



MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

### 13th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review

#### Finland's recommendations to India

24 May 2012

Madam President,

Finland wishes to thank the delegation of India for its national report and its presentation today.

Finland welcomes the declining numbers of maternal deaths in India in recent years. Finland appreciates the policies and programs introduced to improve maternal health and the addressing of the challenges that women in India continue to face in accessing sexual and reproductive health services.

Unsafe abortions are a central reason for maternal deaths in India, especially among girls aged 15-19. While abortion is legal under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, women and girls still face major obstacles in accessing to safe services, including prohibitive costs and a shortage of trained health providers. As a result, 60 percent of abortions occur in unauthorized facilities.

**Finland recommends** that India take further measures to ensure all women without any discrimination access to adequate obstetric delivery services and sexual and reproductive health services, including safe abortion and gender-sensitive comprehensive contraceptive services.

**Finland also recommends** that India remove reservations to the Article 16(1) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Thank you.