

Mr/Mrs President,

Distinguished representatives of the Member States and the Observer States of the Human Rights Council, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to make a few introductory remarks on the report of the Government of Aruba.

The government of Aruba, has made a strong commitment to work diligently towards the enhancement of the quality of life of its people. The aim of the government is to achieve progress, in a sustainable way, causing as little harm as possible to our environment and ensuring the rights of all who live on our island.

The government also believes that it is the people that have to play a central role in the development of their island, and encourages them to take part in community building platforms and neighborhood projects, which participation will increase their sense of belonging and unite our society.

Furthermore, it is important to note that efforts have been made to introduce and modernize the legislation where necessary, in conformity with the human rights conventions.

- In December 2011, Parliament passed the Country Ordinance on Compulsory Education. Compulsory education applies to all children aged over 4 and under 17. The government is introducing the Compulsory Education Ordinance in phases. The implementation plan developed by the government seeks a balanced and responsible introduction of the ordinance. The government is planning to introduce this Ordinance in 2013, which will guarantee access to the educational system to all children, irrespective of their legal status.

- In April 2012, the new Criminal Code was adopted by Aruba's parliament. The new juvenile justice system provides the judiciary with a wider range of sanctions which may be imposed on the juvenile, including placement in a juvenile detention center, community service, training orders and fines. This expansion in legislation gives the court more freedom to impose the sanctions it deems necessary while taking into account the social background and education as well as the circumstances under which the criminal offence was committed. This will make it possible for juveniles to

receive the adequate treatment and care needed to make the transition back into society as smooth as possible and offer them a better chance for the future.

- The Aruban Code of Criminal procedure is currently being reviewed in order to present it to the country's parliament. This legislation will shorten the length of pre-trial detention. Under this new Code a suspect will have the right to be brought before a court within one or two days of his arrest.

Finally, we would like to mention that the government of Aruba also made progress tackling human trafficking and smuggling. In May 2006, the Criminal Code was amended in order to comply with the international Conventions and Protocols. An interdepartmental and interdisciplinary working group was established in 2007. The Task Force implemented several initiatives, inter alia on prevention, victim assistance and awareness-raising. Aruba also appointed a National Coordinator and a Memorandum of Understanding on Human Trafficking and Smuggling was signed by the ministers of Justice of the Kingdom.

The Organization of American States (OAS) is very interested in Aruba's approach to tackle human trafficking and smuggling and would like it to serve as best practice for the region. The latest Trafficking in Persons report was released in 2011 by the United States State Department. It referred favourably to Aruba's efforts to combat trafficking in human beings.

Distinguished representatives of the Member States and Observer States, compliance and protection of human rights is a continuous process in which we encounter many challenges on the road ahead. We hold your views and recommendations in high esteem in helping us on this road.

I thank you for your attention.