

Agreement

between

the Commonwealth of The Bahamas

and

the Federal Republic of Germany

on Assistance in Civil and Criminal Tax Matters through Exchange of Information

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas
and
the Federal Republic of Germany

Whereas the Contracting Parties wish to enhance and facilitate the terms and conditions governing the exchange of information relating to all tax matters;

Have agreed as follows:

Article 1

Scope of the Agreement

The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall provide assistance through exchange of information that is foreseeably relevant to the administration and enforcement of the respective laws of the Contracting Parties concerning taxes covered by this Agreement, including information that is foreseeably relevant to the determination, assessment and collection of such taxes, the recovery and enforcement of tax claims, or the investigation or prosecution of criminal tax matters. The rights and safeguards secured to persons by the laws or administrative practice of the requested Contracting Party remain applicable.

Article 2

Jurisdiction

A requested Contracting Party is not obligated to provide information which is neither held by its authorities nor in the possession of or obtainable by persons who are within its territorial jurisdiction.

Article 3
Taxes Covered

(1) This Agreement shall apply to the following existing taxes:

a) in respect of the Federal Republic of Germany:

- the income tax (Einkommensteuer),
 - the corporation tax (Körperschaftsteuer),
 - the trade tax (Gewerbsteuer),
 - the capital tax (Vermögensteuer) and
 - the inheritance tax (Erbschaftsteuer),
 - the value added tax (Umsatzsteuer),
 - the tax on insurance premiums (Versicherungsteuer),
- including the supplements levied thereon;

b) in respect of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas:

- taxes of every kind and description.

(2) This Agreement shall apply also to any identical or substantially similar taxes that are imposed after the date of signature of the Agreement in addition to or in place of the existing taxes if the Contracting Parties so agree. The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall notify each other of any substantial changes to the taxation and related information gathering measures covered by the Agreement within a reasonable time.

(3) With the exception of taxes listed in paragraph 1, the Agreement shall not apply to taxes imposed by any states, municipalities, or other political sub-divisions of a Contracting Party.

Article 4
Definitions

(1) For the purposes of this Agreement, unless otherwise defined:

- a) “Federal Republic of Germany” means the area in which the tax law of the Federal Republic of Germany is in force;
- b) “The Bahamas” means the Commonwealth of The Bahamas, encompassing the land, the territorial waters, and in accordance with international law and the laws of The Bahamas any area outside the territorial waters inclusive of the exclusive economic zone and the seabed and subsoil over which The Bahamas exercises jurisdiction and sovereign rights for the purpose of exploration, exploitation and conservation of natural resources;
- c) “competent authority” means
 - (i) in respect of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Federal Ministry of Finance or the agency to which it has delegated its power; which in respect of criminal tax matters will be the Federal Ministry of Justice or the agency to which it has delegated its power,
 - (ii) in respect of The Bahamas, the Minister of Finance or the Minister’s duly authorised delegate;
- d) “person” includes an individual, a company and any other body of persons;
- e) “company” means any body corporate or any entity that is treated as a body corporate for tax purposes;
- f) “publicly traded company” means any company whose principal class of shares is listed on a recognised stock exchange provided its listed shares can be readily purchased or sold by the public. Shares can be purchased or sold “by the public” if the purchase or sale of shares is not implicitly or explicitly restricted to a limited group of investors;

- g) “principal class of shares” means the class or classes of shares representing a majority of the voting power and value of the company;
- h) “recognised stock exchange” means any stock exchange agreed upon by the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties;
- i) “collective investment fund or scheme” means any pooled investment vehicle, irrespective of legal form. The term “public collective investment fund or scheme” means any collective investment fund or scheme provided the units, shares or other interests in the fund or scheme can be readily purchased, sold or redeemed by the public. Units, shares or other interests in the fund or scheme can be readily purchased, sold or redeemed “by the public” if the purchase, sale or redemption is not implicitly or explicitly restricted to a limited group of investors;
- j) “tax” means any tax to which the Agreement applies;
- k) “requesting Contracting Party” means the Contracting Party requesting information;
- l) “requested Contracting Party” means the Contracting Party requested to provide information;
- m) “information gathering measures” means laws and administrative or judicial procedures that enable a Contracting Party to obtain and provide the requested information;
- n) “information” means any fact, statement, document or record in any form whatever;
- o) “tax matters” means all tax matters including criminal tax matters;

- p) “criminal tax matters” means tax matters involving intentional conduct whether before or after the entry into force of this Agreement which is liable to prosecution under the criminal laws of the requesting Contracting Party;
- q) “criminal laws” means all criminal laws designated as such under the respective law of the Contracting Parties irrespective of whether such are contained in the tax laws, the criminal code or other statutes; and
- r) the term “national” means
 - i) in respect of the Federal Republic of Germany, any German within the meaning of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany and any legal person, partnership and association deriving its status as such from the laws in force in the Federal Republic of Germany; and
 - ii) in respect of The Bahamas, any individual possessing the nationality or citizenship of The Bahamas and any legal person, partnership, association or other entity deriving its status as such from the laws in force in The Bahamas.

