

**Intervention by Denmark**

*Madame President,*

Denmark warmly welcomes the Moroccan delegation to Geneva and would like to thank them for their comprehensive presentation given here today. We would further like to thank the Government of Morocco for responding to the advance questions submitted by Denmark.

Morocco has shown that non-violent democratic reforms in the Arab region are possible. We note with concern however, the excessive use of force to disperse peaceful demonstrations that violates the right to peaceful assembly. We further note with concern reports of the curtailment of freedom of expression, in particular in the press, with the arrest of journalists and bloggers who have voiced their opinion on politically sensitive issues.

We regrets that UN-led negotiations to find a peaceful solution to the status of Western Sahara remains stalled, and that peaceful demonstrations continue to be subjected to attacks and protestors arbitrarily detained or physically assaulted.

**Denmark would like to ask the Government of Morocco what measures are being taken to protect the safety of peaceful protestors and respect human rights in Western Sahara.**

Morocco can today be considered among the most progressive countries in the Arab region with respect to women's rights and gender equality. This said, gender-based discrimination in law and practice persists.

**Denmark recommends that the Government of Morocco codify the principle of gender equality in all areas of its national legal framework.**

**Finally, Denmark recommends that Government of Morocco ratify the Optional Protocol of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.**

*Thank you, Madame President.*