



THE BAHAMAS MINISTRY OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6th, 2016

By Minister of Financial Services

“PROGRESS BEING MADE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMON REPORTING STANDARD FOR AUTOMATIC EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION”

Bahamas Committed to CRS using a Bilateral Approach

The Common Reporting Standard (CRS) for the Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) is the priority initiative for The Bahamas Government in its global regulatory tax compliance regime. The Bahamas committed to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) CRS for the automatic exchange of Information in 2018. The optional methods of implementation defined by the OECD are a multilateral and bilateral approach, both of which adhere to the international standards for tax cooperation and tax transparency. The criteria for the selection of the bilateral approach as opposed to the multilateral approach, is that the

OECD Multilateral Convention is more applicable to jurisdictions with a direct taxation regime.

The Ministry of Financial Services (project lead) in conjunction with the Ministry of Finance, The Attorney General's Office, The Bahamas Financial Services Board and other private sector stakeholders has developed an implementation framework and action plan, to ensure that The Bahamas meets its 2018 commitment. The Implementation framework and action plan is comprised of measurable goals and timelines. In furtherance of this action plan, legislation, regulations and guidance notes have already been benchmarked both regionally and internationally. In order to effect the OECD Common Reporting Standards, the Government of The Bahamas along with private sector legal experts are now in the process of finalizing the drafting of enabling legislation and the appropriate guidelines.

Minister of Financial Services, Hon. C.V. Hope Strachan said:

“As the project lead for the implementation of the Common Reporting Standards in the Bahamas, I am pleased with the current progress of the implementation plan. Through the co-ordination of my Ministry, with the

Office of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Finance, the Bahamas Financial Services Board and other industry stakeholders, I am confident that we will meet the 2018 implementation deadline.”

As was previously done for the implementation of FATCA, The Bahamas Government is committed to continuing the stakeholder consultative fora with its regulators, the private sector and other industry stakeholders. This process will include a schedule of industry wide information sessions. The AEOI/CRS legislation is imminent and we are confident that we will meet our commitment to the 2018 implementation deadline. As was already demonstrated The Bahamas is a clean, compliant jurisdiction having been deemed largely compliant with the OECD’s existing standards with respect to the exchange of tax information during its Phase II peer review.