(2) Any term not defined in this Agreement shall, unless the context otherwise requires, have the meaning that it has at the time the request was made under the law of that Contracting Party, any meaning under the applicable tax laws of that Contracting Party prevailing over a meaning given to the term under other laws of that Contracting Party.

Article 5

Exchange of Information

(1) The competent authority of a Contracting Party shall provide upon request by the competent authority of the other Contracting Party, information for the purposes referred to in Article 1. Such information shall be provided without regard to whether the requested Contracting Party needs such information for its own tax purposes or the conduct being investigated would constitute a crime under the laws of the requested Contracting Party if it had occurred in the territory of the requested Contracting Party. The competent authority of

the requesting Contracting Party shall only make a request for information pursuant to this Article when it is unable to obtain the requested information by other means in its own territory, except where recourse to such means would give rise to disproportionate difficulty.

(2) If the information in the possession of the competent authority of the requested Contracting Party is not sufficient to enable it to comply with the request for information, that Contracting Party shall use at its own discretion all applicable information gathering measures necessary to provide the requesting Contracting Party with the information requested, notwithstanding that the requested Contracting Party may not, at that time, need such information for its own tax purposes.

(3) If specifically requested by the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party, the competent authority of the requested Contracting Party shall provide information under this Article, to the extent allowable under its laws, in the form of depositions of witnesses and authenticated copies of original records.

(4) Each Contracting Party shall ensure that its competent authorities, in accordance with the terms of this Agreement have the authority to obtain and provide upon request:

- a) information held by banks, other financial institutions, and any person, including nominees and trustees, acting in an agency or fiduciary capacity;
- b) (i) information regarding the beneficial ownership of companies, partnerships and other persons, including in the case of collective investment funds and schemes, information on shares, units and other interests;
- (ii) in the case of trusts, information on settlors, trustees, protectors and beneficiaries; and in the case of foundations, information on founders, members of the foundation council and beneficiaries,

provided that this Agreement does not create an obligation on the Contracting Parties to obtain or provide ownership information with respect to publicly traded companies or

public collective investment funds or schemes unless such information can be obtained without giving rise to disproportionate difficulties.

(5) Any request for information shall be formulated with the greatest detail possible and shall specify in writing:

- a) the identity of the taxpayer under examination or investigation;
- b) the identity of the person in respect of whom information is requested, if that person is not also the taxpayer in subparagraph a) of this paragraph;
- c) the period for which the information is requested;
- d) the nature of the information sought and the form in which the requesting Contracting Party would prefer to receive it;
- e) the tax purpose for which the information is sought including the citation of the legal authority under the requesting Contracting Party's tax law or other law with respect to which the information is sought and whether the matter is a criminal tax matter;
- f) the reasons for believing that the information requested is foreseeably relevant to the administration and enforcement of the tax law of the requesting Contracting Party, with respect to the person identified in subparagraph a) of this paragraph;
- g) the grounds for believing that the information requested is held in the requested Contracting Party or is in the possession of or obtainable by a person within the jurisdiction of the requested Contracting Party;
- h) to the extent known, the name and address of any person believed to be in possession of the requested information;
- i) a statement that the request is in conformity with the laws and administrative practices of the requesting Contracting Party, that if the requested information was

within the jurisdiction of the requesting Contracting Party then the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party would be able to obtain the information under the laws of the requesting Contracting Party and that it is in conformity with this Agreement; and

- j) a statement that the requesting Contracting Party has pursued all means available in its own territory to obtain the information, except those that would give rise to disproportionate difficulties.

(6) The competent authority of the requested Contracting Party shall acknowledge receipt of the request to the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party and shall use its best endeavours to forward the requested information to the requesting Contracting Party with the least reasonable delay.

Article 6

Tax Examinations Abroad

(1) By reasonable notice given in advance, the requesting Contracting Party may request that the requested Contracting Party allow representatives of the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party to enter the territory of the requested Contracting Party, to the extent permitted under its laws, to interview individuals and examine records with the prior written consent of the individuals or other persons concerned. The competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party shall notify the competent authority of the requested Contracting Party of the time and place of the intended meeting with the individuals concerned.

