Opening Statement by The Commonwealth of the Bahamas,

Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government of The Commonwealth of The Bahamas, may I express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for extending the invitation to attend the 38th Annual Meeting of the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission as observers.

Cooperation between NEAFC and The Bahamas remains a good example of transparency and effectiveness in providing quality tonnage for transportation of the convention cargoes. We appreciate the assistance and advice provided by the Secretariat in helping us meet our obligations under the Scheme of Control and Enforcement.

The Bahamas remains firmly committed to the global efforts to prevent, deter and eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. The Bahamas will investigate any allegations of Bahamian ships involvement in IUU fishing and take the appropriate enforcement measures.

The Bahamas does not seek to engage in fishing in the NEAFC Convention Area and indeed does not offer registration to international fishing vessels, fish factories or fish processing vessels.

Finally, Mr Chairman, distinguished delegates may we wish every participant a constructive and fruitful work during the meeting this week. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to make this short statement.