



The Bahamas Will Meet the G20 Standard Before the End of the Year

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2009: The Government of The Bahamas has on numerous occasions, and most recently on September 23rd, confirmed its full expectations that Twelve (12) agreements, the number of agreements set by the G20, will be secured before the end of the year. At this time The Bahamas has three agreements that are compliant with the OECD standard for transparency and information exchange.

The Bahamas has a history of leadership and ongoing adherence to meeting international protocols. The early introduction of regulation of trust companies in 1965, being the first to sign the United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, and its comprehensive framework to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing are hallmarks that reinforce The Bahamas' position as a leading financial services centre.

Likewise, in advance of the formal adoption by G20 of a benchmark of 12 agreements that meet the OECD standard, The Bahamas committed to begin immediate negotiations when a level playing field was established in this era of transparency and cooperation. In a March 2009 Communication to Parliament the Prime Minister of The Bahamas, The Rt. Hon. Hubert Ingraham, said:

1. It has always been the position of this Government that The Bahamas will be a responsible financial services centre.
2. It was appropriate that The Bahamas take the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to international standards of transparency and exchange of information as accepted and applied to all member countries of the OECD and to the majority of financial centres.
3. The Bahamas, recognising significant advances in commitments to broader application of OECD standards of transparency, was ready to negotiate and conclude appropriate arrangements in compliance with these OECD standards.

Following this announcement in March, The Bahamas readied itself for negotiations with G20 and other countries, and on July 29th announced that it had commenced negotiations with 14 countries. The "Tax Cooperation 2009: Towards a Level Playing Field" report, released by the OECD in September as a result of the latest assessment by the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information, confirmed that The Bahamas had opened negotiations with a

number of countries and recognised the strong legal framework for cooperation that already exists in The Bahamas as a result of its 2002 agreement with the United States of America and its anti-money laundering framework.

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