(2) At the request of the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party, the competent authority of the requested Contracting Party may allow representatives of the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party to be present at the appropriate part of a tax examination in the requested Contracting Party.

(3) If the request referred to in paragraph 2 is acceded to, the competent authority of the requested Contracting Party conducting the examination shall, as soon as possible, notify

the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party about the time and place of the examination, the authority or official designated to carry out the examination and the procedures and conditions required by the requested Contracting Party for the conduct of the examination. All decisions with respect to the conduct of the tax examination shall be made by the requested Contracting Party conducting the examination.

Article 7

Possibility of Declining a Request

- (1) The competent authority of the requested Contracting Party may decline to assist:
 - a) where the request is not made in conformity with this Agreement;
 - b) where the requesting Contracting Party has not pursued all means available in its own territory to obtain the information, except where recourse to such means would give rise to disproportionate difficulty; or
 - c) where the disclosure of the information requested would be contrary to the national security or public policy of the requested Contracting Party.

- (2) This Agreement shall not impose upon a requested Contracting Party any obligation:
 - a) to provide items subject to legal privilege, or any trade, business, industrial, commercial or professional secret or trade process, provided that information described in paragraph 4 of Article 5 shall not by reason of that fact alone be treated as such a secret or trade process; or
 - b) to carry out administrative measures at variance with its laws and administrative practices, provided that nothing in this subparagraph shall affect the obligations of a Contracting Party under paragraph 4 of Article 5;

- (3) A request for information shall not be refused on the ground that the tax claim giving rise to the request is disputed.

(4) The requested Contracting Party shall not be required to obtain and provide information which if the requested information was within the jurisdiction of the requesting Contracting Party the competent authority of the requesting Contracting Party would not be able to obtain under its laws or in response to a valid request made in similar circumstances from the requested Contracting Party under this Agreement.

(5) The requested Contracting Party may decline a request for information if the information is requested by the requesting Contracting Party to administer or enforce a provision of the tax law of the requesting Contracting Party, or any requirement connected therewith, which discriminates against a national of the requested Contracting Party as compared with a national of the requesting Contracting Party in the same circumstances.

Article 8 Confidentiality

(1) All information provided and received by the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall be kept confidential and shall be treated as secret in the same manner as information obtained under the domestic laws of the Contracting Parties.

(2) Any information received by a Contracting Party shall be treated as confidential in the same manner as information obtained under the domestic laws of that Party and such information shall be disclosed only to persons or authorities (including courts and administrative bodies) concerned with the purposes specified in Article 1, and used by such persons or authorities only for such purposes, including the determination of any appeal. For these purposes information may be disclosed in administrative or criminal investigations, in public court proceedings or in judicial decisions, if this is provided for in the respective laws of the Contracting Parties.

(3) Such information may not be used for any purpose other than for the purposes stated in Article 1 without the expressed written consent of the competent authority of the requested Contracting Party.

(4) The information provided to a requesting Contracting Party under this Agreement may not be disclosed to any other jurisdiction (including a foreign government).

(5) Personal data may be transmitted to the extent necessary for carrying out the provisions of this Agreement and subject to the provisions of the law of the supplying Contracting Party.

Article 9

Costs

The incidents of costs incurred in providing assistance (including reasonable costs of third parties and external advisors in connection with litigation or otherwise) shall be agreed by the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties.

Article 10

Mutual Agreement Procedure

(1) Where difficulties or doubts arise between the Contracting Parties regarding the implementation or interpretation of the Agreement, the competent authorities shall endeavour to resolve the matter by mutual agreement.

(2) In addition to the agreements referred to in paragraph 1, the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties may mutually agree on the procedures to be used under Articles 5, 6 and 9.

(3) The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties may communicate with each other directly for purposes of reaching agreement under this Article.

(4) The Contracting Parties shall agree on procedures for dispute resolution should this become necessary.

Article 11
Language

Requests for assistance and answers thereto shall be drawn up in the English language.

Article 12
Protocol

The attached Protocol shall be an integral part of this Agreement.

Article 13
Entry into Force

(1) This Agreement shall be ratified and the instruments of ratification shall be exchanged as soon as possible.

(2) This Agreement shall enter into force on the date of exchange of the instruments of ratification and its provisions shall have effect in both Contracting States for all matters covered in Article 1 on that date, but only in respect of taxable periods beginning on or after that date or, where there is no taxable period, all charges to tax arising on or after that date.

