of the most important tools at our disposal, and The Bahamas welcomes the support provided by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme to the

Caribbean Task Force on Crime and Security. Assistance from the UN system, particularly to transit states, is vital to enabling small states such as ours to make our full contribution to global interdiction efforts. In this context, The Bahamas calls on all States to implement fully the ECOSOC resolution 'International Assistance to States affected by the transit of illicit drugs', including through the provision of assistance and technical support to States affected by the transit of illegal drugs, to support their efforts to prevent and suppress trafficking. The Bahamas also calls on all states to sustain their commitment to a balanced approach to drug control, encompassing both supply and demand reduction strategies. Reducing global supply and demand will go a long way to ameliorating the conditions faced by transit states.

A key element in The Bahamas' engagement in the international fight against narcotic drugs remains our active participation in regional interdiction mechanisms, such as the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, the Caribbean Task Force, and the Caribbean Customs and Law Enforcement Council. Collective action at the regional level has enabled the countries of the region to become full stakeholders in this process, and bring a regional perspective to the particular manifestation of this problem in our part of the world. The Bahamas will continue its full and active cooperation with the other countries in the Caribbean, and in the hemisphere as a whole, in the areas of interdiction, and information and intelligence exchange, to meet our shared responsibility for drug control.

Mr. Chairman,

The Bahamas has matched its commitment at the international and regional levels with forceful national action to both interdict the smuggling of illegal drugs through our territory, as well as to engage in efforts at reducing demand for drugs amongst our population. The Bahamas has established a comprehensive legislative regime to criminalise narcotic drugs, facilitate international cooperation and prevent money laundering, which is complemented by a significant law enforcement effort. The Bahamas devotes almost 12% of its national budget to national security, the lion's share of which is applied to law enforcement and drug interdiction efforts. This places a considerable strain on our limited financial resources, to the detriment of other areas of our development. However, successive governments have recognized the grave threat posed to our continuing and future development by the illegal drug trade, and have continued to commit the necessary human and financial resources to this fight. The adoption of The Bahamas National Anti-Drug Plan 2004 – 2009 in June of 2004 provided a significant boost to the coordination and enhancement of our national efforts, and this comprehensive, multi-sectoral and balanced approach to drug control will continue to serve as the blueprint for all national action in this field.

The Bahamas also enjoys fruitful and close bilateral cooperation with its neighbours in order to enhance our national capacity, including through Operation Bahamas and Turks and Caicos [OPBAT], which brings together law enforcement agencies from the United States, The Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos. OPBAT is considered a model in the region for cooperative efforts at drug interdiction, and continues to yield much success. The Bahamas will continue to cooperate through mechanisms such

as this with other States in interdiction operations, and through training and the exchange of information and intelligence.

Consistent with the principles adopted by the international community, The Bahamas has also sought to address the issue of demand reduction. The Bahamas National Drug Council, a quasi-Government body, has a mandate to organize and coordinate national efforts in the areas of prevention, education, treatment and rehabilitation, to reduce demand for narcotic drugs among our own population. This includes the provision of counselling, dissemination of information and education efforts, as we seek to inform the Bahamian public, particularly young people, of the dangers of drug abuse.

Mr. Chairman,

The Bahamas has also applied its commitment to international drug control to ensuring that our Financial Services Industry is not abused by those seeking to engage in financial crimes related to drug trafficking. The Bahamas remains one of the world's premier offshore banking centres, and is committed to ensuring that its banks and other financial entities are well-regulated and in compliance with international norms. The financial services industry is governed by a comprehensive legislative package, which remains under constant review to ensure that criminal networks are not able to exploit our services to facilitate illicit activity.

Mr. Chairman,

We have all recognized the grave challenges posed by the international drug problem to development and to the safety and well being of our populations. The international community has in place strong mechanisms and tools to fight the trade in illegal drugs. We must all ensure that we remain focused, and committed to their full implementation in order to eradicate this dangerous trade. For its part, The Bahamas will continue to live up to its obligations and will play its full role in our collective efforts to address this global threat.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.