

13th Session of the Working Group of the UPR

UPR of the South Africa

Statement by A u s t r i a

Austria welcomes H.E. ... and the delegation of South Africa to the UPR and thanks for the submission of the national report.

We commend the government of South Africa for having taken various positive steps in the implementation of recommendations since the last review. In particular commendable is progress made in the area of economic and social rights, such as access to health care and education, as well as in reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Austria is, however, concerned about reports of persistent discrimination against women and the high levels of sexual and gender-based violence. Austria is also troubled by high numbers of targeted attacks against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals.

Austria would like to note that there have been concerns about new draft laws, such as the Protection of State Information Bill, which might have the potential to undermine the right to access information and freedom of expression under the pretext of national security or national interest. We are, however, encouraged by continuous discussions at the level of Parliament to bring these laws in accordance with international human rights standards.

Austria would like to offer the following recommendations:

1. To ensure effective implementation of the existing normative framework guaranteeing women's right to equality, in particular to ensure access to justice, protection and other remedies.
2. To put in place stronger mechanisms to protect women and girls against gender-based violence and provide redress to victims, in particular by investigating and prosecuting the perpetrators and by providing gender-sensitive training to law enforcement agents and judges.
3. To publically denounce crimes committed against LGBTs and to conduct thorough investigations into and prosecutions of these attacks.
4. To ensure compliance of domestic laws with the right to access to information and freedom of expression.

I thank you.