Article 14
Termination

(1) Either Contracting Party may terminate the Agreement by serving a notice of termination through diplomatic channel to the other Contracting Party.

(2) Such termination shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of three months after the date of receipt of notice of termination by the other Contracting Party.

(3) If the Agreement is terminated, the Contracting Parties shall remain bound by the provisions of Article 8 with respect to any information obtained under the Agreement.

Done at Nassau, this 9th day of April 2010, in duplicate, in the English and German languages, each text being equally authentic.

For the
Commonwealth of The Bahamas

For the
Federal Republic of Germany

Hon. T. Brent Symonette
Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Jürgen Engel
Ambassador of the Federal
Republic of Germany to the
Commonwealth of The Bahamas

Protocol
to the Agreement
between
the Commonwealth of The Bahamas
and
the Federal Republic of Germany
on Assistance in Civil and Criminal Tax Matters through Exchange of Information

The Commonwealth of The Bahamas and the Federal Republic of Germany (the “Contracting Parties”) have agreed at the signing of the Agreement between the two States on Assistance in Civil and Criminal Tax Matters through Exchange of Information on the following provisions which shall form an integral part of the said Agreement:

1. With respect to subparagraph a) of paragraph 5 of Article 5 it is understood that the identity of the person under examination or investigation may be determined by identifying information other than the name.

2. With respect to paragraph 5 of Article 8 the Contracting Parties shall ensure the protection of personal data at a level that is equivalent to that of Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. In addition to the domestic law the following shall apply:
 - a) The receiving agency may use such data in compliance with paragraph 3 of Article 8 only for the purpose stated by the supplying agency and shall be subject to any other conditions for the protection of personal information prescribed by the supplying agency and that conform with Article 8.

- b) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 3 of Article 8, the information may be used for other purposes, if under the law of both Contracting Parties it may be used for these other purposes and the competent authority of the supplying Contracting Party has agreed to this use. Use for other purposes without the prior approval of the supplying Contracting Party is permissible only if it is needed to avert in the individual case at hand an imminent threat to a person of loss of life, bodily harm or loss of liberty, or to protect significant assets and there is danger inherent in any delay. In such a case the competent authority of the supplying Contracting Party must be asked without delay for retroactive authorisation of the change in purpose. If authorisation is refused, the information may no longer be used for the other purpose and the receiving agency shall erase the data supplied without delay. Any damage which has been caused by use of the information for the other purpose must be compensated by the receiving agency.
- c) The supplying agency (where it is the controller of information to be supplied under a request), in response to a properly formulated request, shall be obliged to exercise vigilance, in accordance with its domestic laws, as to the accuracy of the data to be supplied and their foreseeable relevance within the meaning of Article 1 and their proportionality to the purpose for which they are supplied. Data are foreseeably relevant if in the concrete case at hand there is the serious possibility that the other Contracting Party has a right to tax and there is nothing to indicate that the data are already in the possession of the competent authority of the other Contracting Party or that the competent authority of the other Contracting Party would be in a position to confirm the taxable object without the information. If it emerges that inaccurate data or data which should not have been supplied have been supplied, the receiving agency shall be informed of this without delay. That agency shall be obliged to correct or erase such data without delay.
- d) The receiving agency shall on request inform the supplying agency on a case-by-case basis for the purpose of informing the person concerned about the use of the supplied data and the results achieved thereby.

- e) The receiving agency shall inform the person concerned of the data collection by the supplying agency. The person concerned need not be informed if and as long as on balance it is considered that the public interest in not informing him outweighs his right to be informed.
- f) Upon application the person concerned shall be informed of the supplied data relating to him and of the use to which such data are to be put. The second sentence of paragraph e) shall apply accordingly.
- g) The receiving agency shall bear liability under its domestic laws in relation to any person suffering unlawful damage in connection with the supply of data under the exchange of data pursuant to this Agreement. In relation to the damaged person, the receiving agency may not plead to its discharge that the damage had been caused by the supplying agency.
- h) The supplying and the receiving agencies shall be obliged to keep official records of the supply and receipt of personal data.
- i) Where the domestic law of the supplying agency contains special provisions for the deletion of the personal data supplied, that agency shall inform the receiving agency accordingly. In any case, supplied personal data shall be erased once they are no longer required for the purpose for which they were supplied.
- j) The supplying and the receiving agencies shall be obliged to take effective measures to protect the personal data supplied against unauthorised access, unauthorised alteration and unauthorised disclosure.