

**WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION
PLURILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON AGRICULTURE
THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2018**

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE BAHAMAS

The Government of The Bahamas is pleased to resume negotiations on its accession to the World Trade Organization by participating in these plurilateral negotiations on agriculture.

The Bahamas is a Small Island Developing State comprising over 700 islands and cays spread over 13,878 square kilometers in the north Atlantic Ocean. The country has a relatively small population of 373,000 persons spread over 30 main islands. The agricultural sector contributes about 2 percent to GDP and comprises 2,541 registered farmers. The sectors comprises mainly small farmers, most of whom operate on holding of less than five hectares. These farmers are scattered across the archipelago in small communities and are physically isolated from the main markets due to geography and distance from the main market. Their distance from markets results in high transportation and storage costs.

The rural communities, where the agricultural sector is concentrated has higher levels of poverty than the national average of twelve percent, approaching 20 percent in the southeastern islands. In addition to internal constraints, the agricultural sector is also faced by the impacts of climate change which includes sea level rise, climate variability, and increased frequency of tropical storms and hurricanes which currently impact the archipelago every in two years and have disrupted production systems.

Despite these challenges, the Government of The Bahamas seeks to maintain the livelihood and incomes of farmers in the agricultural sector and support efforts to contribute to food security through programmes to increase their production and improve their productivity and competitiveness.

The Bahamas has a minimal share in total world agricultural trade and is a net importer of food products. The Bahamas is committed to its integration into the multilateral trading system and takes pleasure in this opportunity to discuss domestic support in the agricultural sector and export subsidies.